



Customer Focus

Margaret Lalor grew up on the Wisconsin farm that her grandfather settled in 1846. An immigrant from Ireland, he staked a claim just west of the Town of Dunn in Dane County. "He walked through where I am now, and he saw a spring. Of course, water was a high item, and when he got to Milwaukee and he looked at the land maps he said, I want that parcel."

Over 150 years later, in April of 1999, the Town of Dunn purchased an agricultural conservation easement on the Lalor farm using FPP matching funds from the USDA NRCS. Thanks to this cost-share assistance, 150 acres of prime farmland, woods, and wetlands only minutes from the State Capitol will remain a farm forever. FPP funds have helped the Town of Dunn purchase development rights on four more family farms totaling 550 acres. The Town continues to accept applications from landowners eager to protect their farms and the future of agriculture in the Town of Dunn.

The purchase of development rights (PDR) program is part of the Town's Rural Preservation Program. It is a voluntary farmland protection technique that compensates landowners for limiting future development on their land. FPP funds stretch local dollars and offer a tool to help the community determine its future and provide open space and food resources for future generations.

"It gives me a good feeling to know that the land that has been in our family for well over 100 years will be protected from development," said Lalor.

Farmland Protection Program Wisconsin Summary

Overview The USDA Farmland Protection Program (FPP) helps farmers keep their productive land in agriculture. The program assists States, Tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations by purchasing conservation easements for the purpose of limiting conversion to non-agricultural uses. NRCS provides up to 50% of the easement cost to the cooperating entity, which acquires, manages, and enforces the easement. Landowners participate voluntarily, and protected farms remain in private ownership. Every protected farm operates under a conservation plan approved by the local Conservation District. Nationally, over \$52 million have been obligated to state and local entities since establishment of the program in 1996. Proposals were accepted in 1996, 1997, 1998, and 2001.

Accomplishments In Wisconsin, \$1,382,300 in FPP technical assistance and financial assistance funds have been awarded to protect over 1,700 acres of valuable farmland on 14 working farms. Since the FPP was established in 1996, Wisconsin programs have requested over \$4.3 million to protect 5,169 acres on 31 farms. Applications for funding were received in each of the four years that funds were available. Five programs have been funded: the Town of Dunn, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Dane County, Jefferson County Land Trust, and Kinnickinnic River Land Trust. Only one-third of the projects could be approved due to the limited availability of FPP funds. Proposals are selected through a competitive process to protect the most strategic farms that will help accomplish FPP and local land use goals. The easements also protect entire working farms, woodlands, wetlands, important natural areas, and cultural resources.

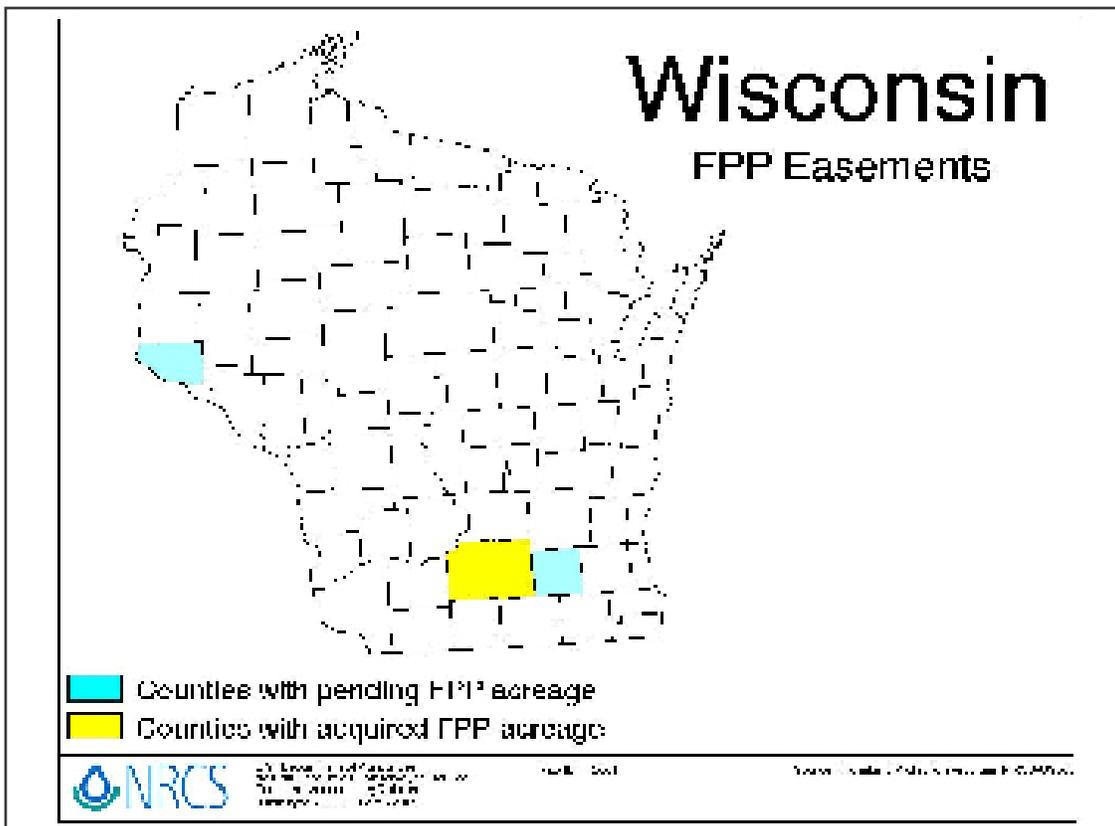
Outlook In recent years, Wisconsin has lost more than 1.5 square miles of rural land to development every week and is losing the equivalent of 250 average-sized farms every year. Most of this loss is occurring in areas identified by the American Farmland Trust (AFT) as high quality soils under high development pressure. The AFT recognizes southern Wisconsin as the third most threatened region in the U.S. for the loss of prime farmland. Interest in effective land-use planning has risen. Purchase of development rights is increasingly viewed as an effective tool to balance the demand for new development with the desire to preserve our best farmland, while meeting the needs of farmers. Because of the increasing development pressures, funds requested from the

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*Photo by: NRCS
NRCS, the Town of Dunn, and the Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation are partners in acquiring an agricultural conservation easement on this working farm.*

**Farmland Protection Program
Wisconsin Easements
(As of December 2001)**

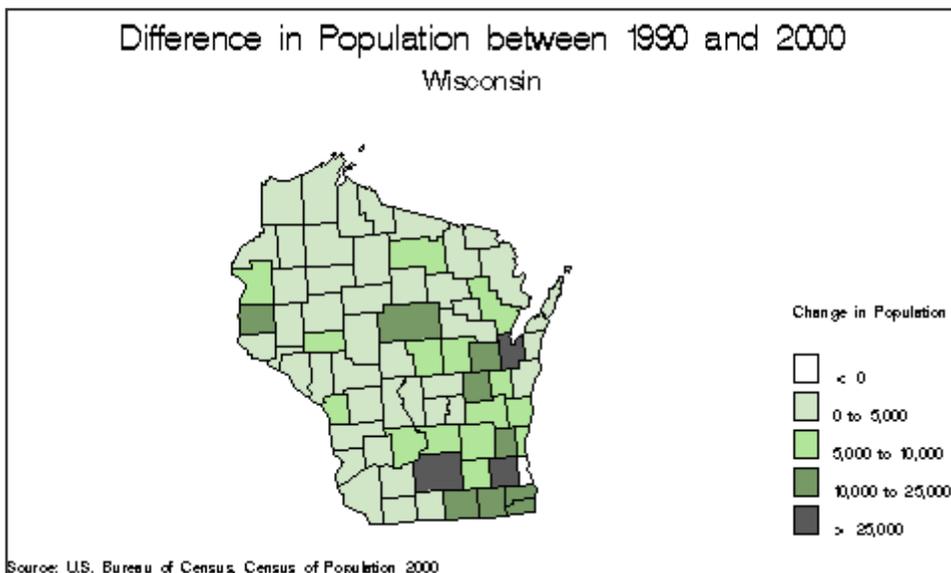


County: Dane
Acres: 1,395
Total Easement Cost:
 \$2,370,630
Average per acre: \$1,699
Federal payment amount:
 \$1,007,000
Percentage: 42%

County: Jefferson
Acres: 65
Total Easement Cost: \$75,000
Average per acre: \$1,154
Federal payment amount:
 \$37,500
Percentage: 50%

County: Pierce
Acres: 260
Total Easement Cost: \$958,000
Average per acre: \$3,685
Federal payment amount:
 \$282,200
Percentage: 29%

WISCONSIN TOTALS:
Acres: 1,720
Total Easement Costs:
 \$3,403,630
Average per acre: \$1,979
Federal payment amount:
 \$1,326,700
Percentage: 39%



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