

# FARMLAND PRESERVATION SURVEY



*Washington County, in cooperation with the local UW-Extension Office, has developed this survey to obtain your opinions about farmland preservation in your municipality. The results will help guide your town or village as it decides whether to participate in Wisconsin's new Working Lands Initiative. Thank you for your input!*

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## 1. Where do you own most or all of your land?

Town/Village of Town of Polk (24 responses) (approx. 18% response rate)

## 2. Approximately how many total acres do you own within Washington County?

110.65 acres (average)

## 3. In the last few years, how many of these acres have you:

A. Typically farmed yourself 71.38 ac B. Rented out for farming 21.88 ac (averages)

## 4. Do you currently receive farmland preservation tax credits?

2 Yes 22 No No response: 0

## 5. Would you like to receive tax credits in the future for preserving your farmland?

5 Yes 9 No 9 Not sure No response: 1

## 6. Would you consider participating in one or both of the following?

A. Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) 2 Yes 7 No 14 Not sure No response: 1

B. Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program? 1 Yes 7 No 15 Not sure  
No response: 1

## 7. Is the agricultural infrastructure (co-op, veterinarian, etc.) you need close enough to your operation? (check one)

16 Everything my operation needs is close enough  
5 Most of what's needed is close enough  
0 Most of what's needed is NOT close enough No response: 3  
0 Nothing my operation needs is close enough

**8. What type of infrastructure, if not already present, would help increase your operation's efficiency? (check all that apply)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <u>  2  </u> Food processing facilities              | <u>  0  </u> Transportation facilities |
| <u>  3  </u> Storage facilities                      | <u>  3  </u> Agricultural suppliers    |
| <u>  1  </u> Co-ops                                  | <u>  0  </u> Veterinarian services     |
| <u>  2  </u> Other (please specify) <u>see below</u> | No response: 16                        |
- > Non-active informing  
> Less government

**9. How should non-ag development occur in rural areas? (check one)**

- 10  Scattered where appropriate  
  3  Concentrated in a few specified areas  
 7.5  There should be little or no non-ag growth in rural areas  
  1  Not sure  
 2.5  Other (please specify) see below                      No response: 0
- > Lots should be small enough to be manageable. 2+ acres - so these large weed patches and junk yards could be curbed in the Polk township. It destroys land values in some areas.  
> Keep it rural  
> Use unfertile land or depleted land

**10. How would you like to see the future (next 10-20 years) of agriculture in Washington County? (check all that apply)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <u>  6 </u> Same as it is today   | <u>  0 </u> Gradually phase out farms               |
| <u>  2 </u> Hobby farms predominate                                     | <u>  2 </u> Larger farms                            |
| <u>  4 </u> Organic or niche farming play a significant role            | <u> 19 </u> In general, a farm-friendly environment |
| <u>  5 </u> Several Agricultural Enterprise Areas in existence          |   |
| <u>  4 </u> Multiple easements or similar farmland protections in place |   |
| <u>  1 </u> Not sure  |   |
| <u>  2 </u> Other (please specify) <u>see below</u>                     | No response: 1                                      |
- > Farms that are here should be cultivated and allowed to prosper. Less regulation from government - county and federal.  
> Those that want to farm should have that choice.

**11. What is your preferred vision of "rural character"? (check one)**

- 6.5  Plenty of small and medium-sized farms  
  8.5  Farms of all sizes and types, including larger operations  
  0   Scattered, large-lot, well-landscaped subdivisions  
  1.5  Green space consisting of a mix of woodlands, wetlands, etc.  
  6.5  A mix of uses including farms, subdivisions, home businesses, and nurseries  
  0   Not sure  
  0   Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_                      No response: 1

**12. If you own a farm, please identify current issues you have, if any, with non-ag landowners? (check all that apply)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <u>14</u> Traffic  | <u>12</u> Loss of prime farmlands               |
| <u>6</u> Stormwater flow problems                                    | <u>5</u> Vandalism or other crimes              |
| <u>7</u> Encroaching non-ag development pressures                    | <u>10</u> Change in "fabric" of rural community |
| <u>13</u> Lack of tolerance for ag-related noises, odors, activities | <u>1</u> No significant issues                  |
| <u>1</u> Other (please specify <u>see below</u> )                    | No response: 3                                  |

> Too many people don't tolerate farm operation, noise, smells, equipment on roads

**13. If you own a farm, what, generally speaking, are your future plans? (check all that apply)**

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| <u>9</u> Keep farming in Washington County until my retirement               |                |
| <u>1</u> Move elsewhere in order to keep farming until my retirement         |                |
| <u>8</u> Pass the farm on to my children or others in the next generation    |                |
| <u>2</u> Get out of farming as soon as practical                             |                |
| <u>4</u> Increase the size of the farm                                       |                |
| <u>0</u> Decrease the size of the farm                                       |                |
| <u>3</u> Seek to put/keep farm in a Farmland Preservation zoning district    |                |
| <u>2</u> Seek to put the farm in an Agricultural Enterprise Area             |                |
| <u>2</u> Preserve the farm with a conservation easement on all or part of it |                |
| <u>4</u> Split off part of the land for development                          |                |
| <u>5</u> Other (please specify) <u>see below</u>                             | No response: 3 |

- > Except for our dwelling our acreage is woodland, swamp, and water. It is not suitable for agriculture
- > Will try to move out once it becomes too regulated or congested to farm. While I'm here I need to preserve ag land but if the opportunity exists for me to leave I don't want to be fined for selling my own valuable asset.
- > To sell it all for commercial
- > Sell the farm when land prices go up

This survey was mailed by the Washington County Planning & Parks Department to all landowners in the Town of Polk who own at least one property that is 20 acres or greater in size.

Survey questions were developed by UW-Extension. Survey results were tabulated by UW-Extension.