

Chapter 2 Recommended Changes

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Farmland Preservation Efforts

Town of Herman farmers can participate in several federal, State and Countywide programs and initiatives that are intended to preserve long-term farming activities. The ~~2008~~2014 Farm Bill contained several significant changes relative to the 2008 Farm Bill. Program descriptions and requirements can be found through the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency. The FSA office for Shawano County is currently located at 603 Lakeland Road in Shawano. FSA may be contacted on the internet by searching "farm service agency". ~~reauthorized several federal programs, including:~~

- ~~◆ The **Conservation Reserve Program** (CRP), which provides technical and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soil, water and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.~~
- ~~◆ The **Wetland Reserve Program**, which provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts.~~
- ~~◆ The **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program**, which provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to landowners to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat on their property.~~
- ~~◆ The **Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative**, which focuses on providing technical assistance to help new grazers begin using rotational grazing methods. Trained grazing specialists work one-on-one with farmers, developing grazing plans, including seeding recommendations, fencing and watering plans.~~
- ~~◆ The **Environmental Quality Incentives Program** (EQIP), which provides a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.~~

In addition, the Wisconsin Department of Revenue offers two important farmland preservation programs, the Farmland Preservation Credit Program and the Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program. Significant changes were made to these programs in 2009. One of those changes requires new Farmland Preservation contracts to be on land that is in a Farmland Preservation Zoning District. The Town of Herman does not currently contain such a district.

~~The Farmland Preservation Credit Program strives to preserve Wisconsin farmland by means of local land use planning and soil conservation practices and provides property tax relief to farmland owners. To qualify for the credit, farmland must be 35 acres or more and zoned for exclusive agricultural use or be subject to a preservation agreement between the farmland owner and the State. In addition, all program participants must comply with soil and water conservation standards set by the State Land Conservation Board. In 2005 there were 8 claims for this credit in the Town, constituting a total of \$4,956 and an average credit of \$620. It should be noted that claims for both of the Farmland Preservation Credit and the Farmland Tax Relief Credit are documented for the municipality in which the claimant lives, which may not be where the farm is actually located. County wide, this program has a 31 percent participation rate.~~

~~The Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program provides direct benefits to all farmland owners with 35 or more acres. The credit is computed as a percentage of up to \$10,000 of property taxes, with the maximum~~

~~credit of \$1,500. In 2005, there were 45 claims for this credit in the Town, constituting a total of \$10,352 and an average credit of \$230.~~

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Policies:

1. Direct non-farming uses away from areas with productive agricultural soils and concentration of farms through land use planning, enforcement of zoning and other mechanisms.
2. Promote the continuation of agriculture in the Town through encouraging agricultural-related businesses, value-added agriculture, and other farm family business opportunities to supplement farm income.
3. Support State and County efforts to monitor and regulate large-scale agricultural operations and to mitigate their impacts so that they do not negatively affect the environment or nearby land-owners.
4. Control animal waste and manure spreading by providing farmers notification of applicable regulations.
5. Continue to work with the County to ensure that the animal density standards in the zoning ordinance remain appropriate.~~Work with the County to develop animal density unit standards to be incorporated in future County zoning ordinance updates.~~
6. Work with the County to explore and implement a Purchase of Development Rights program.
7. Encourage farmers to utilize the Farm Service Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.~~long-term farmers to enroll in the State's Farmland Preservation Program.~~
8. Work with the County to update-maintain the County's Farmland Preservation Plan.
9. Work with the County to develop a maintain the subdivision ordinance ~~to make- which makes~~ available an option of "conservation development," which encourages clustered development to facilitate the preservation of larger contiguous tracts of agricultural land.
10. Require new development to include "right to farm" provisions, particularly where it is adjacent to agricultural areas.
11. Periodically review the town's policy regarding weight limits for Agriculture vehicles to ensure the correct balance is maintained between the needs of Agriculture and the maintenance of town roads.

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Develop-Support Animal Unit Density Standards

Agriculture is an important component of the character and economy of Shawano County and the Town of Herman. In addition to larger farming operations, "hobby farms" are also prevalent in the County. In order to continue the keeping of farm animals and hobby farm animals in a manner which allows for reasonable numbers of animals, the Town ~~intends to work-worked~~ with the County to establish animal unit density standards in each zoning district where farm animals are allowed. ~~This effort would help to avoid nuisances, undesirable odors, and other negative impacts on neighboring properties; protect human and animal health; satisfy the needs of animals for exercise space; and protect water quality. The~~

~~Town will work with the County to ensure that t~~ These standards are reflected in the County's zoning ordinance. The Town will continue to work with the County to update these standards if needed.

Implements of Husbandry Law Enforcement

Wisconsin ACT 15 is a wide ranging statute which establishes height, width, and weight standards for Implements of Husbandry (IOH) and Agriculture Commercial Vehicles (Ag CMV). The provision in the act which most impacts Towns is a 15% increase in both maximum axle loads and gross vehicle weights for IOH and Ag CMV's. While allowing heavier loads for Agriculture results in improved efficiencies for farm operations, it must be recognized that most Town Roads were designed and built to carry loads typical of the times many decades ago. Act 15 gave towns several options as to how to implement the act. The Town of Herman, along with Shawano County and most of the towns in our area selected Option F which allows the increased weight limits on all non-posted roads and requires consideration of requests for no-fee permits to exceed these limits. The Town Board passed a resolution that approval of permits to exceed the limits would be made only under extraordinary conditions. The Town will continually evaluate the current policy to ensure that the need of Agriculture and the need to maintain the Town's roads remains in the proper balance.

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In the case of inactive or sites anticipated to become inactive over the planning period, the Town will work with the operator to require a proper reclamation plan is prepared and followed. The Town may intend these areas for different land uses over the planning period. See the Land Use chapter for more details.

Support Shawano County Land and Water Resource Management Plan

Shawano County has adopted a Land and Water Resource Management Plan (adopted _____). The Town of Herman agrees with, supports, and places a high value on the goals and methods of the County Plan.