
C. Farmland Preservation Efforts

Within the Village limits, farming activities are considered an interim use. However, farmers in the Cottage Grove area and Dane County can participate in several federal, state, and countywide programs and initiatives that are intended to preserve long-term farming activities. The 2008 Farm Bill reauthorized several federal programs, including the following:

- The **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** 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** provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts.
- The **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program** 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** focuses on providing technical assistance to help new grazers begin using rotational grazing methods. Trained grazing specialists work one-on-one with farmers to develop grazing plans, fence and water plans, and provide seed recommendations.
- The **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** is a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promote 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. 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. All program participants must comply with soil and water conservation standards set by the State Land Conservation Board. 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. 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.