



## DATCP Asks for Landowner Thoughts on Farmland Preservation

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MADISON – Landowners in 15 Wisconsin counties are being asked their opinions about the state’s farmland preservation program in an attempt to make the program more effective and make it work for more people.

The survey will arrive in 3,000 mailboxes this week, and landowners are asked to return it by March 30. This is a project of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, separate from the Agricultural Census survey that went out to farmers in late 2017.

“We really need landowners’ input, and the survey will take about 15 minutes to complete,” said Alison Volk, Land Management Section leader with DATCP. “This survey will help us better understand how the program is working for landowners around the state.”

The 15 counties targeted in the survey are Barron, Buffalo, Dodge, Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, Grant, Green, Langlade, Manitowoc, Marathon, Monroe, Polk, Sauk, Walworth and Washington. Volk said these counties were chosen because they are areas where there are farmland preservation zoning districts or agricultural enterprise areas, or that have had high participation in the past but where participation is declining.

The farmland preservation program offers tax credits to landowners in return for keeping their land in agricultural use. In 2016, there were about 12,000 participants, preserving about 2.3 million acres.

The program is intended to provide landowners and local governments with tools to help protect farmland for future generations. Landowners can participate if their land is in a farmland preservation zoning district or is covered by a farmland preservation agreement. Since 2009, when the law was changed, landowners can sign new agreements only if their land is in an agricultural enterprise area. Agreements signed before 2009 remain in effect until they expire.

The department is also surveying local governments about their participation in farmland preservation zoning and agricultural enterprise areas.

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