STATE OF WISCONSIN

Letter Report

Use Value Assessment of Agricultural Land

July 2010

Legislative Audit Bureau

22 E. Mifflin St., Ste. 500, Madison, Wisconsin 53703-4225 ▪ (608) 266-2818
Fax: (608) 267-0410 ▪ Web site: www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab

STATE OF WISCONSIN
Legislative Audit Bureau

22 East Mifflin Street, Suite 500
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
(608) 266-2818
Fax (608) 267-0410
www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab

Janice Mueller
State Auditor

July 8, 2010

Senator Kathleen Vinehout and
Representative Peter Barca, Co-chairpersons
Joint Legislative Audit Committee
State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Senator Vinehout and Representative Barca:

At your request, we have completed a limited-scope review of the use value assessment of agricultural land. Wisconsin's use value law, which was enacted as part of the 1995-97 Biennial Budget Act, is intended both to provide property tax relief for farmers and to reduce urban sprawl. Under use value assessment, property taxes are assessed on land that is used primarily for agricultural purposes based on the land's agricultural productivity, rather than its full market value. In 2008, approximately 35.0 percent of all acreage in Wisconsin was assessed as agricultural land.

In conducting this analysis, we reviewed agricultural land classification and assessments in 14 municipalities statewide. All agricultural land we reviewed met the criteria for agricultural use established in Wisconsin Administrative Code. However, more than 6,300 agricultural acres in the 14 municipalities were zoned for non-agricultural purposes, and more than 3,800 agricultural acres were owned by real estate or property development businesses, which may indicate a greater likelihood for the land to eventually be sold or developed.

We worked with assessors in each of the 14 municipalities to estimate the effect of use value assessment on property taxes within their municipalities. If those communities had assessed agricultural land that is zoned for another purpose at market value in 2009, the owners of the land would have owed a total of $4.7 million in additional property taxes, and the tax liability of other property owners in those municipalities would have been reduced by the same amount. On an individual basis, taxes on agricultural land that is zoned for another purpose would have increased by an average of $3,516, while taxes on all other parcels would have decreased, on average, by $38.

Recently, the Legislature enacted the Working Lands Initiative to promote local farmland planning and provide income tax credits to eligible landowners. Should the Legislature wish to modify farmland preservation strategies through changes to use value assessment, we have identified programs in other states that may serve as models.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us by local assessors in our sample of 14 municipalities and by staff from the departments of Revenue; Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; and Financial Institutions.

Sincerely,

Janice Mueller
State Auditor

JM/KW/ss

USE VALUE ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

Under Wisconsin's use value law, property taxes on agricultural land are assessed based on the land's ability to produce farm income. Before the use value law was enacted as part of 1995 Wisconsin Act 27, the 1995-97 Biennial Budget Act, agricultural land was assessed according to its full market value, which is the estimated sales price. Taxes on most other real and personal property continue to be assessed at full market value.

By reducing assessments on agricultural land, the use value law was intended both to improve Wisconsin's farm economy by providing property tax relief for farmers and to reduce urban sprawl. Section 70.32, Wis. Stats., specifies that to qualify for use value assessment, land must be devoted primarily to agricultural use. All property that meets this definition qualifies, regardless of the owner's occupation or the purpose for which the land is zoned. For example, a landowner who does not farm may lease qualifying land to a farmer for agricultural use.

Recent media reports have alleged that loopholes in the use value assessment law allow non-farmers to benefit inappropriately from owning land that continues to qualify for use value assessment because of temporary cropping, although it has been zoned for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes. It has been argued that in such cases the use value law is not achieving its intended purpose of preserving farmland, even though farming may continue before the land is developed. It has also been argued that the use value assessment of such land inappropriately shifts the property tax burden from real estate developers to other taxpayers. At the request of the co-chairs of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, we conducted a limited-scope review that focused on agricultural land in 14 municipalities chosen for geographic diversity and variation in population density and development. For each municipality chosen, we reviewed:

- the characteristics of its agricultural land, including changes in the number of acres classified and assessed as agricultural, as well as the property taxes assessed on, and ownership of, agricultural land;

- the extent to which the agricultural land was zoned for non-agricultural purposes; and

- the amount by which property taxes on agricultural land zoned for non-agricultural purposes would likely differ if the land were assessed at its market value.

In addition, we interviewed local assessors in our sample municipalities; officials in the Department of Revenue (DOR) and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; and representatives of municipal associations and trade groups. We also analyzed statewide data on agricultural acreage, including sales data maintained by the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service, which is part of the United States Department of Agriculture, as well as data maintained by the Department of Financial Institutions related to ownership of agricultural land.

Wisconsin's Use Value Assessment Law

A 1974 amendment to Article VIII, Section 1 of the Wisconsin Constitution, also known as the uniformity clause, permits agricultural land to be assessed differently than other types of land for the purposes of property taxation. 1995 Wisconsin Act 27:

- allows agricultural land to be assessed based on its use value;
- redefined agricultural land as land devoted primarily to agricultural use;
- created a new class of property—"other"—that includes agricultural buildings and improvements located on agricultural land but not subject to use valuation;
- directed DOR to annually develop per acre use value guidelines for each municipality;
- created the Farmland Advisory Council, chaired by the Secretary of DOR and including eight other individuals, to advise DOR on use valuation issues; and
- recommended a penalty for owners of agricultural land who convert the land to certain other uses, based on the number of acres converted.

Under ch. Tax 18, Wis. Adm. Code:

- agricultural use is further defined to include crop and animal production; pasture; Christmas trees and ginseng; land enrolled in certain federal agricultural programs; and agricultural land subject to an easement under certain conservation programs; and
- local assessors are responsible for determining whether land is engaged in one of the qualifying uses and for classifying such land as agricultural. Local assessors may be municipal employees or contractors.

More recently, 2009 Wisconsin Act 401 modified the definition of agricultural use to include the growing of short rotation woody crops, including poplars and willows, using agronomic practices.

To help municipalities manage the transition to reduced property tax revenues derived from their agricultural land, Act 27 froze the assessed value of agricultural land at 1995 levels for 1996 and 1997 and established a ten-year implementation period. However, in response to the economic pressures faced by farmers when milk prices reached a record low in 1999, DOR fully implemented use valuation on January 1, 2000, by emergency rule.

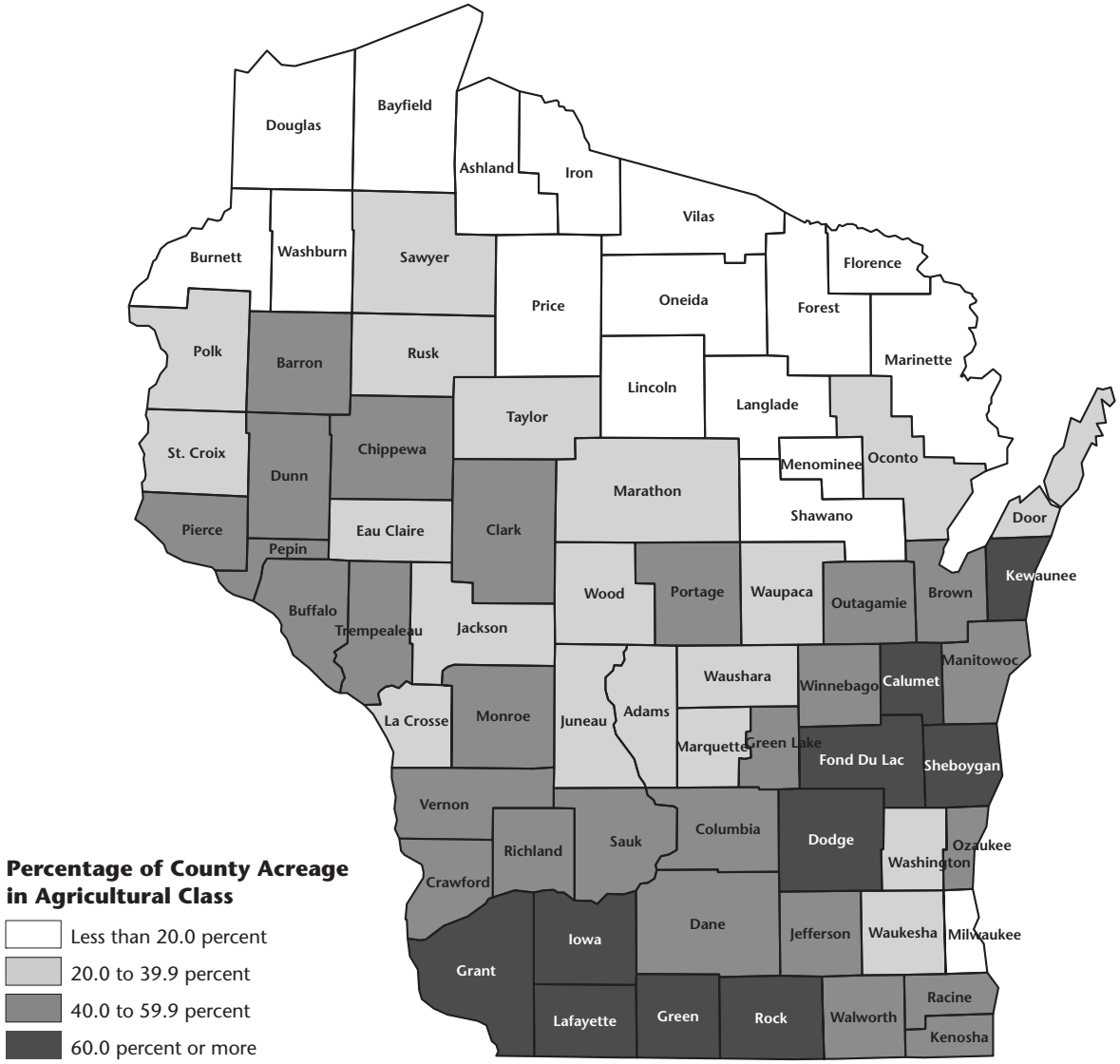
Both the constitutionality of use value assessment and its early implementation faced legal challenges. In 1997, a coalition of urban mayors, the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, and the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities argued that use value assessment was unconstitutional because it placed an unfair tax burden on urban taxpayers. However, the law was upheld in both Dane County Circuit Court and the Wisconsin District IV Court of Appeals. In February 2000, a second suit challenged DOR's accelerated implementation, arguing that the legislation required implementation over the full ten-year period included in Act 27. The Wisconsin Supreme Court upheld the accelerated implementation in June 2002. Appendix 1 shows key dates in the history of Wisconsin's use value law.

Acreage and Location of Agricultural Land

In 2008, 12.2 million acres, or 35.0 percent of all acreage in Wisconsin, was assessed as agricultural land. Figure 1 shows the percentage of agricultural land in each county. Counties in southwestern and east-central Wisconsin have the largest percentage of agricultural land, while northern Wisconsin and Milwaukee County have the smallest. The percentage of agricultural land varies in the more densely populated counties where larger cities are located. For example, 55.2 percent of the acres in Dane County were assessed as agricultural in 2008, compared to 21.2 percent of the acres in Waukesha County.

Figure 1

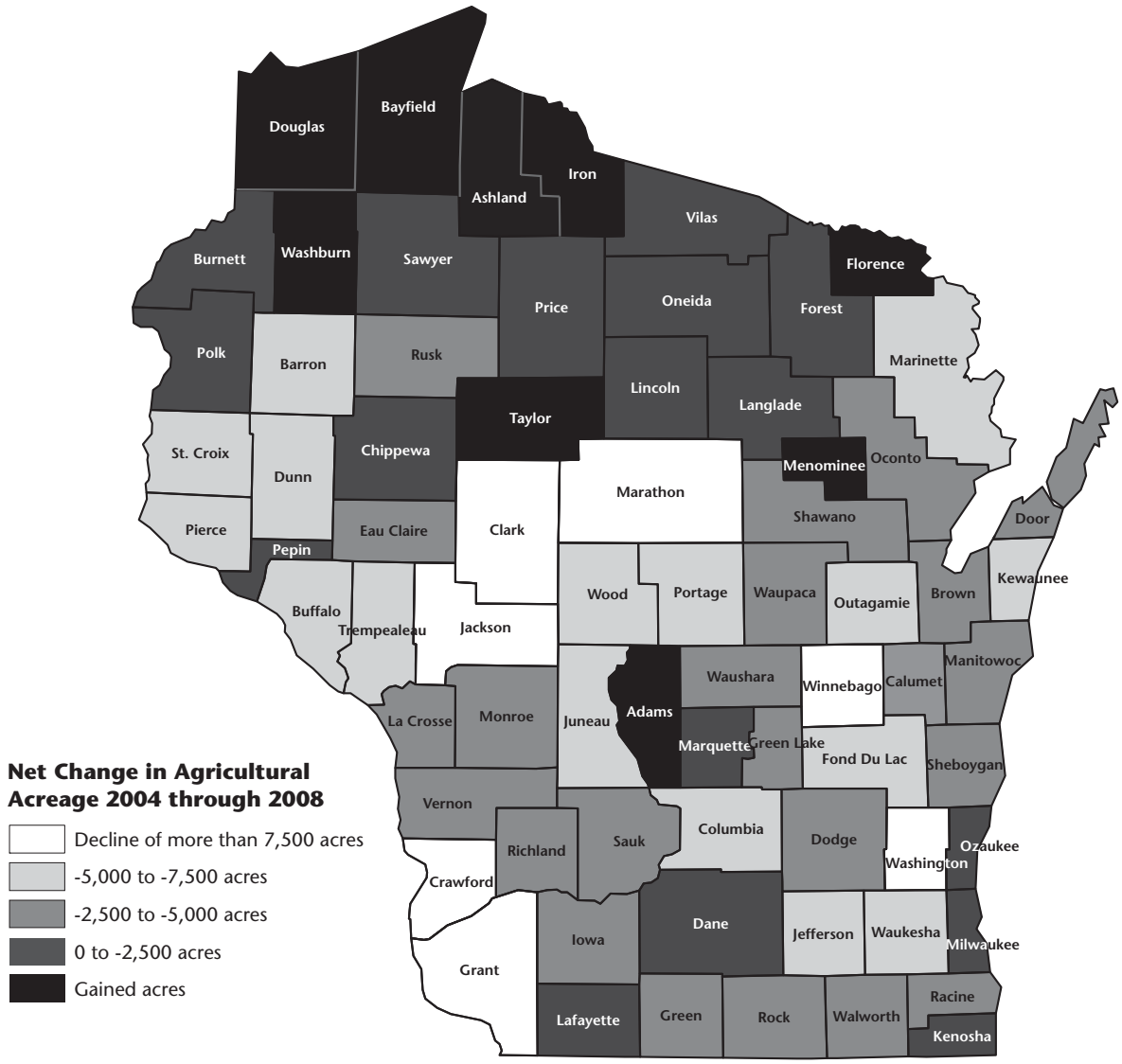
Percentage of County Acreage Classified and Assessed as Agricultural
2008



As shown in Figure 2, the number of acres assessed as agricultural declined in 63 Wisconsin counties from 2004 through 2008 but increased in nine primarily northern counties. Declines exceeded 15,000 acres in each of two geographically large counties—Marathon and Grant—and exceeded 7,500 acres in five others. Appendix 2 shows the number and percentage of acres assessed as agricultural by county in 2004 and 2008.

Figure 2

Net Change in Agricultural Acreage
2004 through 2008



Statewide, agricultural acreage declined by 2.2 percent, or 269,374 acres, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Changes in Agricultural Acreage by Assessing Municipality Type[1]

Assessing Municipality	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Percentage Change 2004-2008
Village	157,115	155,892	161,586	162,215	169,077	7.6%
City	95,483	97,283	96,778	95,765	96,183	0.7
Town	12,199,414	12,107,253	12,015,894	11,965,723	11,917,378	(2.3)
Statewide	**12,452,012**	**12,360,428**	**12,274,258**	**12,223,703**	**12,182,638**	(2.2)

[1] Based on information reported by local assessors to the Department of Revenue.

Some changes in agricultural acreage may reflect shifts in acreage between municipalities, while others may reflect changes in land use. For example, one municipality may lose agricultural acreage when a portion of its land is annexed into a neighboring municipality; however, unless the annexed land is no longer used for agricultural purposes, the annexing municipality will then gain the agricultural acreage. In contrast, agricultural acreage will be lost when agricultural land is sold and converted to another use. As shown in Table 2, buyers reported that 125,894 of the 741,157 agricultural acres sold from 2004 though 2008, or 17.0 percent, were purchased with the intent to convert the land to non-agricultural uses, including commercial, residential, or industrial development or use as recreational and forest land.

Table 2

Agricultural Land Sales by Intended Use[1]
in Acres

Intended Use	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Agricultural	153,685	126,377	106,421	103,673	125,107	615,263
Non-Agricultural	44,403	33,808	23,969	15,228	8,486	125,894
Total	**198,088**	**160,185**	**130,390**	**118,901**	**133,593**	**741,157**

[1] Source: Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

Property Tax Trends

To analyze the effect of use value assessment on the eight property tax classes specified in s. 70.32(2)(a), Wis. Stats., we reviewed property tax levies. As shown in Table 3, the tax levy net

of state property tax credits increased by 65.8 percent statewide from 1995 through 2008, when it reached $8.7 billion. In contrast, the levy on the combined agricultural and "other" property classes was reduced by 39.0 percent, from $352.8 million in 1995 to $215.3 million in 2008. Because agricultural buildings and improvements were removed from the agricultural class beginning in 1996 and reclassified as "other," the agricultural and "other" property classes are combined when comparing values from 1995 through 2008. We note that in 2008, DOR reported that approximately 83 percent of the gross tax levy in the combined classes had been generated by the "other" class, and the remaining 17 percent by the agricultural class. We also note that since 2004, property in the undeveloped and newly created agricultural forest classes has been assessed at 50 percent of its market value, which may also have contributed to changes in agricultural acreage in some communities.

Table 3

Net Tax Levy by Property Class[1]
(in millions)

Property Class	1995	2000	2005	2008	Percentage Change
Real Property:					
Residential	$3,370.5	$4,079.3	$5,465.0	$6,145.3	82.3%
Commercial	1,023.6	1,166.5	1,478.2	1,715.9	67.6
Manufacturing	196.8	227.9	234.9	243.1	23.5
Agricultural/Other	352.8	255.2	208.1	215.3	(39.0)[2]
Agricultural Forest/ Productive Forest/ Undeveloped	59.3	105.6	150.6	181.8	206.6[3]
Subtotal	5,003.0	5,834.5	7,536.8	8,501.4	69.9
Personal Property	264.6	212.2	203.1	229.7	(13.2)
Total	**$5,267.6**	**$6,046.7**	**$7,739.9**	**$8,731.1**	65.8

[1] The net tax levy reflects the gross tax levy minus applicable lottery and school tax credits and, beginning in 2008, the First Dollar tax credit.

[2] This decrease reflects the change in valuation of agricultural land from full market value to use value.

[3] Some land in the agricultural forest classification may have been classified as agricultural prior to the creation of the agricultural forest class.

Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau.

Table 4 shows the proportion of the net tax levy paid by each property tax class. Since 1995, the declining proportion of property taxes paid by the agricultural class has been offset by increasing proportions in the remaining classes.

Table 4

Percentage of Net Tax Levy by Property Class

Property Class	1995	2000	2005	2008
Real Property:				
Residential	64.0%	67.5%	70.6%	70.4%
Commercial	19.4	19.3	19.1	19.6
Manufacturing	3.7	3.7	3.0	2.8
Agricultural/Other	6.7	4.2	2.7	2.5
Agricultural Forest/ Productive Forest/ Undeveloped	1.1	1.7	1.9	2.1
Subtotal	94.9	96.4	97.3	97.4
Personal Property	5.1	3.6	2.7	2.6
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

[1] The net tax levy reflects the gross tax levy minus applicable lottery and school tax credits and, beginning in 2008, the First Dollar tax credit.

Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau.

Use Value Assessment in 14 Municipalities

As noted, we focused our analysis on the implementation of use value assessment in 14 municipalities chosen for their geographic diversity and variation in population density and development. As part of our review, we interviewed assessors to determine their procedures for classifying and assessing agricultural land. We also obtained data from each assessor on the number and characteristics of agricultural parcels in their municipalities, including each parcel's ownership, zoning, and size.

Section Tax 18.06(1), Wis. Adm. Code, requires assessors to determine whether land classified as agricultural is devoted primarily to agricultural use. How that determination is made varied among the assessors we interviewed. For example:

- 10 assessors reported that they regularly conduct on-site inspections of agricultural land to determine its current class, with frequencies ranging from one to four times per year;

- 9 assessors reported that they regularly use aerial photographs to identify agricultural land, although several assessors noted that the photographs may be outdated and therefore less useful than other methods;

- 7 assessors reported that they regularly speak with agricultural property owners to obtain information about land use; and

- 5 assessors reported that they regularly request documentation from property owners including lease agreements and copies of Internal Revenue Service Form 1040 (Schedule F), which reports profit or loss from farming, or use information from property owners on a form developed by DOR in October 2009 to assist them in making classification decisions.

In 2009, the percentage of acres assessed as agricultural in the 14 municipalities we reviewed ranged from a low of 1.2 percent in the City of Brookfield to a high of 72.3 percent in the Town of Akan, as shown in Table 5. Appendix 3 includes more detailed information for each of the 14 municipalities.

Table 5

Agricultural Acreage in Selected Municipalities
2009

Municipality	Type	County	Agricultural Acres	Total Assessed Acres	Percentage of Total
Akan	Town	Richland	13,039.1	18,032.0	72.3%
Appleton	City	Calumet, Outagamie, and Winnebago	1,042.3	10,156.0	10.3
Brookfield[1]	City	Waukesha	208.6	17,655.0	1.2
Eau Claire[1]	City	Chippewa and Eau Claire	387.4	10,197.0	3.8
Germantown	Village	Washington	6,312.7	17,622.0	35.8
Middleton	City	Dane	114.7	2,680.0	4.3
Onalaska	City	La Crosse	282.7	4,114.0	6.9
Perry	Town	Dane	15,646.0	21,799.0	71.8
Platteville[1]	City	Grant	619.4	2,688.0	23.0
Rice Lake	City	Barron	452.1	2,772.0	16.3
Sturtevant	Village	Racine	642.7	1,921.0	33.5
Sun Prairie	City	Dane	808.8	4,434.0	18.2
Twin Lakes	Village	Kenosha	2,426.9	4,667.0	52.0
Wausau	City	Marathon	110.7	7,184.0	1.5

[1] Total assessed acres and agricultural acres as a percentage of total assessed acres are estimates based on information we obtained from the local assessor and the municipality's total land area.

Agricultural Land Ownership

In order to review how municipalities are implementing the use value law and whether it is operating as intended, we first obtained information on the parcels that make up the 42,094.1 agricultural acres within our sample municipalities, including the names of their owners. We found:

- limited liability partnerships and individuals owned approximately 74 percent of the agricultural acreage;

- corporations, including non-profit and limited liability corporations (LLCs), owned approximately 19 percent of the agricultural acreage; and

- the balance of the agricultural acreage, about 7 percent, was held in trusts.

Because corporations and LLCs are statutorily required to file annual reports with the Department of Financial Institutions indicating the nature of their business, we asked for the Department's assistance in obtaining additional ownership information for agricultural acreage. We then determined whether any agricultural acreage in our sample municipalities was owned by corporations or LLCs self-reporting as real estate or property development businesses, which may indicate a greater likelihood for the land to eventually be sold or developed.

The percentage of agricultural land owned by real estate or property development businesses varied by municipality but was often higher in urban areas. As shown in Table 6, it ranged from 0.7 percent in the Town of Akan to 55.4 percent in the City of Sun Prairie. However, these percentages are likely understated because they do not include corporations or LLCs that reported the nature of their business as both agriculture and real estate or property development. In addition, the data included only corporations and LLCs, but other entities and individuals could also own agricultural land with the intention of developing or selling it for other uses.

Table 6

Agricultural Land Owned by Real Estate or Property Development Businesses[1]
Selected Municipalities, 2009

Municipality	Agricultural Acres	Acres Owned by Real Estate or Property Development Businesses	Percentage of Total
Akan	13,039.1	87.6	0.7%
Appleton	1,042.3	523.0	50.2
Brookfield	208.6	42.1	20.2
Eau Claire	387.4	108.8	28.1
Germantown	6,312.7	973.5	15.4
Middleton	114.7	54.5	47.5
Onalaska	282.7	6.0	2.1
Perry	15,646.0	998.5	6.4
Platteville	619.4	203.5	32.9
Rice Lake	452.1	48.7	10.8
Sturtevant	642.7	10.6	1.6
Sun Prairie	808.8	448.0	55.4
Twin Lakes	2,426.9	244.5	10.1
Wausau	110.7	51.2	46.3
Total	**42,094.1**	**3,800.5**	9.0

[1] Based on information contained in statutorily required annual reports filed with the Department of Financial Institutions as of March 2010.

Agricultural Land Zoning

Land classification for assessment purposes is established by state law, but zoning to regulate land use is established by county and municipal ordinances. Because its primary purpose is to reflect local land use preferences, zoning helps to indicate what types of future development are appropriate by local standards. State law does not limit eligibility for use value assessment based on zoning, and all land classified as agricultural is assessed at its use value, as required by s. 70.32, Wis. Stats., regardless of how it is zoned.

Zoning ordinances vary widely among Wisconsin counties and municipalities, and in some cases local zoning categories do not correspond directly with the land classes specified in statute for assessment purposes. For example, 3 municipalities in our review had zoning categories that combine or mix commercial and industrial or residential uses; 10 had conservancy zones, which are intended to preserve natural areas; 11 had "planned development" zones; and 4—all cities—had no agricultural zones, although 3 of these cities permit agricultural production in residential zones.

Land that is classified as agricultural for assessment purposes may be zoned for non-agricultural purposes for a number of reasons. First, statutes protect the continued use of a property when a new zoning ordinance is passed. For example, if an agricultural parcel located near a new highway bypass is rezoned for commercial use, agricultural production will remain a legally protected non-conforming use, and the land will continue to qualify for use value assessment. Second, agricultural land may be zoned for a non-agricultural purpose if it is annexed by a neighboring municipality. For example, the City of Eau Claire zones all land annexed into its boundaries as non-agricultural, regardless of its previous zoning and use. Finally, individuals, real estate and property developers, and other businesses may own land zoned for future development but may, for example, rent the land to farmers for agricultural production until the development precludes agricultural use.

Because zoning for a non-agricultural purpose may indicate that the market value of an agricultural parcel exceeds its use value for tax assessment purposes, we reviewed the zoning of agricultural acres in our 14 selected municipalities. In 9 of these municipalities, more than 50.0 percent of agricultural land was zoned for a purpose other than agriculture, while two rural municipalities had only 1.0 percent zoned in this manner. As shown in Table 7, all 14 municipalities had some agricultural land zoned for non-agricultural purposes.

Table 7

Zoning of Agricultural Acres
Selected Municipalities, 2009

Municipality	Total Agricultural Acres	Acres Zoned for Agriculture		Acres Zoned for Non-Agricultural Purposes	
		Number	Percentage of Total	Number	Percentage of Total[1]
Municipalities with Agricultural Zoning					
Akan	13,039.1	12,905.3	99.0%	133.8	1.0%
Appleton	1,042.3	918.7	88.1	123.6	11.9
Germantown	6,312.7	5,810.3	92.0	502.4	8.0
Middleton	**114.7**	**45.1**	**39.3**	**69.6**	**60.7**
Onalaska	**282.7**	**53.5**	**18.9**	**229.2**	**81.1**
Perry	15,646.0	15,487.0	99.0	159.0	1.0
Rice Lake	**452.1**	**80.4**	**17.8**	**371.7**	**82.2**
Sturtevant	**642.7**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**642.7**	**100.0**
Sun Prairie	808.8	433.9	53.6	374.9	46.4
Twin Lakes	**2,426.9**	**5.1**	**0.2**	**2,421.8**	**99.8**
Municipalities without Agricultural Zoning					
Brookfield	**208.6**	**N.A.**	**N.A.**	**208.6**	**100.0**
Eau Claire	**387.4**	**N.A.**	**N.A.**	**387.4**	**100.0**
Platteville	**619.4**	**N.A.**	**N.A.**	**619.4**	**100.0**
Wausau	**110.7**	**N.A.**	**N.A.**	**110.7**	**100.0**

[1] Highlighted municipalities are those in which more than 50.0 percent of agricultural acreage is zoned for a non-agricultural purpose.

Agricultural Land Platting

Platting is another indicator that a property is intended for development. Some believe that owners of agricultural land that has already been platted for development are inappropriately benefitting from use value assessment. Chapter 236, Wis. Stats., defines a plat as the planned subdivision of land into parcels of 1.5 acres or less and specifies the units of government that must approve a plat before land may be legally subdivided and developed. Depending on the location and characteristics of a proposed development, review and approval may be required from the village or town board, the city council, a nearby city, the county, the Department of Administration, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Transportation. Local ordinances may establish more restrictive platting requirements than those set forth in statute.

Comprehensive, uniform information regarding agricultural parcels that have been platted was not readily available for all of the municipalities included in our review, but assessors in 9 of the 14 municipalities were able to provide us with limited platting data. In four of those municipalities, no agricultural parcels had been platted; in the remaining five, the percentages ranged from 13.5 percent of all agricultural parcels in Appleton to 91.8 percent of all agricultural parcels in Middleton. Moreover, municipal services such as streets, water, and sewer connections had already been extended to 9 of the platted agricultural parcels in Eau Claire and 222 of the platted agricultural parcels in Twin Lakes.

We also analyzed the size of agricultural parcels within each municipality. The average size of agricultural parcels in the 14 municipalities we reviewed ranged from 1.3 acres in Middleton to 29.2 acres in Sturtevant. Based on the statutory definition of platting and information provided by local assessors, agricultural parcels of 1.5 acres or less have generally been platted for development, while parcels 10.0 acres and larger generally have not. As shown in Table 8, more than 80.0 percent of the agricultural parcels in Sun Prairie, Middleton, and Twin Lakes were 1.5 acres or smaller; conversely, in Akan, Perry, and Sturtevant, more than 70.0 percent of the agricultural parcels were 10.0 acres or larger.

Table 8

Size of Agricultural Parcels
Selected Municipalities, 2009

Municipality	Total Parcels	1.5 Acres or Less		10.0 Acres or More	
		Number	Percentage of Total	Number	Percentage of Total
Akan	609	26	4.3%	440	72.2%
Appleton	37	2	5.4	21	56.8
Brookfield	19	3	15.8	8	42.1
Eau Claire	27	13	48.1	6	22.2
Germantown	422	30	7.1	263	62.3
Middleton	85	73	85.9	4	4.7
Onalaska	19	3	15.8	10	52.6
Perry	728	31	4.3	555	76.2
Platteville	79	26	32.9	23	29.1
Rice Lake	26	2	7.7	17	65.4
Sturtevant	22	0	0.0	20	90.9
Sun Prairie	439	393	89.5	25	5.7
Twin Lakes	512	413	80.7	39	7.6
Wausau	9	0	0.0	5	55.6
Total	**3,033**	**1,015**	33.5	**1,436**	47.3

Estimated Effects of Use Value Assessment on Property Taxes

To analyze the effects of use value assessment on the property tax bills of agricultural and other landowners, we estimated the amount by which 2009 assessments and property taxes would have differed in our sample of 14 municipalities if agricultural land zoned for a non-agricultural purpose had been assessed according to its estimated market value.

Property tax liability is calculated by multiplying a property's assessed value by the property tax rate of the municipality in which it is located. A municipality's property tax rate is determined by dividing the tax levy, which is the total revenue that must be generated to cover budgeted costs, by the total assessed value of all taxable property in the municipality. Assuming all other factors affecting the tax levy remain constant, the property tax rate will decrease as the total value of taxable property within a municipality increases. Conversely, if the taxable value of one class of property is reduced—as occurs under use value assessment for agricultural land—a higher property tax rate will result because the total assessed value of all taxable property in the municipality has been reduced.

As shown in Table 9, the difference between market and use value for the agricultural land zoned for non-agricultural purposes in the 14 municipalities we reviewed was an estimated $250.2 million in 2009. Differences ranged from $336,300 in rural Akan to $54.3 million in Twin Lakes, a village located near urban areas.

Table 9

Estimated Value of Agricultural Land Zoned for Non-Agricultural Purposes
Selected Municipalities, 2009

Municipality	Agricultural Acres Zoned for Non-Agricultural Purposes	Assessed Use Value	Estimated Market Value[1]	Difference
Akan	133.8	$ 25,100	$ 361,400	$ 336,300
Appleton	123.6	24,100	5,291,900	5,267,800
Brookfield	208.6	62,800	28,285,300	28,222,500
Eau Claire	387.4	85,800	8,762,800	8,677,000
Germantown	502.4	133,100	42,609,800	42,476,700
Middleton	69.6	20,000	27,427,100	27,407,100
Onalaska	229.2	49,900	2,581,700	2,531,800
Perry	159.0	32,700	1,881,200	1,848,500
Platteville	619.4	178,600	12,952,000	12,773,400
Rice Lake	371.7	76,200	17,989,800	17,913,600
Sturtevant	642.7	133,400	24,102,000	23,968,600
Sun Prairie	374.9	127,800	23,021,200	22,893,400
Twin Lakes	2,421.8	628,600	54,951,300	54,322,700
Wausau	110.7	21,300	1,533,600	1,512,300
Total	**6,354.8**	**$1,599,400**	**$251,751,100**	**$250,151,700**

[1] Estimates were determined with the assistance of the local assessor in each municipality and do not reflect the full assessment process, which may include an appeal before a board of review or a challenge in circuit court.

As shown in Table 10, if agricultural land zoned for non-agricultural purposes had been assessed at market value in 2009, agricultural landowners in the 14 municipalities we selected would have been liable for an additional $4.7 million in property taxes, and the property tax liability of all other property owners would have been reduced by that amount. However, the estimates in Table 10 reflect specific conditions of each of the municipalities in 2009 and assume no change in either the tax levy and its apportionment or in the distribution of school aids. Moreover, they cannot be extrapolated to other municipalities or statewide, nor can they be projected for the future in the 14 municipalities.

Table 10

Estimated Property Taxes on Agricultural Land Zoned for Non-Agricultural Purposes
Selected Municipalities, 2009

Municipality	Total Estimated Taxes—Use Value Assessment	Total Estimated Taxes—Market Value Assessment	Difference
Akan	$ 500	$ 7,400	$ 6,900
Appleton	500	111,400	110,900
Brookfield	1,100	474,600	473,500
Eau Claire	1,700	176,500	174,800
Germantown	2,300	737,700	735,400
Middleton	400	499,200	498,800
Onalaska	1,000	49,800	48,800
Perry	500	26,900	26,400
Platteville	4,000	286,300	282,300
Rice Lake	1,900	437,400	435,500
Sturtevant	2,600	451,500	448,900
Sun Prairie	2,800	506,700	503,900
Twin Lakes	11,400	923,100	911,700
Wausau	500	36,400	35,900
Total	**$31,200**	**$4,724,900**	**$4,693,700**

Keeping these constraints in mind, estimated effects on local property taxes were greater when a larger relative proportion of the property tax base qualified for use value assessment and the market and use values of qualifying land differed significantly, as was common in urbanizing areas. For example, the property tax effects of use value assessment were greater in Germantown, which is an urbanizing municipality near Milwaukee, than in Onalaska, where the difference between the use value and the market value of agricultural land was not as great.

As shown in Table 11, we estimated that the average property tax bill for an agricultural parcel zoned for non-agricultural purposes would have been $3,516 higher in 2009 if the land had been assessed at its market value. Conversely, the average property tax bill for all other parcels would have been $38 lower, in part because of the large number of non-agricultural properties.

Table 11

Estimated Effects of Use Value Assessment on Average Property Tax Bills in Selected Municipalities
2009

Municipality	Agricultural Land Zoned for Non-Agricultural Purposes			All Other Land		
	Estimated Taxes—Use Value Assessment	Estimated Taxes—Market Value Assessment	Difference	Estimated Taxes—Use Value Assessment	Estimated Taxes—Market Value Assessment	Difference
Akan	$37	$ 526	$ 489	$ 443	$ 438	$ (5)
Appleton	37	7,958	7,921	3,966	3,961	(5)
Brookfield	56	24,977	24,921	7,492	7,460	(32)
Eau Claire	64	6,538	6,474	3,883	3,875	(8)
Germantown	29	9,107	9,078	4,873	4,789	(84)
Middleton	5	6,163	6,158	7,642	7,564	(78)
Onalaska	60	2,931	2,871	4,942	4,934	(8)
Perry	25	1,414	1,389	630	616	(14)
Platteville	51	3,624	3,573	4,225	4,131	(94)
Rice Lake	83	19,018	18,935	3,859	3,737	(122)
Sturtevant	119	20,522	20,403	4,564	4,368	(196)
Sun Prairie	7	1,209	1,202	5,300	5,252	(48)
Twin Lakes	22	1,807	1,785	4,133	3,882	(251)
Wausau	57	4,048	3,991	4,357	4,355	(2)
14-Municipality Average	$23	$3,539	$3,516	$4,748	$4,710	$(38)

Future Considerations

Our review of 14 municipalities suggests that use value assessment has met its goal of significantly reducing property taxes levied on agricultural land. However, the extent to which it has met other goals is less clear. Recent Wisconsin legislation—known as the Working Lands Initiative—and use value assessment programs in other states may be useful models if the Legislature wishes to consider modifications to Wisconsin's use value law.

Working Lands Initiative

The Working Lands Initiative, enacted in 2009 Wisconsin Act 28, the 2009-11 Biennial Budget Act, was designed to provide a framework for state and local units of government and private

landowners to promote agriculture and minimize land use conflicts. Under the initiative, counties are required to adopt farmland preservation plans that specify areas they plan to preserve for agricultural use. Landowners in those preservation areas who meet other eligibility requirements may qualify for farmland preservation income tax credits, and local entities—such as municipal governments and non-profit organizations—may purchase agricultural easements from willing landowners in order to preserve qualifying land for agricultural use. Purchasers receive reimbursements of up to 50.0 percent of the easement's fair market value from the State.

In adopting the Working Lands Initiative, the Legislature restricted eligibility for farmland preservation income tax credits, which range from $5.00 to $10.00 per acre, to land that is located in either a locally established farmland preservation zoning district or a state-designated agricultural enterprise area. The Legislature also chose to remove a minimum parcel size requirement of 35.0 acres that had previously been in place for farmland preservation tax credits. However, the Working Lands Initiative continues the requirement that eligibility for farmland preservation credits be limited to those who generated—exclusive of receipts from land rental—gross farm revenue in excess of $6,000 in the past year, or $18,000 in the past three years.

It is too early to determine what effect the Working Lands Initiative will have on farmland preservation. In the short term, however, the eligibility requirements for farmland preservation tax credits are more restrictive than those for use value assessment, which require only that land be devoted primarily to agricultural use.

Other States' Practices

With the exception of Michigan, all 50 states have some form of use value assessment that allows agricultural land to be assessed based on its ability to produce farm income. Michigan allows farmers to claim state income tax credits to offset their property tax bills. Other states have implemented a variety of eligibility requirements for use value assessment, including those related to parcel size, income generated from agricultural production, prior years in agricultural use, and zoning categories.

We analyzed the characteristics of use value assessment programs in a sample of six other states, including five midwestern states and Maryland, which was the first state to pass use value legislation in 1956. As shown in Table 12, four of the states in our review—Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, and Ohio—had more restrictive use value laws than Wisconsin did in 2009, while two—Indiana and Iowa—did not.

Table 12

Characteristics of Use Value Assessment Programs in Selected States
2009

State	Year Use Value Assessment Was Passed	Application Required	Minimum Parcel Size Required	Years in Agricultural Production before Eligible for Use Value Assessment	Zoning Restrictions	Ownership Restrictions	Land Use Conversion Penalty
Illinois	1977			■			
Indiana	1963						
Iowa	1967						
Maryland	1956	■	■		■	■	■
Minnesota	1967	■	■			■	■
Ohio	1974	■	■	■			■
Wisconsin	1995						■

One of the most common requirements among the six other states concerns parcel size. In Minnesota and Ohio, the minimum parcel size for use value assessment is 10.0 acres, while in Maryland the minimum is 3.0 acres. However, in all three of these states, parcels of less than the minimum size may still qualify if they meet other criteria, such as a minimum amount of income generated by agricultural production.

The six other states' practices to limit eligibility for use value assessment vary. For example, Illinois requires that land be in agricultural production for two years before it is eligible for use valuation, and Ohio requires three years. Minnesota restricts eligibility for use value assessment based on the type of entity owning the land. In Maryland, land rezoned at the request of the owner for a more intensive use, such as residential or commercial development, is no longer eligible for use value assessment; however, if rezoning occurs at the initiative of a county, eligibility for use value assessment continues until the allowed development occurs. Maryland also limits the number of parcels a landowner may have enrolled in its use value assessment program to a maximum of five parcels that are less than 10.0 acres each.

Two states in our review have recently considered or enacted legislation to further restrict eligibility for use value assessment. In 2008, the Minnesota Legislature enacted legislation excluding vacant agricultural land from use valuation and requiring that land be in agricultural production in order to qualify. The Iowa Senate considered, but did not pass, a bill that would have required a parcel with a home site to be at least 10.0 acres in size or to generate an average annual income of $2,000 from agricultural production in order to qualify for use value assessment.

Wisconsin has considered, but not implemented, use value requirements similar to those of some other states. For example:

- in October 1993, as directed by the Legislature, DOR conducted a feasibility study and recommended the Legislature adopt use value assessment with a minimum parcel size requirement of 35.0 acres;

- in November 1995, during the administrative rule-making process, DOR proposed a minimum parcel size of 1.0 acre, as well as a rule requiring that a parcel be used for agricultural production for a minimum of three years before it would become eligible for use value assessment;

- during the 2001-03 biennium, the Senate approved modifying the definition of agricultural land to include only land from which $3,500 or more in agricultural products were sold or would normally be sold during the year; and

- during the two most recent biennia—2007-09 and 2009-11—the Legislature considered requirements related to zoning and platting. An amendment to 2007 Senate Bill 40 would have excluded land platted and zoned for residential, commercial, or industrial use from qualifying for use value assessment, and the Senate approved language in the 2009-11 biennial budget bill that would have excluded land platted or zoned for residential, commercial, or industrial use from qualifying for use value assessment. However, that language was not approved by the Assembly or by the Committee of Conference on Assembly Bill 75.

Although the Working Lands Initiative and the experiences of other states could serve as useful models for discussing use value assessment in Wisconsin, modifying the use value law could present challenges. For example, because zoning categories are not consistent statewide, and some municipalities have mixed zoning districts while others have no zoning, modifying the definition of agricultural use based on locally established zoning categories would likely be difficult to implement and could result in inconsistent application of a modified use value law. Similarly, if the Legislature were to implement a minimum parcel size requirement, the possibility exists that farmers who produce low-volume, high-value crops—such as ginseng—on small acreage farms would be excluded, which has been a concern raised by some interest groups.

Finally, some interest groups expressed concern to us that any modifications to the definition of agricultural use could open the door for legal challenges regarding the Wisconsin Constitution's uniformity clause. As noted, a 1974 amendment permits agricultural land to be treated differently from other types of land for the purposes of property taxation. However, the interest groups argued that the implementation of additional eligibility requirements—such as zoning, minimum parcel size, or minimum farm revenue—could conflict with rulings by the Wisconsin Supreme Court that all land within the agricultural class must be taxed uniformly, as is currently the case.

On the other hand, modifications to Wisconsin's use value law could also address the alleged loopholes. For example, restricting eligibility for use value assessment based on ownership, parcel size, income generated from agricultural production, or other characteristics could help ensure that property tax benefits of the use value assessment are being directed solely to farmers.

■ ■ ■ ■

Appendix 1

Key Legislative and Judicial Actions Related to Use Value Assessment

Year	Action	Description
1974	Constitutional Amendment to Article VIII, Section 1, Uniformity Clause	▪ Allowed non-uniform taxation of agricultural and undeveloped land.
1993	1993 Senate Bill 44	▪ Senate attempted to introduce use value assessment for agricultural land.
1993	1993 Wisconsin Act 16, the 1993-95 Biennial Budget Act	▪ Directed DOR to study use value assessment. DOR recommended the Legislature adopt use value assessment with a minimum parcel size of 35 acres.
1995	1995 Senate Bill 104/ 1995 Assembly Bill 176	▪ Proposed use value assessment for agricultural land, with agricultural land defined through a cross-reference to the farmland preservation statute.
1995	1995 Wisconsin Act 27, the 1995-97 Biennial Budget Act	▪ Redefined the agricultural class of land and created a new class of land, "other," that includes agricultural buildings and improvements. ▪ Provided for use value assessment of agricultural land, to be implemented over ten years. ▪ Created the Farmland Advisory Council to advise DOR on use value assessment and recommend a penalty for conversion of agricultural land to other uses.
1999	Wisconsin Appellate Court Decision	▪ Court of Appeals upheld the constitutionality of use value assessment.
1999	1999 Wisconsin Act 9, the 1999-2001 Biennial Budget Act	▪ Established a conversion penalty, equal to the difference between taxes paid under market valuation and use valuation for the previous two years and payable by owners of converted parcels.
1999	Emergency Rule to amend Chapter Tax 18, Wis. Adm. Code	▪ Suspended the ten-year phase-in process and implemented full use value assessment effective January 1, 2000.
2002	Senate version of the budget adjustment bill, which became 2001 Wisconsin Act 109	▪ Senate approved modifying the definition of agricultural land to include only land from which $3,500 or more in agricultural products were sold or would normally be sold during the year.
2002	2001 Wisconsin Act 109	▪ Changed the conversion penalty to a per acre amount calculated by DOR for each county.
2002	Wisconsin Supreme Court Decision	▪ Upheld early implementation of use value assessment.
2003	2003 Wisconsin Act 33, the 2003-05 Biennial Budget Act	▪ Redefined classes of property to include agricultural forest land, which is taxed at 50 percent of market value.
2007	Amendment to 2007 Senate Bill 40	▪ Proposed modifying the definition of agricultural land to exclude land platted ***and*** zoned for residential, commercial, or industrial use.
2008	2007 Wisconsin Act 210	▪ Renamed the penalty for converting agricultural land to another use to a "conversion charge."
2009	Senate version of the 2009-11 biennial budget	▪ Senate approved modifying the definition of agricultural land to exclude land platted ***or*** zoned for residential, commercial, or industrial use.
2010	2009 Wisconsin Act 401	▪ Modified the definition of agricultural use to include the growing of short rotation woody crops using agronomic practices.

Appendix 2

Agricultural Acres by County

Counties	2004 Acres	2004 Percentage of Total	2008 Acres	2008 Percentage of Total	Change from 2004 through 2008 Acres	Change from 2004 through 2008 Percentage
Adams	100,088	24.1%	100,345	24.2%	257	0.3%
Ashland	34,040	5.1	35,353	5.3	1,313	3.9
Barron	267,239	48.4	260,524	47.2	(6,715)	(2.5)
Bayfield	76,562	8.1	78,198	8.3	1,636	2.1
Brown	174,516	51.6	170,056	50.3	(4,460)	(2.6)
Buffalo	219,681	50.1	213,357	48.7	(6,324)	(2.9)
Burnett	63,518	12.1	62,307	11.9	(1,211)	(1.9)
Calumet	137,587	67.2	133,993	65.5	(3,594)	(2.6)
Chippewa	293,662	45.4	292,050	45.2	(1,612)	(0.5)
Clark	371,869	47.8	362,368	46.6	(9,501)	(2.6)
Columbia	271,726	54.9	264,462	53.4	(7,264)	(2.7)
Crawford	206,735	56.4	199,073	54.3	(7,662)	(3.7)
Dane	426,297	55.4	424,277	55.2	(2,020)	(0.5)
Dodge	357,075	63.2	353,300	62.6	(3,775)	(1.1)
Door	109,975	35.6	106,454	34.5	(3,521)	(3.2)
Douglas	50,838	6.1	55,193	6.6	4,355	8.6
Dunn	297,161	54.5	291,626	53.5	(5,535)	(1.9)
Eau Claire	162,420	39.8	158,498	38.8	(3,922)	(2.4)
Florence	16,286	5.2	16,529	5.3	243	1.5
Fond du Lac	291,695	63.0	286,329	61.9	(5,366)	(1.8)
Forest	19,676	3.0	18,380	2.8	(1,296)	(6.6)
Grant	568,694	77.4	553,182	75.3	(15,512)	(2.7)
Green	284,541	76.1	281,127	75.2	(3,414)	(1.2)
Green Lake	119,604	52.7	115,827	51.1	(3,777)	(3.2)
Iowa	326,238	66.8	323,004	66.2	(3,234)	(1.0)
Iron	5,718	1.2	6,390	1.3	672	11.8
Jackson	159,249	25.2	151,583	24.0	(7,666)	(4.8)
Jefferson	211,402	59.3	206,317	57.9	(5,085)	(2.4)
Juneau	134,357	27.3	126,881	25.8	(7,476)	(5.6)
Kenosha	80,816	46.3	79,275	45.4	(1,541)	(1.9)
Kewaunee	140,840	64.2	135,359	61.7	(5,481)	(3.9)
La Crosse	115,044	39.7	111,939	38.6	(3,105)	(2.7)
Lafayette	337,102	83.1	336,355	83.0	(747)	(0.2)
Langlade	84,744	15.2	83,175	14.9	(1,569)	(1.9)
Lincoln	59,173	10.5	57,733	10.2	(1,440)	(2.4)

Counties	2004 Acres	2004 Percentage of Total	2008 Acres	2008 Percentage of Total	Change from 2004 through 2008 Acres	Change from 2004 through 2008 Percentage
Manitowoc	219,644	58.0%	215,519	56.9%	(4,125)	(1.9)%
Marathon	404,377	40.9	388,185	39.3	(16,192)	(4.0)
Marinette	100,305	11.2	93,490	10.4	(6,815)	(6.8)
Marquette	93,387	32.0	92,168	31.6	(1,219)	(1.3)
Menominee	0	0.0	33	0.0	33	–
Milwaukee	7,923	5.1	6,180	4.0	(1,743)	(22.0)
Monroe	252,690	43.8	248,138	43.0	(4,552)	(1.8)
Oconto	164,699	25.8	162,023	25.4	(2,676)	(1.6)
Oneida	16,843	2.3	14,983	2.1	(1,860)	(11.0)
Outagamie	219,180	53.5	212,056	51.7	(7,124)	(3.3)
Ozaukee	64,358	43.4	62,264	41.9	(2,094)	(3.3)
Pepin	80,312	54.0	78,343	52.7	(1,969)	(2.5)
Pierce	223,943	60.7	218,211	59.1	(5,732)	(2.6)
Polk	212,762	36.2	211,514	36.0	(1,248)	(0.6)
Portage	216,570	42.0	210,840	40.9	(5,730)	(2.6)
Price	58,305	7.3	57,619	7.2	(686)	(1.2)
Racine	108,016	50.7	104,386	49.0	(3,630)	(3.4)
Richland	214,606	57.2	210,309	56.1	(4,297)	(2.0)
Rock	320,445	69.5	316,107	68.6	(4,338)	(1.4)
Rusk	141,967	24.3	137,091	23.5	(4,876)	(3.4)
St. Croix	263,377	57.0	257,931	55.8	(5,446)	(2.1)
Sauk	265,693	49.6	260,879	48.7	(4,814)	(1.8)
Sawyer	38,015	4.7	37,585	4.7	(430)	(1.1)
Shawano	212,900	37.3	208,791	36.6	(4,109)	(1.9)
Sheboygan	168,098	51.1	165,489	50.3	(2,609)	(1.6)
Taylor	160,773	25.8	162,795	26.1	2,022	1.3
Trempealeau	263,607	56.1	256,855	54.7	(6,752)	(2.6)
Vernon	285,524	56.1	282,297	55.5	(3,227)	(1.1)
Vilas	4,469	0.8	4,397	0.8	(72)	(1.6)
Walworth	207,750	58.5	203,320	57.2	(4,430)	(2.1)
Washburn	67,226	13.0	68,685	13.3	1,459	2.2
Washington	114,778	41.6	106,682	38.7	(8,096)	(7.1)
Waukesha	80,913	22.8	75,405	21.2	(5,508)	(6.8)
Waupaca	173,454	36.1	169,585	35.3	(3,869)	(2.2)
Waushara	146,294	36.5	142,620	35.6	(3,674)	(2.5)
Winnebago	147,005	52.4	139,102	49.6	(7,903)	(5.4)
Wood	155,636	30.7	149,942	29.6	(5,694)	(3.7)
State Total	**12,452,012**	35.8%	**12,182,638**	35.0%	**(269,374)**	(2.2)%

Appendix 3

Characteristics of Agricultural Acreage and Parcels in Selected Municipalities

Town of Akan

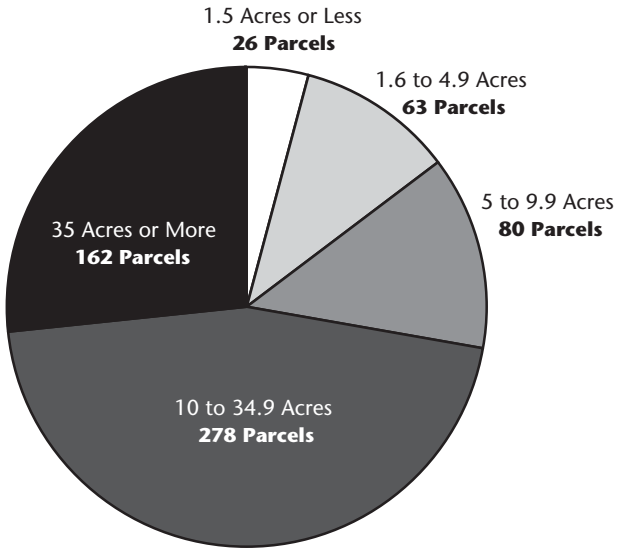
Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	13,039	72.3%	$ 2,006,400	6.5%
Agricultural Forest	1,980	11.0	2,675,900	8.6
Commercial	20	0.1	539,600	1.7
Manufacturing	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other	117	0.6	8,790,800	28.4
Productive Forest	878	4.9	2,370,400	7.7
Residential	157	0.9	12,400,900	40.0
Undeveloped	1,841	10.2	2,136,600	6.9
Subtotal	18,032	100.0	30,920,600	99.8
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	75,800	0.2
Total	**18,032**	**100.0%**	**$30,996,400**	**100.0%**

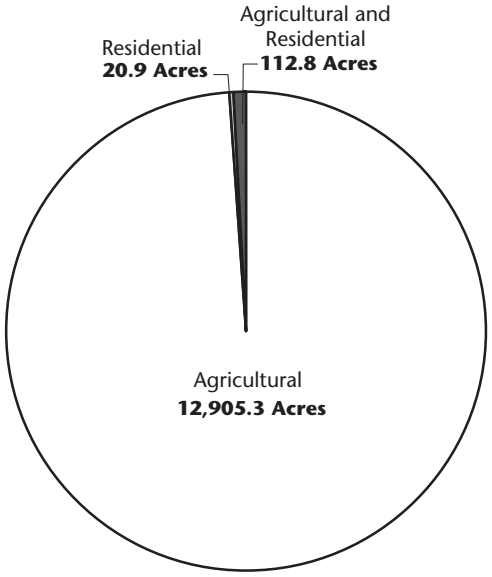
Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	11,721	–
2005	11,766	45
2006	11,874	108
2007	12,377	503
2008	12,778	401

Size of Agricultural Parcels—Town of Akan
609 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—Town of Akan



City of Appleton

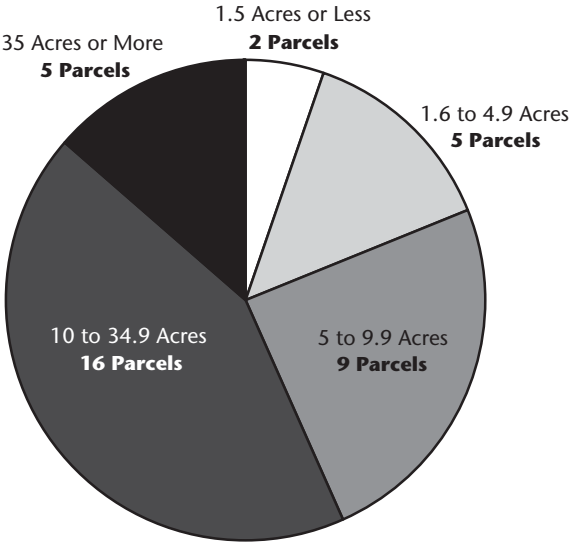
Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	1,042	10.3%	$ 189,100	<0.1%
Agricultural Forest	7	0.1	9,500	<0.1
Commercial	2,825	27.8	1,099,706,200	23.1
Manufacturing	513	5.1	151,449,600	3.2
Other	9	0.1	215,500	<0.1
Productive Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Residential	5,740	56.5	3,358,972,100	70.7
Undeveloped	20	0.2	2,000	<0.1
Subtotal	10,156	100.0	4,610,544,000	97.0
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	142,907,700	3.0
Total	**10,156**	**100.0%**	**$4,753,451,700**	**100.0%**

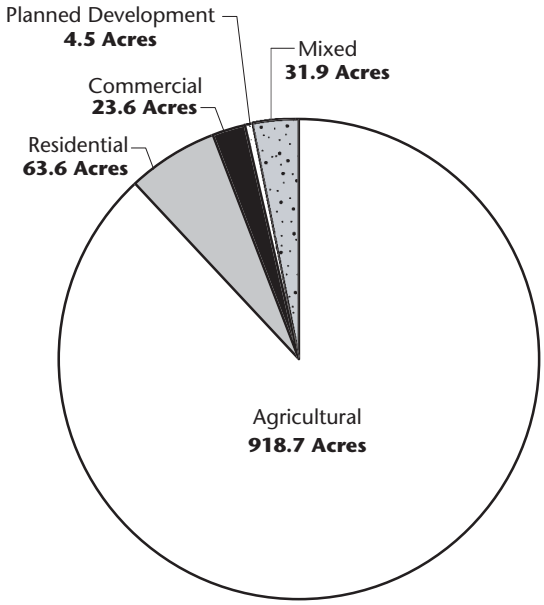
Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	688	–
2005	973	285
2006	812	(161)
2007	1,081	269
2008	1,066	(15)

Size of Agricultural Parcels—City of Appleton
37 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—City of Appleton



City of Brookfield

Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

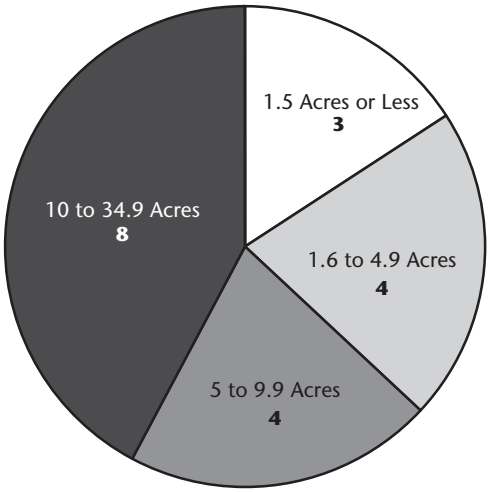
Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	209	1.2%	$ 62,800	<0.1%
Agricultural Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Commercial[1]	–	–	1,808,302,700	27.5
Manufacturing	121	0.7	57,432,400	0.9
Other	0	0.0	0	0.0
Productive Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Residential[1]	–	–	4,528,992,000	68.9
Undeveloped [1]	–	–	583,000	<0.1
Subtotal	17,655		6,395,372,900	97.3
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	174,176,600	2.7
Total	**17,655**	–	**$6,569,549,500**	**100.0%**

[1] Data on the number of acres in the Commercial, Residential and Undeveloped Classes were not available.

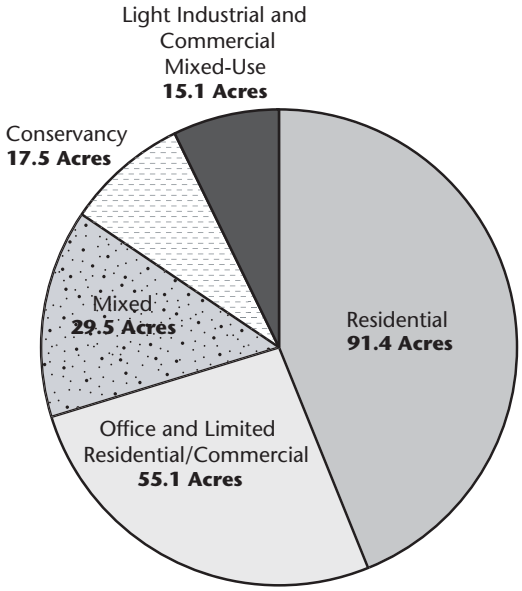
Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	220	–
2005	213	(7)
2006	203	(10)
2007	216	13
2008	–	–

Size of Agricultural Parcels—City of Brookfield
19 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—City of Brookfield



City of Eau Claire

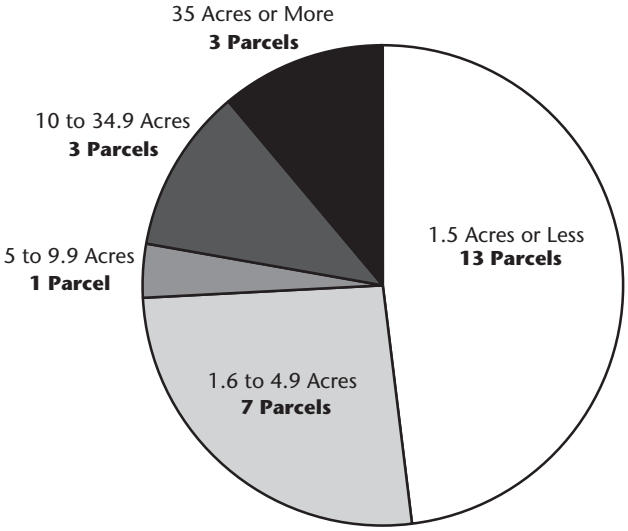
Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	387	3.8%	$ 87,000	<0.1%
Agricultural Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Commercial	3,167	31.0	1,459,862,200	32.7
Manufacturing	935	9.2	145,772,600	3.3
Other	1	<0.1	34,900	<0.1
Productive Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Residential	5,707	56.0	2,692,285,600	60.3
Undeveloped	0	0.0	0	0.0
Subtotal	10,197	100.0	4,298,042,300	96.3
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	167,056,400	3.7
Total	**10,197**	**100.0%**	**$4,465,098,700**	**100.0%**

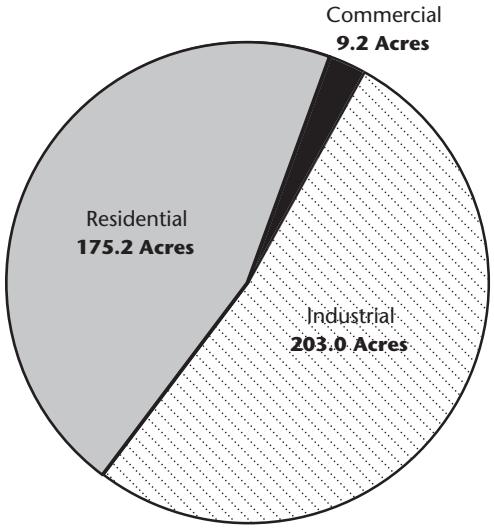
Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	128	–
2005	209	81
2006	317	108
2007	275	(42)
2008	241	(34)

Size of Agricultural Parcels—City of Eau Claire
27 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—City of Eau Claire



Village of Germantown

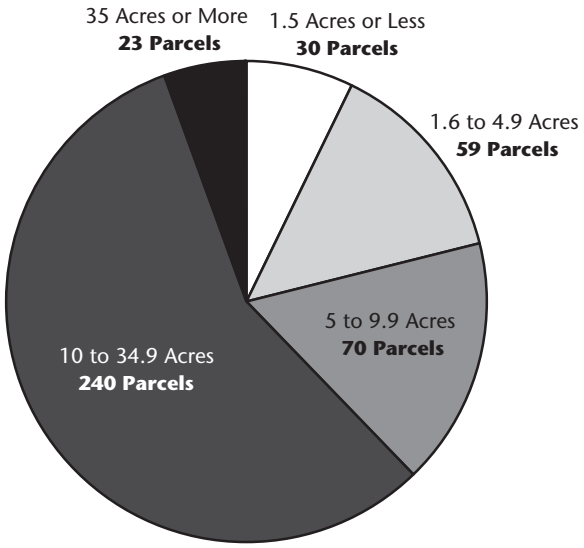
Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	6,313	35.8%	$ 1,571,600	<0.1%
Agricultural Forest	1,006	5.7	1,945,800	<0.1
Commercial	1,933	11.0	523,394,000	21.5
Manufacturing	552	3.1	173,456,700	7.1
Other	105	0.6	8,553,500	0.4
Productive Forest	340	1.9	948,900	<0.1
Residential	5,215	29.6	1,655,733,500	68.1
Undeveloped	2,158	12.3	5,572,000	0.2
Subtotal	17,622	100.0	2,371,176,000	97.5
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	60,984,000	2.5
Total	**17,622**	**100.0%**	**$2,432,160,000**	**100.0%**

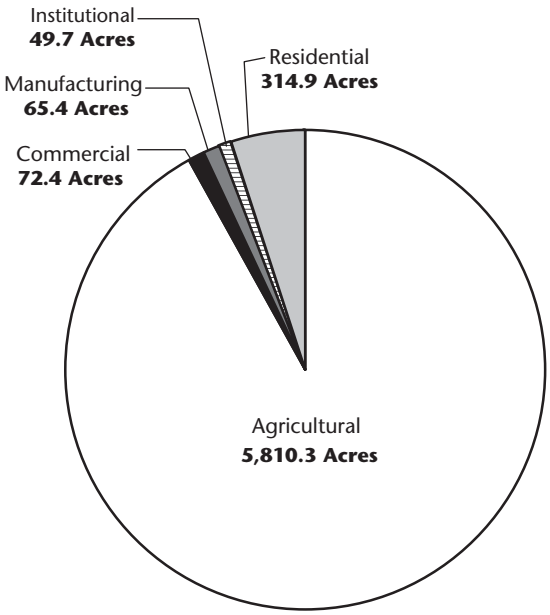
Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	6,902	–
2005	6,830	(72)
2006	6,777	(53)
2007	6,660	(117)
2008	6,258	(402)

Size of Agricultural Parcels—Village of Germantown
422 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—Village of Germantown



City of Middleton

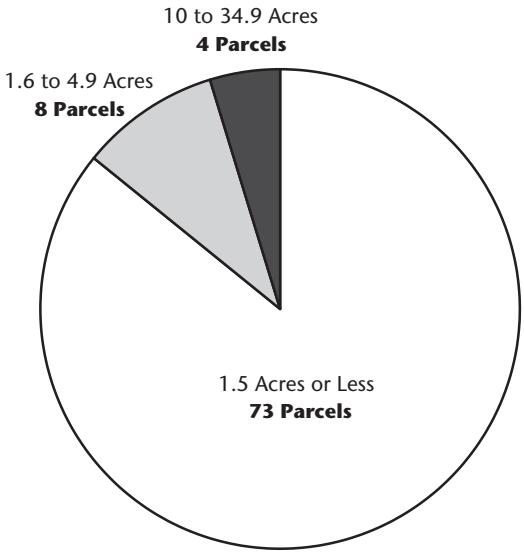
Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	115	4.3%	$ 30,100	<0.1%
Agricultural Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Commercial	1,141	42.6	960,514,800	36.2
Manufacturing	190	7.1	98,299,700	3.7
Other	4	0.1	440,400	<0.1
Productive Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Residential	1,230	45.9	1,468,028,100	55.3
Undeveloped	0	0.0	0	0.0
Subtotal	2,680	100.0	2,527,313,100	95.2
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	126,427,900	4.8
Total	**2,680**	**100.0%**	**$2,653,741,000**	**100.0%**

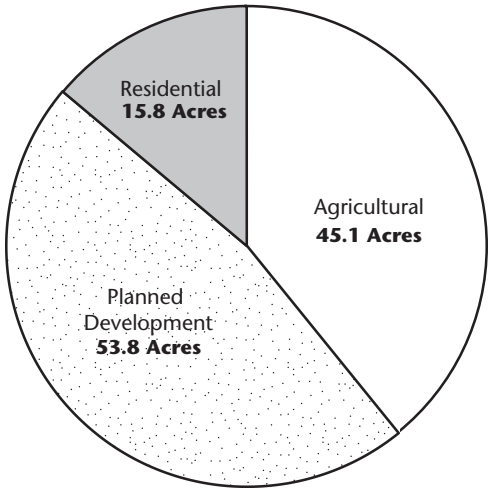
Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	73	–
2005	30	(43)
2006	74	44
2007	105	31
2008	71	(34)

Size of Agricultural Parcels—City of Middleton
85 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—City of Middleton



City of Onalaska

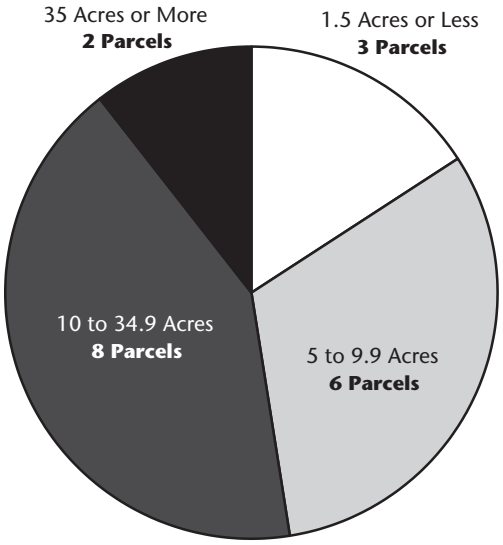
Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	283	6.9%	$ 62,200	<0.1%
Agricultural Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Commercial	998	24.3	498,711,000	32.0
Manufacturing	59	1.4	10,482,300	0.7
Other	2	<0.1	120,600	<0.1
Productive Forest	298	7.2	653,800	<0.1
Residential	2,184	53.1	1,000,059,000	64.2
Undeveloped	290	7.0	811,600	0.1
Subtotal	4,114	100.0	1,510,900,500	97.0
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	47,028,700	3.0
Total	**4,114**	**100.0%**	**$1,557,929,200**	**100.0%**

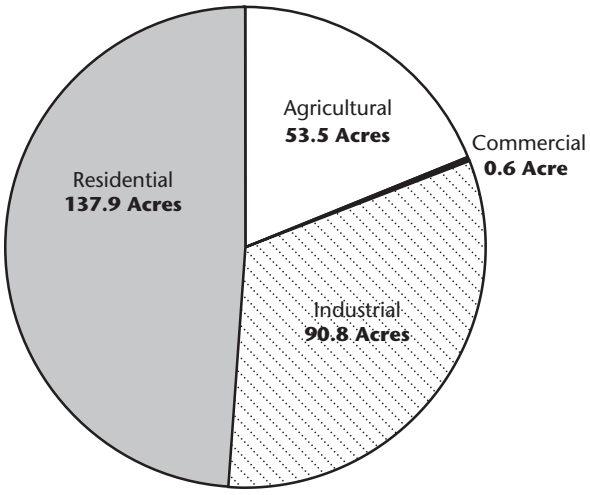
Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	352	–
2005	331	(21)
2006	349	18
2007	317	(32)
2008	284	(33)

Size of Agricultural Parcels—City of Onalaska
19 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—City of Onalaska



Town of Perry

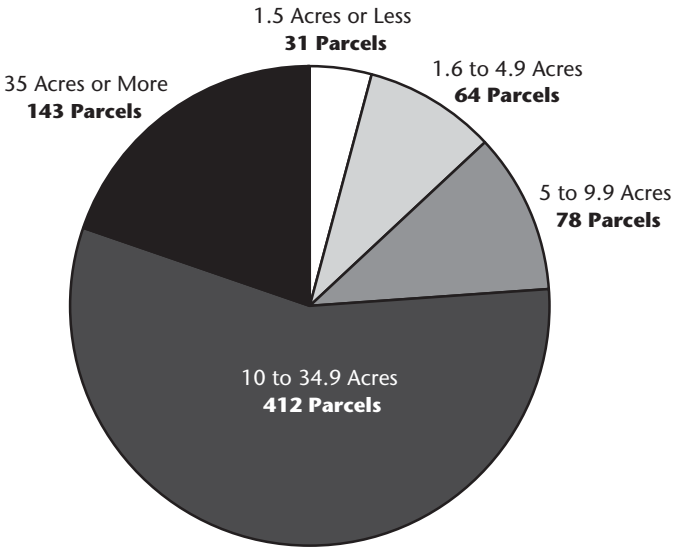
Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	15,646	71.8%	$ 3,211,800	3.9%
Agricultural Forest	3,346	15.3	8,305,800	10.0
Commercial	15	0.1	267,700	0.3
Manufacturing	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other	192	0.9	20,150,000	24.4
Productive Forest	130	0.6	643,100	0.8
Residential	602	2.7	45,634,500	55.2
Undeveloped	1,868	8.6	4,387,600	5.3
Subtotal	21,799	100.0	82,600,500	99.9
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	120,900	0.1
Total	**21,799**	**100.0%**	**$82,721,400**	**100.0%**

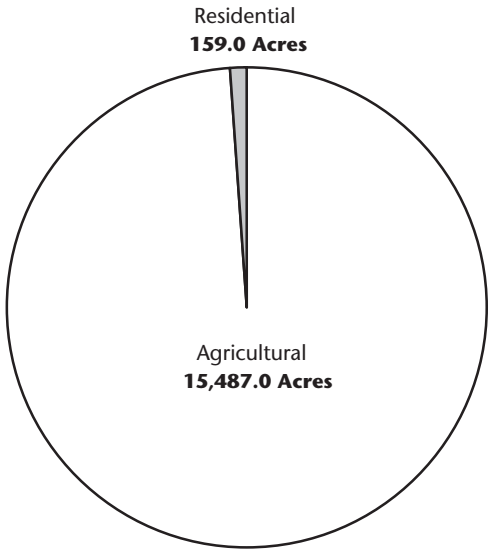
Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	16,701	–
2005	16,583	(118)
2006	16,574	(9)
2007	16,544	(30)
2008	21,642	5,098

Size of Agricultural Parcels—Town of Perry
728 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—Town of Perry



City of Platteville

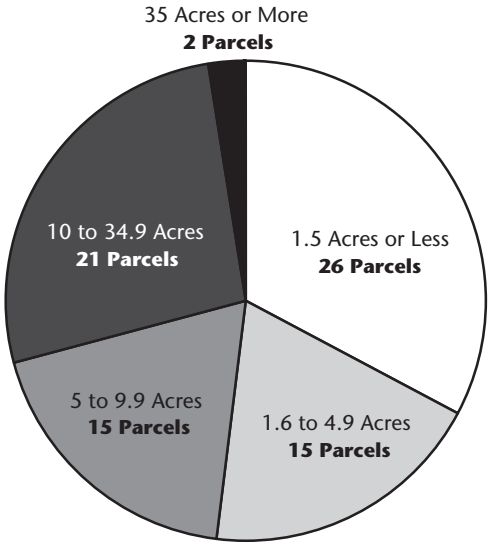
Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	619	23.0%	$ 178,600	<0.1%
Agricultural Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Commercial	251	9.3	199,808,800	35.8
Manufacturing	95	3.5	12,182,100	2.2
Other	4	0.2	187,900	<0.1
Productive Forest	10	0.4	39,900	<0.1
Residential	1,636	60.9	325,072,700	58.3
Undeveloped	73	2.7	203,500	<0.1
Subtotal	2,688	100.0	537,673,500	96.5
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	19,704,900	3.5
Total	**2,688**	**100.0%**	**$557,378,400**	**100.0%**

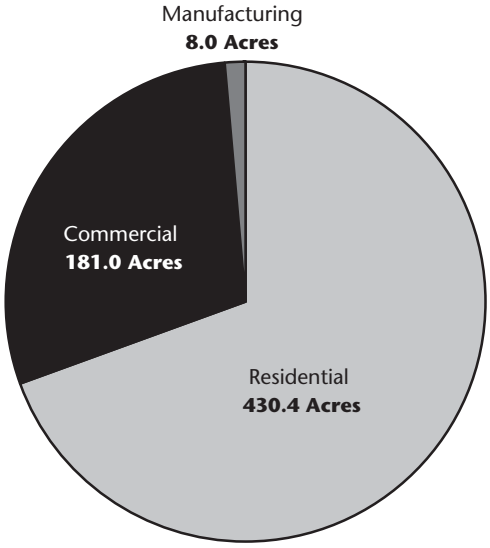
Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	291	–
2005	291	0
2006	682	391
2007	564	(118)
2008	598	34

Size of Agricultural Parcels—City of Platteville
79 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—City of Platteville



City of Rice Lake

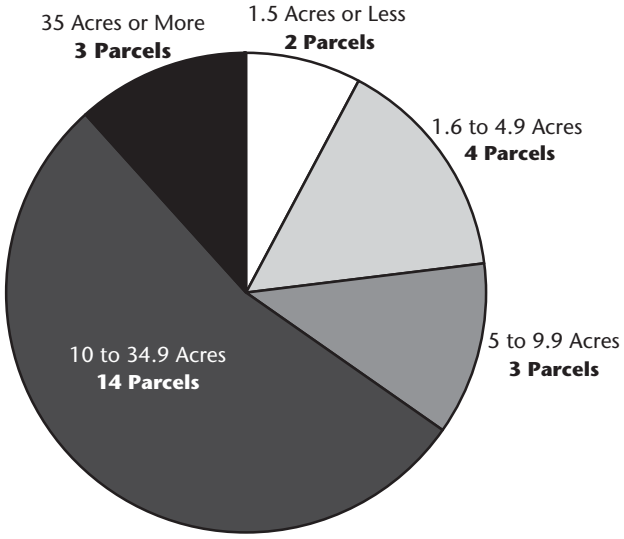
Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	452	16.3%	$ 91,700	<0.1%
Agricultural Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Commercial	827	29.8	227,230,300	41.5
Manufacturing	206	7.4	21,853,600	4.0
Other	8	0.3	244,000	<0.1
Productive Forest	57	2.1	96,200	<0.1
Residential	1,178	42.5	273,088,500	49.9
Undeveloped	44	1.6	55,800	<0.1
Subtotal	2,772	100.0	522,660,100	95.5
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	24,846,500	4.5
Total	**2,772**	**100.0%**	**$547,506,600**	**100.0%**

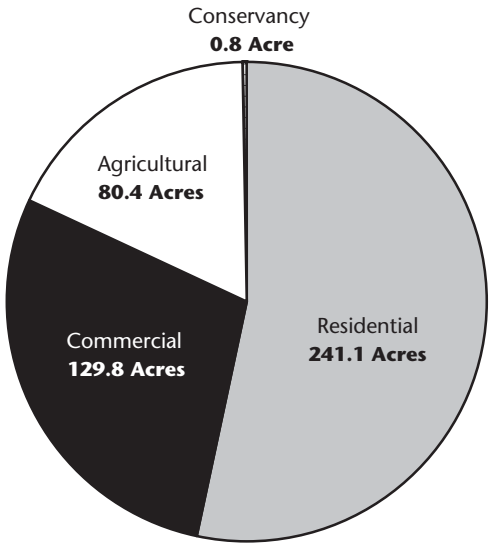
Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	416	–
2005	453	37
2006	453	0
2007	450	(3)
2008	452	2

Size of Agricultural Parcels—City of Rice Lake
26 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—City of Rice Lake



Village of Sturtevant

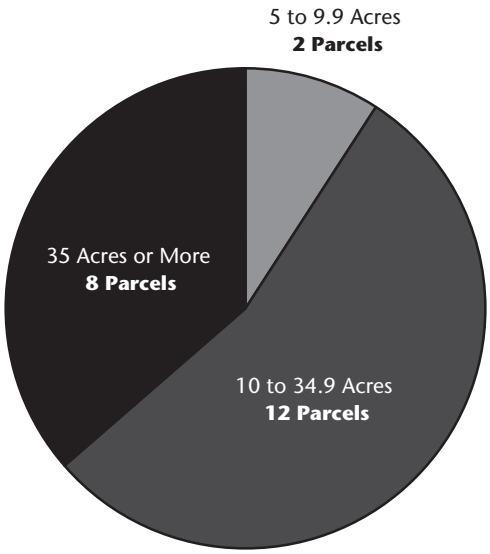
Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	643	33.5%	$ 133,400	<0.1%
Agricultural Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Commercial	477	24.8	136,559,800	25.6
Manufacturing	248	12.9	80,925,400	15.2
Other	42	2.2	1,774,600	0.3
Productive Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Residential	511	26.6	295,028,100	55.4
Undeveloped	0	0.0	0	0.0
Subtotal	1,921	100.0	514,421,300	96.5
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	18,516,600	3.5
Total	**1,921**	**100.0%**	**$532,937,900**	**100.0%**

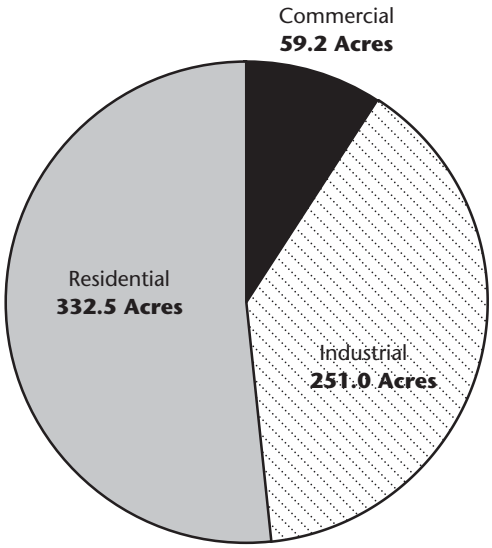
Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	133	–
2005	761	628
2006	761	0
2007	667	(94)
2008	666	(1)

Size of Agricultural Parcels—Village of Sturtevant
22 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—Village of Sturtevant



City of Sun Prairie

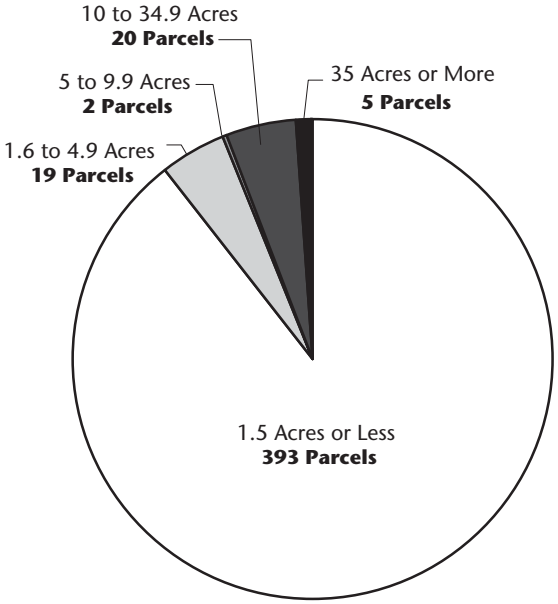
Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	809	18.2%	$ 256,100	<0.1%
Agricultural Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Commercial	1,009	22.8	617,059,400	24.8
Manufacturing	164	3.7	48,960,400	2.0
Other	2	<0.1	221,600	<0.1
Productive Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Residential	2,387	53.8	1,766,738,300	71.1
Undeveloped	63	1.4	402,400	<0.1
Subtotal	4,434	100.0	2,433,638,200	97.9
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	52,701,300	2.1
Total	**4,434**	**100.0%**	**$2,486,339,500**	**100.0%**

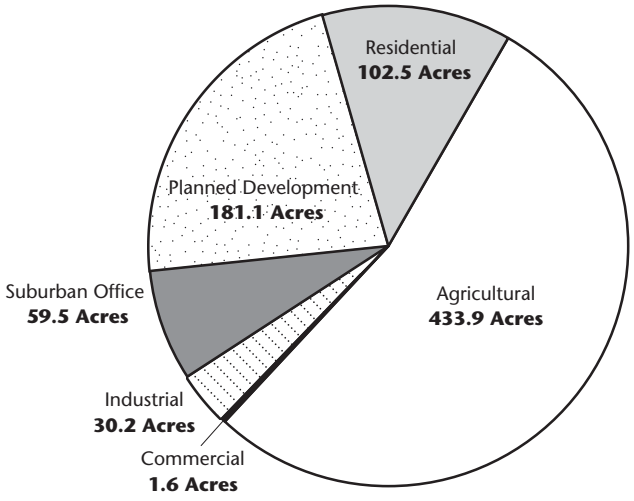
Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	1,011	–
2005	1,288	277
2006	818	(470)
2007	816	(2)
2008	664	(154)

Size of Agricultural Parcels—City of Sun Prairie
439 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—City of Sun Prairie



Village of Twin Lakes

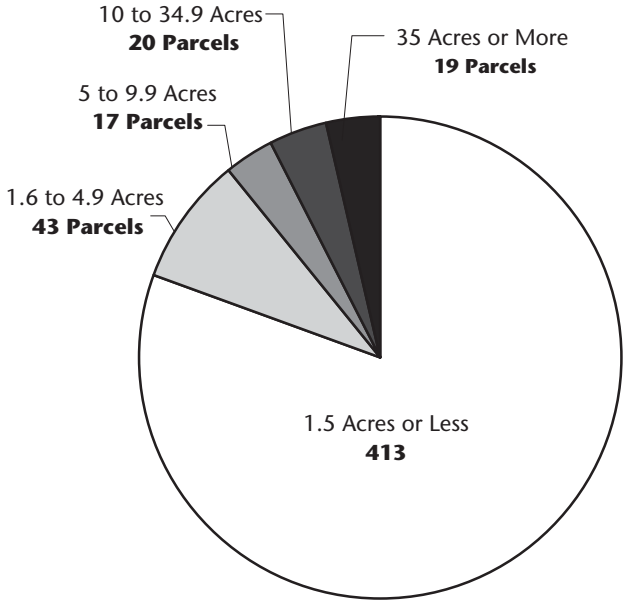
Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	2,427	52.0%	$ 630,000	<0.1%
Agricultural Forest	130	2.8	955,900	0.1
Commercial	278	6.0	62,370,800	7.4
Manufacturing	12	0.3	3,508,900	0.4
Other	37	0.8	2,362,800	0.3
Productive Forest	0	0.0	0	0.0
Residential	1,415	30.3	766,391,600	91.1
Undeveloped	368	7.9	348,200	<0.1
Subtotal	4,667	100.0	836,568,200	99.5
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	4,298,900	0.5
Total	**4,667**	**100.0%**	**$840,867,100**	**100.0%**

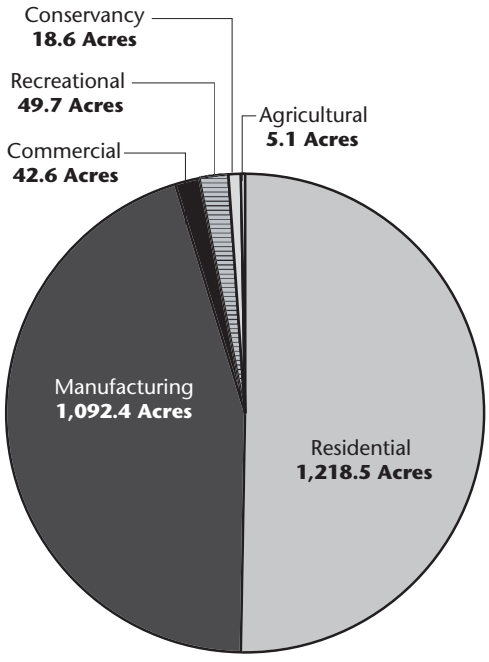
Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	993	–
2005	1,016	23
2006	1,003	(13)
2007	2,419	1,416
2008	2,425	6

Size of Agricultural Parcels—Village of Twin Lakes
512 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—Village of Twin Lakes



City of Wausau

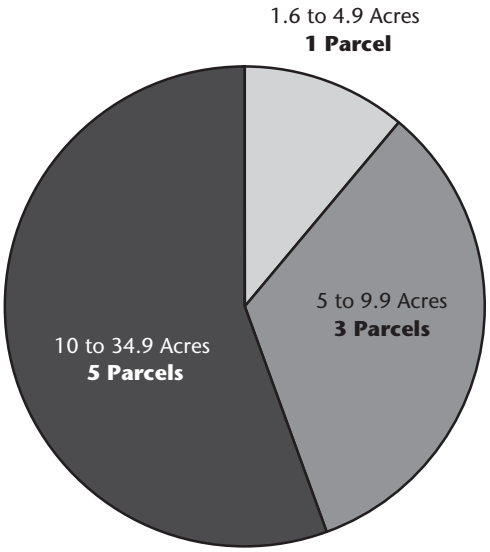
Acreage and Value of Taxable Property by Property Class
2009

Property Class	Number of Acres	Percentage of Acres	Assessed Value	Percentage of Assessed Value
Agricultural	111	1.5%	$ 21,300	<0.1%
Agricultural Forest	62	0.9	406,500	<0.1
Commercial	1,975	27.5	918,019,100	33.9
Manufacturing	477	6.6	115,368,300	4.3
Other	5	0.1	274,100	<0.1
Productive Forest	114	1.6	1,137,600	<0.1
Residential	4,440	61.8	1,565,407,600	57.7
Undeveloped	0	0.0	0	0.0
Subtotal	7,184	100.0	2,600,634,500	95.9
Personal Property	N.A.	N.A.	110,243,300	4.1
Total	**7,184**	**100.0%**	**$2,710,877,800**	**100.0%**

Change in Agricultural Acres

Year	Number of Acres	Change from Prior Year
2004	109	–
2005	94	(15)
2006	111	17
2007	111	0
2008	111	0

Size of Agricultural Parcels—City of Wausau
9 Parcels



Zoning of Agricultural Parcels—City of Wausau