

## CHAPTER 91

## FARMLAND PRESERVATION

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## SUBCHAPTER I

## GENERAL PROVISIONS

**91.01 Definitions.** In this chapter:

(1) "Agricultural use" means beekeeping; commercial feedlots; dairying; egg production; floriculture; fish or fur farming; forest and game management; grazing; livestock raising; orchards; plant greenhouses and nurseries; poultry raising; raising of grain, grass, mint and seed crops; raising of fruits, nuts and berries; sod farming and vegetable raising.

(2) "Board" means the agricultural lands preservation board.

(3) "Department" means the department of agriculture, trade and consumer protection.

(4) "Develop" means change to any use other than agricultural use.

(5) "Devoted primarily to agricultural use" means under agricultural use for at least 12 consecutive months during the preceding 36-month period.

(6) "Eligible farmland" means a parcel of 35 or more acres of contiguous land which is devoted primarily to agricultural use which during the year preceding application for a farmland preservation agreement produced gross farm profits, as defined in s. 71.09 (11) (a) 3m, of not less than \$6,000 or which, during the 3 years preceding application produced gross farm profits, as defined in s. 71.09 (11) (a) 3m, of not less than \$18,000.

(7) "Farmland preservation agreement" or "transition area agreement" means a restrictive covenant, evidenced by an instrument whereby the owner and the state agree to hold jointly the right to develop the land except as may be expressly reserved in the instrument and which contains a covenant running with the land, for a term of years, not to develop except as expressly reserved in the instrument.

(8) "Local governing body having jurisdiction" means the city council, village board or town board if that body has adopted a certified ordinance under subch. V; or the county board where such a city, village or town zoning ordinance is not in effect.

(9) "Owner" means a resident of this state owning land and includes an individual, legal guardian, corporation incorporated in this state, business trust, estate, trust, partnership or association or 2 or more persons having a joint or common interest in the land. However, where land is subject to a land contract, it means the vendor in agreement with the vendee.

History: 1977 c. 29, 418.

**91.03 Interdepartmental cooperation.** All other departments and agencies of state government shall cooperate with the board and the department in the exchange of information concerning projects and activities, including takings under eminent domain, which might jeopardize the preservation of land contemplated by this chapter. The department shall periodically advise other departments and agencies of state

government of the location and description of land upon which there exist farmland preservation agreements or zoning for exclusively agricultural use and the departments and agencies shall administer their planning and projects consistent with the purposes of this chapter.

*History:* 1977 c. 29

**91.05 Preliminary agricultural areas delineation.** (1) For the purpose of assisting local units of government to preserve agricultural lands, the department and the department of local affairs and development, under standards prepared by the board, and in connection with other state agencies, counties and soil and water conservation districts shall prepare or cause to be prepared, maps that locate lands in the state which should be considered for preservation because of their agricultural significance.

(2) Maps shall be prepared first for those portions of the state where the need for agricultural preservation is of the highest priority. Priority shall be based upon the degree of threat of agricultural alteration, loss to other usages, agricultural quality and agricultural importance.

(3) Agricultural maps shall be prepared utilizing the best practicable method and shall be based upon data such as soil surveys, aerial photography interpretation, existing agricultural zoning and surveys and may be supplemented by on-site surveys and other studies.

*History:* 1977 c. 29; 1979 c. 34

**91.06 Certification.** The board shall review farmland preservation plans and exclusive agricultural use zoning ordinances submitted to it under ss. 91.61 and 91.78 and shall certify to the appropriate zoning authority whether the plans and ordinances meet the standards of subchs. IV and V, respectively. Certifications may be in whole or in part.

*History:* 1977 c. 29

## SUBCHAPTER II

### FARMLAND PRESERVATION AGREEMENTS

**91.11 Eligibility.** (1) An owner may apply for a farmland preservation agreement under this subchapter if:

(a) The county in which the land is located has a certified agricultural preservation plan in effect; or

(b) The land is in an area zoned for exclusive agricultural use under an ordinance certified under subch. V.

(2) An owner of land located in a county with a population density of less than 100 per-

sons per square mile which has adopted a certified exclusive agricultural use zoning ordinance may apply under this subchapter even if the town in which the land is located has not approved the ordinance.

(3) In any county with a population density of 100 or more persons per square mile, an owner may apply for a farmland preservation agreement under this subchapter only if the county in which the land is located has a certified exclusive agricultural use zoning ordinance under subch. V and the town in which the land is located has approved the ordinance.

(4) In any city, town or village that has adopted a certified exclusive agricultural use zoning ordinance under subch. V, or in any town that has approved a certified exclusive agricultural use zoning ordinance adopted by the county under subch. V, an owner may apply for a farmland preservation agreement only if the land is in an area zoned for exclusive agricultural use.

*History:* 1977 c. 29; 1979 c. 34

**91.13 Farmland preservation agreements.** (1) Any owner of eligible farmlands who desires to have the lands covered by a farmland preservation agreement may apply to the county clerk on or after December 1, 1977, by executing a form provided by the department. The application shall include a land survey or legal description of all eligible farmland to be covered under the agreement, a map showing significant natural features and all structures and physical improvements on the lands or an aerial photograph of all land which is an integral part of the owner's farming operation which is marked to indicate the farmland and structures to be covered by the agreement, the soil classification of the lands and such other data as the department deems reasonably necessary to determine the eligibility of the lands for coverage under the agreement.

(2) Upon receipt of the application, the county clerk shall forward the application to the local governing body having jurisdiction, if not the county, and shall send written notification to the department, county planning and zoning agency, the regional planning commission and the soil and water conservation district. If the county has jurisdiction, the clerk shall also notify the board of the town in which the land is situated. If the land is within the extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction of any municipality under s. 62.23 (7a), the clerk shall send written notification to the governing body of the city or village.

(3) An agency or local governing body receiving written notice shall upon receipt of notification have 30 days to review, comment and

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make recommendations to the local governing body having jurisdiction.

(4) After considering the comments and recommendations of the reviewing agencies and local governing bodies, the local governing body having jurisdiction shall approve or reject the application within 120 days after the application is received unless time is extended by mutual agreement of the parties involved. The local governing body's approval or rejection of the application shall be based upon and consistent with the following:

(a) Whether the farmland is designated an agricultural preservation area in a certified agricultural preservation plan established under subch. IV or is an area zoned for exclusive agricultural use under an ordinance certified under subch. V.

(b) The productivity and viability of the land for agricultural use.

(c) The predominance of agricultural use on the land.

(d) The inclusion of all contiguous lands which are in single ownership.

(e) Whether the property is eligible farmland.

(f) Consistency with the county agricultural preservation plan.

(g) Other criteria established by the local governing body consistent with the agricultural preservation purposes of this chapter.

(5) The clerk of the local governing body having jurisdiction shall forward a copy of all approved applications for farmland preservation agreements, along with the comments and recommendations of the reviewing bodies, to the department. If action is not taken by the local governing body within the time prescribed or agreed upon, the applicant may proceed as provided in sub. (7) as if the application was rejected.

(6) The department may reject an application for a farmland preservation agreement which has been approved by a local governing body only if the land is not eligible farmland.

(7) If the application for a farmland preservation agreement is rejected by the local governing body or the department, the application shall be returned to the applicant with a written statement regarding the reasons for rejection. Within 30 days after receipt of the rejected application, the applicant may appeal the rejection to the board. The board shall, within 60 days after the appeal has been received, upon consideration of the factors listed in sub. (4) (a) to (g), approve or reject the application.

(8) If an application is approved by the department or, on appeal, by the board, the department shall prepare and send to the appli-

cant a farmland preservation agreement which shall include the following provisions:

(a) Except as provided under s. 91.75 (2), no structure may be built on the land except for use consistent with agricultural use or with the approval of the local governing body having jurisdiction and the department.

(b) Land improvements shall not be made except for use consistent with agricultural use or with the approval of the local governing body having jurisdiction and the department.

(c) A structure or improvement made as an incident to a scenic, access or utility easement or license shall be deemed consistent with agricultural use under pars. (a) and (b).

(d) Farming operations shall be conducted in substantial accordance with an approved soil and water conservation district conservation plan. The county soil and water conservation district supervisors shall ensure that such plans are prepared and followed. Deviations from a plan may be allowed, if in the judgment of the supervisors, personnel are not available to lay out the suggested practices on the land or if the practices are not economical for the owner to adopt.

(e) The state agrees to pay, with respect to each year the agreement is in effect, the greater of the credits claimable under s. 71.09 (11), as such statute exists on the date the agreement takes effect, or the credits claimable under s. 71.09 (11), as such statute exists at the end of the year for which a claim for credit is filed, if all the requirements of s. 71.09 (11) are satisfied.

(f) The department shall not require the owner to permit public access onto the land.

(g) Any other condition and restriction on the land as agreed to by the parties that is deemed necessary to preserve the land for agricultural use if it is not in conflict with the county agricultural preservation plan.

(9) If the owner executes the farmland preservation agreement, the owner shall return it to the department for execution on behalf of the state. An agreement shall become effective on the date it is delivered or mailed to the department for execution. The department shall within 30 days of receipt record the executed agreement with the register of deeds of the county in which the land is situated and notify the applicant, the local governing body having jurisdiction, all reviewing agencies and the department of revenue.

(10) Agreements under this subchapter shall be for not less than 10 years nor more than 25 years.

(11) An applicant may reapply for a farmland preservation agreement following a one-year waiting period from notice of final determi-

nation of the original application by the local governing body having jurisdiction, the department, the board or a court on appeal.

(12) The value of the jointly owned development rights as expressed in a farmland preservation agreement shall not be exempt from general property taxation and shall be assessed to the owner of the land as part of the value of the land.

History: 1977 c. 29, 169, 418, 447; 1979 c. 233 s. 8.

**91.14 Transition area agreements.** An owner may apply for a transition area agreement under this subchapter if the farmland is located in an area identified as a transition area under a certified county agricultural preservation plan under subch. IV. The provisions of this subchapter, except ss. 91.11 (1) (b) and (4), 91.13 (4) (a) and (10) and 91.15, apply to agreements under this section. Agreements under this section shall be for not less than 5 nor more than 20 years, consistent with the county agricultural preservation plan.

History: 1977 c. 29

**91.15 Exemption from special assessments.** A city, village, town, county or other governmental agency may not impose special assessments for sanitary sewers, water, lights or nonfarm drainage on land zoned for exclusively agricultural use under subch. V or for which a farmland preservation agreement under this subchapter has been recorded except as to a dwelling or a nonfarm structure located on the land unless the assessments were imposed prior to the recording of the agreement. Land covered by this exemption shall be denied use of an improvement created by the special assessment as long as the owner of the land has a recorded agreement under this subchapter unless the owner has paid the amount that would have been paid had the land not been excluded.

History: 1977 c. 29, 418.

**91.17 Change of ownership.** (1) Land subject to a farmland preservation agreement may be sold without a lien being filed under s. 91.19, subject to the reservation of rights contained in the agreement. The seller shall notify the department of any such transfer. The purchaser shall be liable under any subsequent lien under s. 91.19 only for the amount of tax credits paid on that portion of the land purchased.

(2) When the owner of land subject to a farmland preservation agreement dies or is certified by a physician to be totally and permanently disabled, the land may be released from the program under this chapter and shall be subject to a lien under s. 91.19 (8).

History: 1977 c. 29, 169.

### 91.19 Relinquishment of agreements.

(1) A farmland preservation agreement shall be relinquished by the department on behalf of the state at the expiration of the term of the agreement.

(2) A farmland preservation agreement may be relinquished by the department prior to the termination date contained in the instrument as follows:

(a) The owner of the land may submit an application, on forms prescribed by the department, to the local governing body having jurisdiction requesting that the agreement be relinquished. Upon receipt of the application, the clerk of the local governing body shall send written notification thereof to the persons specified under s. 91.13 (2), and such persons shall have 30 days from receipt of notification to review, comment and make recommendations to the local governing body having jurisdiction.

(b) After considering the comments and recommendations of the reviewing agencies, the local governing body having jurisdiction shall approve or reject the application within 120 days after it is filed, unless the time is extended by mutual agreement of the parties involved. The local governing body having jurisdiction shall not approve an application for relinquishment under this subsection unless it finds that one or more of the following conditions exist:

1. The agreement imposes continuing economic inviability causing hardships through the prevention of necessary improvements to the land. In this subdivision "economic inviability" means continued uneconomic operation because of the restrictions in the agreement and not merely the existence of uses of the land which would allow higher returns.

2. Significant natural physical changes in the land which are generally irreversible and permanently affect the land.

3. Surrounding conditions prohibit agricultural use.

(3) If the request for relinquishment of the farmland preservation agreement is approved by the local governing body having jurisdiction, a copy of the application, along with the comments and recommendations of the reviewing agencies, shall be forwarded to the board. The board shall, within 60 days, upon consideration of the factors in sub. (2) (b), approve or reject the application for relinquishment. If the board approves the application it shall notify the local governing body having jurisdiction and the department of revenue, prepare an instrument under sub. (7) and record it with the register of deeds of the county in which the land is located.

(4) If action is not taken by the local governing body having jurisdiction within the time

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period prescribed or agreed upon, the applicant may proceed as provided in sub. (5) as if the application was rejected.

(5) If the application for relinquishment is rejected by the local governing body having jurisdiction, the application shall be returned to the applicant with a written statement regarding the reasons for rejection. Within 30 days after receipt of the rejected application, the applicant may appeal the rejection to the board. The board shall, within 60 days after the appeal has been received, upon consideration of the factors listed in sub. (2) (b), approve or reject the request for relinquishment. If the board approves the application it shall notify the local governing body having jurisdiction and the department of revenue, prepare an instrument under sub. (7) and record it with the register of deeds of the county in which the land is located.

(6) The department shall relinquish from a farmland preservation agreement any lands acquired for use as an electric generating facility authorized under s. 196.491 (3), or which involves acquisition of the fee by a utility or a cooperative organized under ch. 185 for purposes of generating electricity or other utility uses.

(6m) The department shall relinquish from a farmland preservation agreement any lands acquired by the state for the correctional institutions authorized under s. 46.05.

(7) Whenever a farmland preservation agreement is relinquished under sub. (2) or a transition area agreement is relinquished under sub. (1) or (2), the department shall cause to be prepared and recorded a lien against the property formerly subject to the agreement for the total amount of all credits received by all owners of such lands under s. 71.09 (11) during the last 10 years that the land was eligible for such credit, plus interest at the rate of 6% per year compounded annually on the credits received from the time the credits were received until the lien is paid. No interest shall be compounded for any period during which the farmland is subject to a subsequent farmland preservation agreement or transition area agreement or is zoned for exclusive agricultural use under an ordinance certified under subch. V.

(8) Upon the relinquishment of a farmland preservation agreement under sub. (1), the department shall cause to be prepared and recorded a lien against the property formerly subject to the farmland preservation agreement for the total amount of the credits received by all owners thereof under s. 71.09 (11) during the last 10 years that the land was eligible for such credit, plus 6% interest per year compounded from the time of relinquishment. No interest

shall be compounded for any period during which the farmland is subject to a subsequent farmland preservation agreement or transition area agreement or is zoned for exclusive agricultural use under an ordinance certified under subch. V.

(9) A lien recorded under this section shall be effective upon recording and shall be subordinate to a lien of mortgage which is recorded prior to the recording of the lien under this section.

(10) The lien may be paid and discharged at any time and shall become payable to the state by the owner of record at the time the land or any portion of it is sold by the owner of record or if the land is converted to a use prohibited by the former farmland preservation agreement. Upon reentry in an agreement under this subchapter, the portion of the lien on the land reentered shall be discharged. The discharge of a lien does not affect the calculation of any subsequent lien under sub. (7) or (8). The proceeds from the payment shall be paid into the general fund.

(12) No lien shall be filed under sub. (7) or (8), on the date of relinquishment or termination, for tax credits paid on lands or any portion thereof which are zoned for exclusively agricultural use under an ordinance certified under subch. V.

History: 1977 c 29, 169, 418; 1979 c 221.

**91.21 Penalty for use change.** (1) If the owner or a successor in title of the land upon which a farmland preservation agreement has been recorded under this chapter changes the use of the land to a prohibited use without first acting under ss. 91.17 and 91.19, the owner or successor in title may be enjoined by the state, acting through the attorney general, or by the local governing body having jurisdiction, acting through its attorney, and is subject to a civil penalty for actual damages, but in no case to exceed double the value of the land as established at the time the application for the agreement was approved.

(2) The department or local governing body having jurisdiction shall send written notification to the owner or successor in title, the department or local governing body having jurisdiction, as appropriate, and the department of revenue, of any action taken under this section. Such person may, within 30 days of receipt of the notice, request a hearing before the department or local governing body issuing the notice, which shall be scheduled within 30 days of receipt of the request. All actions of the department under this section are subject to review under ch. 227.

(3) If the owner or a successor in title of the land upon which a farmland preservation agree-

ment has been recorded under this chapter fails to comply with s. 91.13 (8) (d), such person shall be given one year to restore compliance before the remedies of sub. (1) shall be applicable.

**History:** 1977 c. 29.

**91.23 Conversion.** An owner under a farmland preservation agreement may at any time apply for a transition area agreement, and an owner under a transition area agreement may at any time apply for a farmland preservation agreement. If such an application is approved, the prior agreement shall be relinquished without a lien being filed under s. 91.19.

**History:** 1977 c. 29, 169.

### SUBCHAPTER III

#### INITIAL AGREEMENTS

**91.31 Eligibility.** Prior to October 1, 1982, an owner may apply for an initial farmland preservation agreement under this subchapter if the county in which the land is located does not have a certified agricultural preservation plan in effect and if the eligible farmland is not in an area zoned for exclusive agricultural use under an ordinance certified under subch. V. Subchapter II applies to such farmland preservation agreements except as specifically provided in this subchapter. No agreements shall be made under this subchapter after September 30, 1982.

**History:** 1977 c. 29.

**91.33 Applications.** An application under this subchapter need not include the soil classification of the lands involved.

**History:** 1977 c. 29.

**91.35 Agreement provisions.** (1) Farmland preservation agreements under this subchapter shall require that a soil and water conservation district conservation plan be either under development or in effect.

(2) Except as provided in s. 91.39, farmland preservation agreements under this subchapter shall expire on September 30, 1982.

**History:** 1977 c. 29, 169.

**91.37 Liens.** (1) If the owner withdraws during the term of an agreement under this subchapter, the lien shall apply to the amount of all credit under s. 71.09 (11) received for the period the land was subject to the agreement plus 6% interest per year compounded annually from the time the credit was received until it is paid.

(2) If at the end of an agreement under this subchapter, the owner does not apply for a

renewal under s. 91.39 or an agreement under subch. II, the lien shall apply, without interest, to the credit received under s. 71.09 (11) for the last 2 years the land was eligible for such credit if the land is not subject to a certified exclusive agricultural use zoning ordinance under subch. V and either the county in which the land is located has not adopted a certified agricultural preservation plan, or, if such a plan is adopted, the farmland would not be eligible for an agreement under the terms of the plan.

(3) If at the end of an agreement under this subchapter, the owner does not apply for a renewal under s. 91.39 or an agreement under subch. II, although the land is eligible for an agreement under subch. II and is not subject to a certified exclusive agricultural use zoning ordinance under subch. V, the lien shall apply to all credit received during the period the land was subject to an agreement under this subchapter, plus 6% interest per year compounded from the time of expiration.

(4) If at the end of an agreement under this subchapter, the farmland is not eligible for agreement under subch. II because s. 91.11 (2), (3) or (4) is applicable, the lien shall apply, without interest, to the credit received under s. 71.09 (11) for the last 2 years the land was eligible for such credit.

(5) If at the end of an agreement under this subchapter, the owner does not apply for a renewal under s. 91.39 or an agreement under subch. II and only a portion of the land subject to the agreement is eligible for an agreement under subch. II, the lien shall be calculated under sub. (2) or (4) on that part of the land which is ineligible and under sub. (3) on that part which is eligible.

(6) No lien shall be filed, on the date of relinquishment or termination of an agreement under this subchapter, for tax credits paid on lands or any portion thereof which are zoned for exclusively agricultural use under an ordinance certified under subch. V.

**History:** 1977 c. 29, 169, 418.

**91.39 Renewal.** Such agreements may be renewed for a single one-year period only if an agricultural preservation plan is adopted by the county in which the farmland is located and the farmland is eligible for an agreement under subch. II under such plan.

**History:** 1977 c. 29.

**91.41 Conversion.** Any person subject to a farmland preservation agreement under this subchapter may apply under subch. II whenever the county in which the land is located adopts a certified agricultural preservation plan under subch. IV or whenever the farmland becomes

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subject to a certified exclusive agricultural use zoning ordinance under subch. V. In such case, the farmland preservation agreement under this chapter shall be relinquished under s. 91.19 without a lien being filed.

**History:** 1977 c. 29, 169.

**SUBCHAPTER IV****AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION PLANNING**

**91.51 Purpose.** The purpose of this subchapter is to specify standards for county agricultural preservation plans required to enable farmland owners to enter into farmland preservation agreements under this chapter. Agricultural preservation planning shall be undertaken in accordance with s. 59.97 and agricultural preservation plans shall be a component of and consistent with any county development plan prepared under s. 59.97 (3).

**History:** 1977 c. 29.

**91.53 Studies.** County agricultural preservation plans shall be based upon, without limitation because of enumeration, surveys, studies and analyses of agricultural use and productivity, natural resources and open space, population and population density, urban growth, housing and the character, location, timing, use and capacity of existing and future public facilities.

**History:** 1977 c. 29.

**91.55 Content of plans.** (1) County agricultural preservation plans shall, at a minimum, include:

(a) Statements of policy regarding preservation of agricultural lands, urban growth, the provision of public facilities and the protection of significant natural resource, open space, scenic, historic or architectural areas.

(b) Maps identifying agricultural areas to be preserved, areas of special environmental, natural resource or open space significance and, if any, transition areas. Transition areas shall be areas in predominantly agricultural use which the plan identifies for future development. Any agricultural preservation areas mapped must be a minimum of 100 acres. Any transition areas mapped must be a minimum of 35 acres. In mapping agricultural preservation areas, the maps identifying preliminary agricultural preservation areas prepared under s. 91.05 shall be considered if the map is provided to the county at least 12 months prior to adoption of the agricultural preservation plan.

(2) The maps may include areas other than those mapped under s. 91.05. Areas mapped

under s. 91.05 may be excluded from the county maps upon a finding that one or more of the following conditions exist:

(a) Existing or planned activities adjacent to the identified agricultural area are incompatible with agricultural use.

(b) The area is not economically viable for agricultural use.

(c) Substantial urban growth in the area or planned urban expansion has created a public need to convert agricultural land use to other uses.

(d) Maintenance of the area in agricultural use is not consistent with the goals and objectives of a county agricultural preservation plan.

(3) Statements regarding the coordination requirements of s. 91.59.

**History:** 1977 c. 29.

**91.57 Implementation programs.** County agricultural preservation plans shall include a program of specific public actions designed to preserve agricultural lands and guide urban growth. Such implementation programs shall include, without limitation because of enumeration:

(1) A general description of land use controls and programs to implement the policy statements of s. 91.55 (1).

(2) A program that describes the character, location, timing, use, capacity and financing of existing and proposed public facilities to serve existing and new development.

(3) An identification of procedures and standards for controlling the installation and maintenance of private waste disposal systems, specifically identifying areas not suitable for the installation of such systems.

(4) A program to protect areas of special environmental, natural resource or open space significance.

**History:** 1977 c. 29.

**91.59 Coordination.** (1) County agricultural preservation plans shall include agricultural preservation plans adopted by municipalities within the county if such plans comply with ss. 91.55 and 91.57.

(2) At least 60 days prior to the public hearing under s. 59.97 (3) (d), copies of the agricultural preservation plan shall be submitted for review and comment to all cities, villages and towns within the county, all adjoining counties and the regional planning commission to which the county belongs.

(3) County agricultural preservation plans must indicate how they compare with regional plans prepared under s. 66.945 and must explain any discrepancies between the plans.

**History:** 1977 c. 29.

**91.61 Certification.** Upon completion of county agricultural preservation plans described in this subchapter, copies of the plan may be submitted to the board for review and certification under s. 91.06.

History: 1977 c. 29.

**91.63 Revisions.** Counties shall continually review and evaluate the agricultural preservation plan in light of changing needs and conditions and shall provide for periodic revision of the agricultural preservation plan set forth in this subchapter. Revisions shall be made in the same manner as adoption of the plan.

History: 1977 c. 29.

**91.65 State aids. (1)** Subject to the approval of the board, the department of development shall distribute the funds appropriated under s. 20.143 (4) (c) to assist counties in developing agricultural preservation plans in accordance with this subchapter.

**(2)** Subject to the approval of the board, the department shall distribute the funds appropriated under s. 20.115 (6) (b) to assist counties in developing agricultural preservation plans in accordance with this subchapter.

History: 1977 c. 29; 1979 c. 34; 1979 c. 361 ss. 112, 113.

## SUBCHAPTER V

### EXCLUSIVE AGRICULTURAL ZONING

**91.71 Purpose.** The purpose of this subchapter is to specify the minimum requirements for zoning ordinances designating certain lands for exclusively agricultural use, allowing the owners of such lands to claim the farmland preservation credit permitted under s. 71.09 (11).

History: 1977 c. 29, 418.

**91.73 Procedures. (1)** Except as otherwise provided, exclusive agricultural zoning ordinances shall be adopted and administered in accordance with ss. 59.97 to 59.99, 60.74 and 60.75, 61.35 or 62.23.

**(2)** Exclusive agricultural zoning ordinances shall be consistent with county agricultural preservation plans established under subch. IV.

**(3)** A majority of towns in a county with a population density of 100 or more persons per square mile may reject adoption of a county exclusive agricultural use zoning ordinance under this subchapter for all towns within the county only by filing within 6 months after adoption of the ordinance by the county board certified copies of resolutions disapproving the ordinance with the county clerk. Notwithstanding s. 59.97 (5) (c), the procedure established

in this subsection shall be the only procedure by which a town in such a county may reject the application of a county exclusive agricultural use zoning ordinance in that town.

**(4)** Amendments to the texts of existing county zoning ordinances to bring the ordinances into compliance with this chapter, which are adopted by the county board, shall be effective in any town which does not file a certified copy of a resolution disapproving of the amendment pursuant to s. 59.97 (5) (e) 3 or 6. In those towns which disapprove of the amendment the former agricultural zoning remains in effect and shall be so designated on the official zoning map.

History: 1977 c. 29, 169; 1979 c. 34; 1979 c. 233.

See note to 59.97, citing 67 Atty. Gen. 290.

**91.75 Ordinance standards.** A zoning ordinance shall be deemed an "exclusive agricultural use ordinance" if it includes those jurisdictional, organizational or enforcement provisions necessary for its proper administration, if the land in exclusive agricultural use districts is limited to agricultural use and is identified as an agricultural preservation area under any agricultural preservation plans adopted under subch. IV and if the regulations on the use of agricultural lands in such districts meet the following standards which, except for sub. (4), are minimum standards:

**(1)** Except as provided under subs. (2) and (6), the minimum parcel size to establish a residence or a farm operation is 35 acres.

**(2)** The only residences allowed as permitted uses are those to be occupied by a person who, or a family at least one member of which, earns a substantial part of his or her livelihood from farm operations on the parcel, or is a parent or child of the operator of the farm. Preexisting residences located in areas subject to zoning under this section which do not conform to this paragraph may be continued in residential use and may be exempted from any limitations imposed or authorized under s. 59.97 (10).

**(3)** No structure or improvement may be built on the land unless consistent with agricultural uses.

**(4)** Such ordinances shall be considered local ordinances for purposes of s. 196.491 (3) (i) and shall provide that gas and electric utility uses not requiring authorization under s. 196.491 (3) are special exceptions or permitted or conditional uses and do not conflict with agricultural use.

**(5)** Special exceptions and conditional uses are limited to those agricultural-related, religious, other utility, institutional or governmental uses which do not conflict with agricultural use and are found to be necessary in light of the



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alternative locations available for such uses. The department shall be notified of the approval of any special exceptions and conditional uses in areas zoned for exclusive agricultural use.

(6) For purposes of farm consolidation and if permitted by local regulation, farm residences or structures which existed prior to the adoption of the ordinance may be separated from a larger farm parcel.

History: 1977 c. 29, 169, 418.

**91.77 Ordinance revisions.** (1) A county, city, village or town may approve petitions for rezoning areas zoned for exclusive agricultural use only after findings are made based upon consideration of the following:

(a) Adequate public facilities to accommodate development either exist or will be provided within a reasonable time.

(b) Provision of public facilities to accommodate development will not place an unreasonable burden on the ability of affected local units of government to provide them.

(c) The land proposed for rezoning is suitable for development and development will not result in undue water or air pollution, cause unreason-

able soil erosion or have an unreasonably adverse effect on rare or irreplaceable natural areas.

(2) Land which is rezoned under this section shall be subject to the lien provided under s. 91.19 (8) to (10) for the amount of tax credits paid on the land rezoned.

(3) The department shall be notified of all rezonings under this section.

History: 1977 c. 29, 169.

**91.78 Certification.** Copies of exclusive agricultural zoning ordinances may be submitted to the board for review and certification under s. 91.06.

History: 1977 c. 29.

**91.79 Conditional uses; lien.** Any land zoned under this subchapter which is granted a special exception or conditional use permit for a use which is not an agricultural use shall be subject to the lien provided under s. 91.19 (8) to (10) for the amount of tax credits paid on the land granted such a permit.

History: 1977 c. 169.