

**ORDER OF THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION CREATING AND  
ADOPTING RULES**

- 1 The Wisconsin department of agriculture, trade and consumer protection adopts the following
- 2 rule *to create* ch. ATCP 49 *relating to* Wisconsin's farmland preservation program and affecting
- 3 small business.

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**Analysis Prepared by the Department  
of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**

*Statutes Interpreted*

Statutes Interpreted: ch. 91, Stats.

*Statutory Authority*

Statutory Authority: ss. 91.02, and 93.07 (1), Stats.

*Explanation of Statutory Authority*

DATCP has specific and general authority to establish rules interpreting and clarifying provisions of ch. 91, the farmland preservation program. DATCP has general authority for promulgating rules under s. 93.07 (1), for all of its program areas, and under s. 91.02 for the administration of ch. 91, Stats. Under s. 91.02 (1), DATCP has specific authority to set forth technical specifications for farmland preservation zoning maps under s. 91.38 (1) (d). DATCP has specific authority under s. 91.02 (2) to identify additional uses that would qualify as accessory uses, agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, and base farm tracts. DATCP also has specific authority under s. 91.02 (2) to specify requirements for certifications of farmland preservation plans under s. 91.18 (1) (b) as well as farmland preservation zoning ordinances under s. 91.38 (1) (i). Section 91.02 (2) also gives DATCP specific authority to require information in an application for certification of a farmland preservation plan or amendment under s. 91.20 (4) or zoning ordinance under s. 91.40 (5), and to specify the types of ordinance amendments for which certification is required under s. 91.36 (8) (b) 3. DATCP has authority under s. 91.02 (2) to authorize additional uses in a farmland preservation zoning district under s. 91.42 (4), including additional uses allowed as permitted uses under s. 91.44 (1) (g) and as conditional uses under s. 91.46 (1) (j). Finally, DATCP has the authority under s. 91.02 (2) to

require information in an application for a farmland preservation agreement under s. 91.64 (2) (h).

### ***Related Statutes and Rules***

Chapter 91 governs the state's farmland preservation program. Landowners who participate in the zoning or farmland preservation agreement provisions of the program are eligible for farmland preservation tax credits under s. 71.613, Stats. Under ss. 91.80 and 91.82, Stats., landowners claiming those tax credits are required to comply with soil and water conservation standards promulgated by the department under ss. 92.05 (3) (c) and (k), 92.14 (8), and 281.16 (3) (b) and (c), Stats. Those standards are found primarily in ch. ATCP 50, Wis. Adm. Code, as well as the Department of Natural Resources performance standards under ss. NR 151.02 to 151.08, Wis. Adm. Code.

### ***Plain Language Analysis***

#### **Background**

Wisconsin's Farmland Preservation Program (FPP), ch. 91, Stats., was repealed and recreated under 2009 Wis. Act 28. Chapter 91, Stats., was updated to acknowledge the growing pressures on farmland across the state and to curb the increasing conversion of farmland out of agricultural use.

The farmland preservation law requires all counties to update their farmland preservation plans before January 1, 2016. The farmland preservation planning process ensures that local governments evaluate the agricultural land within their boundaries and consider the role that agriculture plays in their local economy. Counties must submit farmland preservation plans to DATCP for certification. In order to be certified by DATCP, the plan must meet certain requirements under ch. 91, Stats. Once a plan is certified, land that is identified as part of a farmland preservation area is then eligible for other parts of the FPP.

One such part of the FPP is farmland preservation zoning. Local governments may choose to adopt farmland preservation zoning ordinances to protect farmland. Similar to farmland preservation plans, zoning ordinances must also be submitted to the department for certification. To be certified, the ordinance must meet certain requirements under ch. 91, Stats. The certification process ensures that only compatible uses are allowed in the farmland preservation district to limit pressures on active agriculture created by the presence of incompatible uses. Once certified, landowners are eligible to claim farmland preservation tax credits.

Another component of the FPP is the farmland preservation agreement. Under ch. 91., Stats., any new agreement must cover land located in a landowner-initiated and state-designated Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA). Landowners with farmland preservation agreements are eligible to collect farmland preservation tax credits. By clustering agreements in areas that are primarily devoted to agricultural use, farmland can be better protected because a concentration of agriculture provides landowners with the confidence that the surrounding land will remain in agriculture. This confidence encourages landowners not only to continue farming, but to make additional investments in their agricultural operations.

## **Rule Content**

### **General**

This rule does all of the following:

- Creates ch. ATCP 49.
- Adds to definitions listed under s. 91.01, Stats., and further clarifies certain terms in ch. 91.
- Specifies the application content and process for receiving certification of farmland preservation plans and ordinances.
- Specifies types of ordinance amendments for which certification is required under s. 91.36 (8) (b) 3, Stats.
- Authorizes additional uses allowed in a farmland preservation zoning district.
- Specifies when the department may deny an application for a farmland preservation agreement.

### **Definitions**

This rule:

- Makes clear the types of uses that may be listed by a political subdivision as accessory uses and agriculture-related uses.
- Defines several terms including crops and forest management.
- Adds a definition of base farm tract to provide political subdivisions flexibility in administering this density restriction if they choose to utilize it.

### **Farmland Preservation Plans**

This rule:

- Reiterates the statutory requirement that, unless a county obtains certification of a new farmland preservation plan by December 31 of the year following the expiration date of the county plan, the department may withdraw certification of any farmland preservation zoning ordinances within the county.
- Explains the circumstances under which a county may receive an extension to the expiration of their farmland preservation plan to facilitate coordination with other planning and zoning efforts that may be occurring in the county.
- Reiterates the statutory requirement that any amendment to a certified farmland preservation plan must be submitted to the department for certification.
- Provides that the rationale used for identifying the farmland preservation area must be based on objective criteria. Describes the relationship between the farmland preservation plan and any county's comprehensive plan.
- Provides technical specifications for the farmland preservation plan map and states that the county must provide the department with the data used to create the map.

## **Farmland Preservation Zoning**

This rule:

- Provides that nonfarm residences existing at the time an ordinance is certified may be considered permitted uses rather than prior nonconforming uses.
- Authorizes single-family and duplex nonfarm dwellings as conditional uses subject to density restrictions that are as restrictive as the density standards under ch. 91, Stats.
- Clarifies the statutory provision that an ordinance certification expires according to the statutory schedule in s. 91.34, Stats., and a political subdivision has until December 31 of the year following the expiration date to have its ordinance certified by the department to prevent landowners from losing eligibility to claim farmland preservation tax credits.
- Clarifies the statutory provision that authorizes a local government to request an extension to the expiration of its farmland preservation zoning ordinance certification to facilitate coordination with other planning and zoning efforts that may be occurring in the town or county.
- Describes the relationship between a political subdivision's farmland preservation zoning ordinance and the county's farmland preservation plan.
- Provides technical specifications for the farmland preservation zoning map and states that the political subdivision must provide the department with the data used to create the map.
- Specifies that the department may withdraw certification of an ordinance if the county farmland preservation plan expires or if the political subdivision adopts an ordinance that fails to comply with ch. 91, Stats.
- Specifies when an amendment to a farmland preservation zoning ordinance must be submitted to the department for certification.

## **Farmland Preservation Agreements**

This rule:

- Provides that the department may deny a farmland preservation agreement application if the department determines that lands to be excluded from the proposed agreement are withheld for purposes that conflict with the goals of the Agricultural Enterprise Area, or are withheld for purposes that will likely impair or limit agricultural use on other lands in the Agricultural Enterprise Area or lands proposed for inclusion under a farmland preservation agreement.

*Summary of, and comparison with, existing or proposed federal statutes and regulations.*

There are no federal regulations or statutes related to this rule.

### *Comparison with rules in adjacent states*

Michigan, Illinois, and Minnesota have statewide programs in which landowners may restrict the use of their land to agricultural or related uses in exchange for tax credits. These programs require local governments to engage in planning efforts prior to allowing landowners to enter into these agreements.

Michigan allows farmers voluntarily to enter into a Farmland Development Rights Agreement with the state. In exchange for income tax credits and exemptions from special assessments, landowners agree not to develop the land for a specified number of years.

In Illinois, any single landowner, or two or more contiguous landowners with over 350 acres of land, may form an Agricultural District. The county government is responsible for approving and implementing these areas, however the Illinois Department of Agriculture may advise those county governments interested in forming or expanding these areas. Once land is within an Agricultural District, the area remains protected for ten years. Landowners can request additions to, deletions from, or dissolution of the area. Land within the area is protected from local laws that might restrict farming practices and from special assessments.

In Minnesota, counties outside of the metropolitan area can participate in the Greater Minnesota Agricultural Preserves Program. Counties that want to participate must develop an agricultural land preservation plan for review and approval by the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. The plan must identify land for long-term agricultural use and anticipate expected growth around urbanized areas. The designated areas must be adopted as part of the county's comprehensive plan. Landowners that are located within these areas may then place a restrictive covenant on their land, agreeing to limit the land to agricultural or forestry use. The covenant is recorded on the title to the land. In exchange for agreeing to preserve land for long term agricultural use, the landowner receives property tax credits of \$1.50 per acre, per year.

### *Summary of factual data and analytical methodologies*

To develop this rule, DATCP consulted a group of stakeholders familiar with and potentially affected by the provisions of the rule. DATCP also collected feedback from local government officials who had experience working with, understanding, and implementing the farmland preservation law.

### *Analysis and Supporting Documents Used to Determine Effect on Small Business or in Preparation of the Economic Impact Analysis*

This rule will not have a significant fiscal impact on state government and will have no significant negative fiscal effect on local governments or public utility rate payers. To determine the potential economic impact of the rule, the department posted the rule on the department

website and the state of Wisconsin administrative rules website, and contacted appropriate organizations to solicit information and advice from businesses, business sectors, associations, local governmental units, and individuals that may be affected by the proposed rule.

### *Effect on Small Businesses*

This rule will have a generally positive impact on agriculture-related businesses of all sizes, including farms. This rule will have no negative impact on non-agriculture related businesses. As part of the farmland preservation planning process, counties are required to inventory and evaluate agriculture-related businesses and services, including farm operations, agricultural production facilities, and enterprises related to agriculture. This process helps to ensure that the impact of farm operations and agriculture-related business can be measured within the community. By clarifying this requirement in the planning process, the rule may aid communities in accurately capturing the impact and breadth of farm operations and agriculture-related businesses within the area.

This rule also provides clarity in the farmland preservation zoning standards, encouraging local governments to include farm operations and agriculture-related enterprises in the zoning district. Farm operations and agriculture-related businesses may be allowed in a farmland preservation zoning district either as an agricultural use, an agriculture-related use, or an accessory use. The rule provides additional flexibility and a positive economic impact to farmers and agricultural business, including small businesses. Though such businesses may or may not claim tax credits, their presence in the district may add additional certainty to farmers also within the certified farmland preservation district, encouraging those farmers to continue to invest in their farm operations.

### *Agency Contact Person*

Questions and comments related to this rule may be directed to:

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1       **SECTION 1.** Chapter ATCP 49 is created to read:

2                                   CHAPTER ATCP 49

3                                   FARMLAND PRESERVATION

4       **Note:** This chapter implements Wisconsin’s farmland preservation program under ch. 91,  
5       Stats. The purposes of the farmland preservation program are to preserve  
6       agricultural lands, to promote soil and water conservation, to promote orderly land  
7       use planning and development, and to provide tax credits for owners of farmland  
8       covered by the program. This chapter is adopted under ss. 91.02 and 93.07 (1),  
9       Stats.

10                                   SUBCHAPTER I

11                                   DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL PROVISIONS

12       **ATCP 49.01 Definitions.** In this chapter:

13       (1) “Accessory use” has the meaning given in s. 91.01(1), Stats.

14       **Note:** A building, structure or improvement that is an integral part of, or is incidental to,  
15       an agricultural use under s. 91.01(1)(a) includes facilities *on the farm* used to:  
16       store or process raw agricultural commodities primarily produced on the farm,  
17       keep livestock, keep or service vehicles or equipment primarily used on the farm,  
18       provide veterinary services to livestock on the farm, or store or process inputs for  
19       agricultural uses primarily on the farm. Such buildings and structures may also  
20       include greenhouses, roadside stands and agricultural research facilities selling or  
21       utilizing agricultural products produced primarily on the farm, as well as facilities  
22       to produce energy primarily from the farm’s products, or primarily for use on the  
23       farm, such as wind turbines, solar energy structures, manure digesters, or bio-fuel  
24       facilities. A waste storage or processing facility to store or process animal waste  
25       produced on the farm may also be considered an accessory use.  
26

27       **Note:** An activity or business operation that is an integral part of, or incidental to, an  
28       agricultural use under s. 91.01(1)(b), Stats., could include activities such as: direct  
29       sales from farm to customer, “you-pick” operations, crop mazes, and agricultural  
30       tourism operations.

31       (2) “Agriculture-related use” means any of the following:

32       (a) An agriculture-related use as defined in s. 91.01(1) (3), Stats.

33       (b) A facility integral to an agricultural use, regardless of whether the facility is located  
34       on a farm, that relies on agricultural uses conducted primarily off-site.

1           **Note:** These “agriculture-related uses” may include facilities to: provide agricultural  
2           supplies, equipment, fertilizers, pesticides or other agricultural inputs or services  
3           to farms; store, process, handle, or market raw agricultural commodities;  
4           slaughter or process livestock that were primarily kept off-site; or process  
5           agricultural by-products or wastes produced primarily off-site. A manure  
6           digester, bio-fuel facility or other facility that produces energy for use primarily  
7           off-site may also be considered an agriculture-related use.  
8

9           (c) A facility used for providing veterinary services primarily to livestock, including the  
10          sale of supplies and pharmaceuticals related to animal husbandry.

11          **(3)** “Base farm tract” means one of the following:

12          (a) A tract of land as defined in s. 91.01(5)(a), Stats.

13          (b) All land, whether or not the parcels are contiguous, that is in a farmland preservation  
14          zoning district under the same zoning ordinance and that is part of a single farm on the date that  
15          the owner of the farm first creates a new lot or parcel from that farm, regardless of any  
16          subsequent changes in the size of the farm. All land, at the time of the creation of the new lot or  
17          parcel by the owner, is considered part of the same base farm tract, including the newly created  
18          lot or parcel.

19          **Note:** Under this provision, the political subdivision may now choose to define “base  
20          farm tract” in any of the following ways: 1) all contiguous parcels in single  
21          ownership under the same zoning ordinance, *on the date the department first*  
22          *certifies* the ordinance, 2) all contiguous parcels in single ownership under the  
23          same zoning ordinance *on a date, specified in the ordinance, which occurred*  
24          *before the department first certifies* the ordinance, or 3) all parcels in single  
25          ownership under the same zoning ordinance *on the date the owner first creates a*  
26          *new lot or parcel*, which occurs *after* the department first certifies the ordinance.  
27          The political subdivision must choose one of these ways of defining “base farm  
28          tract” in its ordinance, and any further subdividing or ownership transfers does  
29          not affect that determination.

30          **(4)** “Communications use,” as used in s. 91.46(1)(f), includes transmission lines, cell  
31          towers, antennae and broadcast towers.

32          **(5)** “Consistent with” means furthers or does not contradict objectives, goals, and  
33          policies in a relevant document.



1       **Note:** This definition is similar to that found in s. 66.1001 (1) (am), Stats., for the  
2               comprehensive planning program. Under s. 91.10 (2), Stats., the farmland  
3               preservation plan is required to be “consistent with” the county’s comprehensive  
4               plan.

5  
6       **(6)** “Contiguous” means adjacent to or sharing a common boundary.

7       **Note:** A political subdivision may choose to define “contiguous” lands as including  
8               lands separated by a road, stream or section line, or as not including those  
9               separate lands. Contiguity is defined under s. 91.84(1)(e)3., Stats., specifically  
10              for the Agricultural Enterprise Area program.

11       **(7)** “Crop” means a cultivated plant that includes any of the following:

12           (a) Field crops, including corn, wheat, oats, rye, barley, hay, potatoes, and dry beans.

13           (b) Fruits, including apples, grapes, cranberries, cherries, and berries.

14           (c) Vegetables, including tomatoes, carrots, sweet corn, and squash.

15           (d) Plants raised for culinary, medicinal, or aesthetic purposes, including herbs and  
16           spices, ginseng, and ornamental shrubs and trees.

17           (e) Plants raised for energy production, including switchgrass, or textile use, including  
18           cotton or bamboo.

19       **(8)** “Department” means the state of Wisconsin department of agriculture, trade and  
20           consumer protection.

21       **(9)** “Drainage use,” as used in s. 91.46 (1) (f), includes drainage ditches and drains, as  
22           defined in s. 88.01 (8), Stats.

23       **(10)** “Electric transmission use,” as used in s. 91.46 (1) (f), includes high voltage lines  
24           and electric substations.

25       **(11)** “Farm family business” means a business operated by the owner or operator, or  
26           resident family member of the owner or operator, of a farm, that is not associated with an  
27           agricultural use, that requires no buildings, structures, or improvements other than those  
28           described in s. 91.01(1)(a) or (c), that employs no more than 4 full-time non-family employees

1 annually, and that does not impair or limit the current or future agricultural use of the farm or of  
2 other protected farmland.

3 (12) “Forest management,” as used in s. 91.01 (2) (a) 7., means private forest lands and  
4 woodlands managed in accordance with any type of written management plan, including a plan  
5 prepared under the state’s managed forest law.

6 **Note:** This includes land that is designated as managed forest land under a forest tax  
7 program established in ss. 77.80 to 77.91, Stats. Though active agricultural land  
8 may not qualify for the managed forest law program under ss. 77.82(1)(b)1 and  
9 77.875, Stats., land covered by the managed forest law program can qualify as an  
10 agricultural use for the purposes of the farmland preservation program. A  
11 wooded lot that is not actively managed under a written management plan may be  
12 included in a farmland preservation zoning district as an open space or natural  
13 resource area but may not be included as an agricultural use. Government-owned  
14 woodlands may also be included as an open space or natural resource area.

15  
16 (13) “Governmental use,” as used in s. 91.46(1)(g), includes community centers, police  
17 and fire facilities, public parks and town halls.

18 (14) “Pipeline use,” as used in s. 91.46(1)(f), includes oil and gas pipelines.

19 (15) “Political subdivision” has the meaning given in s. 91.01(24), Stats.

20 (16) “Secretary” means the secretary of the department of agriculture, trade and  
21 consumer protection.

22 (17) “Spatial location data” means data referenced to a specific coordinate system that  
23 identifies the boundaries and spatial extent of parcels of land included in a farmland preservation  
24 area or a farmland preservation zoning district.

25 (18) “Transportation use,” as used in s. 91.46 (1) (f), includes roads and rail facilities.

26 (19) “Utility use,” as used in s. 91.46 (1) (f), includes facilities for the generation of  
27 electricity from sunlight, wind, coal or natural gas.

28 **SUBCHAPTER II**

1 FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLANS

2 **ATCP 49.10 Farmland preservation plan certification. (1) CERTIFICATION**

3 EXPIRATION. The certification of a farmland preservation plan expires on the date provided in  
4 the most recent certification of the plan or its amendment, or, if the certification does not provide  
5 an expiration date, on the date provided under s. 91.14, Stats. If a county with an expired plan  
6 does not obtain certification of a farmland preservation plan by December 31 of the year  
7 following the certification expiration date of the plan, the department may withdraw certification  
8 of any zoning ordinances within the county under the procedures in s. ATCP 49.29, effective on  
9 December 31 of the year following the year of plan expiration.

10 **Note:** If a county plan expires on December 31, 2014, the county has until December 31,  
11 2015, to obtain certification of the plan by the department. If the plan is not  
12 certified by the department by December 31, 2015, the department may withdraw  
13 certification of any zoning ordinances in the county, effective December 31, 2015.  
14 Under s. 71.613 (1) (h) 2., the landowners with land in these farmland preservation  
15 zoning districts could not claim tax credits on those lands for the tax year 2015,  
16 since certification must be in effect on the last day of the calendar year in order for  
17 a plan to be considered certified. The county is not precluded from seeking future  
18 certification of its farmland preservation plan.  
19

20 **(2) CERTIFICATION EXPIRATION EXTENSION.** The secretary may delay the expiration date  
21 of the certification of a county's farmland preservation plan for up to 2 years upon a written  
22 request from the county demonstrating to the secretary's satisfaction that a delay would allow the  
23 county to coordinate the farmland preservation planning process with other planning or zoning  
24 efforts in the county.

25 **(3) AMENDMENTS AND CERTIFICATION.** If, after July 1, 2009, a county amends a  
26 farmland preservation plan in accordance with s. 66.1001 (4), Stats., the amendment shall be  
27 submitted to the department for certification.

28 **Note:** Under s. 91.16 (8), Stats., amendments are not effective unless certified by the  
29 department.  
30

1           **ATCP 49.12 Certification standards.** The department may certify a county’s farmland  
2 preservation plan under s. 91.16, Stats., if that plan complies with the requirements in s. 91.10  
3 (1) and (2), Stats., and all of the following:

4           **(1) RATIONALE.** (a) The farmland preservation plan shall describe the rationale used to  
5 determine which areas the county plans to preserve for agricultural use and agriculture-related  
6 use. The rationale shall be based on objective criteria related to the characteristics of the land  
7 parcels themselves, including consideration of all of the following criteria:

- 8           1. Whether the soils are suitable for agricultural production.
- 9           2. Whether the land has historically been used for agricultural use or agriculture-related  
10 use.
- 11           3. Whether the land is in close proximity to agricultural infrastructure.
- 12           4. Whether the land is in undeveloped natural resource or open space areas that connect  
13 other farmland parcels to create a large, uninterrupted block of preserved area.
- 14           5. Whether the land may be under some development pressure but the land is not located  
15 in an area the county plans for development in the next 15 years.

16           Note: The criteria listed above are all land-based considerations that may or may not be  
17 relevant in the county. Other factors may also be considered such as availability  
18 of supporting infrastructure or presence of protected land.

19           (b) The rationale shall exclude from a farmland preservation area any parcels planned,  
20 within 15 years, for nonagricultural development or other incompatible uses in the town or  
21 county comprehensive plans.

22           (c) The rationale may not be based primarily on landowner preferences.

23           (d) The rationale shall be applied consistently across the county to the extent applicable  
24 and practicable.

1 (e) The farmland preservation plan map shall accurately reflect the rationale utilized by  
2 the county.

3 **Note:** Utilizing objective criteria means that the criteria must be applied impartially and  
4 not favor some landowners over other landowners. The criteria should be based  
5 on characteristics associated with the land itself or existing pressures that may  
6 affect the future use of the land instead of focusing solely on the preferences of  
7 individual landowners.  
8

9 **(2) RELATIONSHIP TO THE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.** (a) The farmland preservation  
10 plan shall be consistent with any county comprehensive plan.

11 **Note:** To be “consistent with” does not mean that the farmland preservation plan and the  
12 comprehensive plan must be identical; however, for the department to find that  
13 the plans are consistent there should not be any significant difference between  
14 elements of the plans. For example, not every area that is shown as an  
15 agricultural area in the comprehensive plan future land use map must be included  
16 as a farmland preservation area in the farmland preservation plan map; however,  
17 lands planned for residential or non-agricultural commercial use in the  
18 comprehensive plan should not be planned for farmland preservation in the  
19 farmland preservation plan within the next 15 years.  
20

21 (b) The farmland preservation plan shall be included in any county comprehensive plan.

22 **Note:** Under s. 91.10 (2), Stats., the county is required to include the farmland  
23 preservation plan in any county comprehensive plan it adopts. Under s. 91.18,  
24 Stats., the farmland preservation plan is not qualified for certification by the  
25 department if pars. (a) and (b) are not met.  
26

27 **(3) PLAN INELIGIBLE FOR CERTIFICATION.** The department may not certify a farmland  
28 preservation plan that does not meet the requirements of ch. 91, Stats., and this subchapter.

29 **ATCP 49.14 Applying for certification of a plan or a plan amendment.**

30 **(1) GENERAL.** A county seeking certification of its farmland preservation plan or a plan  
31 amendment shall submit an application to the department as provided in this section.

32 **(2) REQUIRED INFORMATION.** The application for certification shall include all of the  
33 following in order to be considered complete and to be evaluated for compliance with s. 91.16,  
34 Stats.:

1 (a) An application on a form developed by the department that includes the information  
2 required under ss. 91.20 (2) and (3), Stats.

3 **Note:** You may obtain a copy of the form by contacting the department at the following  
4 address:

5  
6 Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection  
7 Attn: Bureau of Land and Water Resource Management  
8 2811 Agriculture Drive  
9 Madison, WI 53718

10 Website:

11 [http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Working\\_Lands\\_Initiative/Farmland\\_Preservati](http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Working_Lands_Initiative/Farmland_Preservation_Planning/index.aspx)  
12 [on\\_Planning/index.aspx](http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Working_Lands_Initiative/Farmland_Preservation_Planning/index.aspx)

13  
14 (b) All parts of the plan for which the County is seeking certification. A county seeking  
15 certification of a full plan shall submit the text and map of the plan along with the spatial  
16 location data used to create the farmland preservation plan map. A county seeking certification  
17 of an amendment to a certified plan shall submit all parts of the plan affected by the amendment.

18 **Note:** A county seeking certification of a plan amendment only needs to submit those  
19 parts of the plan that are affected by the amendment. If a county wishes to amend  
20 the text of its farmland preservation plan, then the county may submit just the  
21 plan text. If a county wishes to amend the plan map, then the county may submit  
22 just the plan map. If the amendment makes changes to both the plan map and  
23 text, then the county should submit both the map and the text.

24 (c) All spatial location data used to delineate the farmland preservation areas proposed  
25 for certification, submitted in accordance with the department requirements on format.

26 **(3) PLANTEXT.** The plan text shall comply with the requirements in ss. 91.10 (1) and (2),  
27 Stats., and this subchapter.

28 **(4) PLANMAP.** A farmland preservation plan shall include a map that clearly delineates  
29 all areas in the county identified as a farmland preservation area so that a reader can determine  
30 whether a parcel is within an identified area. The farmland preservation plan map shall:

31 (a) Be comprised of one county map or a series of town, village, and city maps.

1 (b) Be titled “Farmland Preservation Plan Map” followed by the name of the political  
2 subdivision depicted on the map.

3 (c) Specify the county in which the farmland preservation plan area is located.

4 (d) Clearly delineate areas designated for farmland preservation, designating parcels as  
5 included or excluded from the district and following parcel boundaries where possible.

6 (e) Display environmental or other overlay areas, if any, in a manner that does not  
7 obscure or confuse the boundaries of an underlying farmland preservation area.

8 (f) Be drawn at a scale no greater than one inch to 2,000 feet (1:24,000).

9 **Note:** The county may fulfill this requirement by submitting maps at that required scale  
10 only for the towns which are to include farmland preservation areas.

11 (g) Show political boundaries, parcel boundaries, section lines, section numbers, roads,  
12 and water bodies.

13 (h) Include a map legend with corresponding symbols or colors for all data represented  
14 on the map.

15 (i) Identify farmland preservation areas and non-farmland preservation areas with  
16 corresponding symbols in the legend and with titles that correspond to the titles in the plan text  
17 that apply to those areas.

18 (j) Specify map scale, north arrow direction, map date, and map producer.

19 **SUBCHAPTER III**

20 **FARMLAND PRESERVATION ZONING**

21 **ATCP 49.20 General.** A political subdivision may adopt a farmland preservation  
22 zoning ordinance. In order for the ordinance to be certified by the department under s. 91.36,  
23 Stats., the ordinance must meet the requirements of s. 91.38, Stats., and this subchapter.

1           **ATCP 49.22 Permitted uses.** In addition to the uses listed under s. 91.44 (1), Stats.,  
2 the following uses may be allowed as permitted uses in a certified district:

3           **(1) EXISTING RESIDENCE.** Residences, regardless of occupancy, existing as of the  
4 effective date [LRB inserts date] or an earlier date specified by the ordinance may be permitted.

5           **Note:** Residences, which may or may not be associated with a farm, that are constructed  
6 as of a date specified in the zoning ordinance text may be allowed as permitted  
7 uses in the district. These residences need not receive a conditional use permit  
8 unless the local government decides to require it and they need not follow the  
9 prior nonconforming use provisions found under s. 59.69 (1), 60.61 (5), or 62.23  
10 (7) (h), Stats., unless mandated by the local government.

11           **(2) FARM FAMILY BUSINESS.**

12           **ATCP 49.23 Conditional uses.** In addition to the uses listed in s. 91.46, Stats., and  
13 ATCP 49.22, a proposed new single-family or duplex nonfarm dwelling may be allowed as a  
14 conditional use in a certified farmland preservation district. The new nonfarm dwelling is  
15 subject to legal restrictions established by the political subdivision which demonstrate to the  
16 department's satisfaction that the restrictions will be as restrictive as the density standards for  
17 nonfarm residences set forth in s. 91.46 (2), Stats.

18           **Note:** A political subdivision that chooses to allow limited nonfarm residences within the  
19 certified farmland preservation district may choose to implement the base farm  
20 tract concept defined in s. 91.01 (5), Stats., and applied through s. 91.46 (2) (c) 1.  
21 and 2., Stats., or may utilize an alternative provision developed at the local level.  
22 The political subdivision must demonstrate to the Secretary that the local  
23 provision limits nonfarm development to the same extent or more as the state  
24 statutes so that the alternative policy would not allow for both additional nonfarm  
25 residences to be built and more nonfarm residential acreage to be introduced into  
26 the farmland preservation district. The political subdivision may choose to apply  
27 a density restriction to all parcels in the district regardless of whether the parcels  
28 qualify as farms under the definition of farm in the ordinance. The conditional  
29 use permit for a nonfarm residence is an optional provision that a political  
30 subdivision may choose to include in a farmland preservation zoning ordinance.

31           **ATCP 49.24 Zoning ordinance certification expiration. (1) CERTIFICATION**  
32 **EXPIRATION.** The certification of a farmland preservation zoning ordinance expires on the date



1 provided in the most recent certification of the ordinance or its amendment, or, if the certification  
2 does not provide an expiration date, on the date provided under s. 91.34, Stats. If a local  
3 government with an expired ordinance does not obtain certification of a farmland preservation  
4 zoning ordinance by December 31 of the year following the expiration date, landowners covered  
5 by the zoning ordinance are not eligible to claim farmland preservation tax credits beginning in  
6 the year following the year of the expiration date.

7 **Note:** If a farmland preservation zoning ordinance expires on December 31, 2014, the  
8 political subdivision has until December 31, 2015, to obtain certification of its  
9 ordinance by the department. If the political subdivision's ordinance is not  
10 certified by the department by December 31, 2015, all landowners with land  
11 located in the farmland preservation zoning district may not claim tax credits for  
12 tax year 2015. The political subdivision is not precluded from seeking future  
13 certification of its farmland preservation zoning ordinance.  
14

15 **(2) CERTIFICATION EXPIRATION EXTENSION.** The secretary may delay the expiration date  
16 of the certification of a farmland preservation zoning ordinance for up to 2 years upon a written  
17 request from the political subdivision demonstrating to the secretary's satisfaction that a delay  
18 would allow the political subdivision to coordinate updating the farmland preservation zoning  
19 ordinance with other planning efforts in the political subdivision.

20 **ATCP 49.25 Certification standards. (1) QUALIFYING FOR CERTIFICATION.** The  
21 department may certify a farmland preservation zoning ordinance under s. 91.36, Stats., if that  
22 ordinance complies with the requirements in ss. 91.38 and 91.40, Stats., and this subchapter.

23 **(2) CONSISTENCY WITH FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN.** At least 80% of the area  
24 planned for farmland preservation in each town, city, or village covered by a certified farmland  
25 preservation plan shall be included in the farmland preservation district or a district that imposes  
26 land use restrictions as restrictive as or more restrictive than the farmland preservation zoning  
27 district. The department may consider certifying a farmland preservation zoning ordinance that  
28 is between 70 and 80% consistent with a farmland preservation plan if the political subdivision

1 can demonstrate to the Secretary's satisfaction a reasonable, objective justification for the lower  
2 level of consistency.

3 **Note:** If an area is planned for farmland preservation but is not zoned for farmland  
4 preservation, it may be zoned as open space or conservancy. Such a zoning  
5 designation would be consistent with farmland preservation. Areas that are zoned  
6 for nonagricultural residential, commercial, or industrial use, however, would not  
7 be consistent with farmland preservation.  
8

9 **ATCP 49.26 Applying for ordinance certification. (1) GENERAL.** Except as provided  
10 under s. 91.36 (8), Stats., and s. ATCP 49.27, a political subdivision seeking certification of its  
11 farmland preservation ordinance shall submit an application to the department as provided in this  
12 section.

13 **(2) REQUIRED INFORMATION.** The application for certification shall include all of the  
14 following in order to be considered complete and evaluated for compliance with s. 91.36, Stats.:

15 (a) An application on a form developed by the department that includes the information  
16 required under s. 91.40 (2), Stats.

17 **Note:** You may obtain a copy of the form by contacting the department at the following  
18 address:

19  
20 Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection  
21 Attn: Bureau of Land and Water Resource Management  
22 2811 Agriculture Drive  
23 Madison, WI 53718  
24 Website:  
25 [http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Working\\_Lands\\_Initiative/Farmland\\_Preservati](http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Working_Lands_Initiative/Farmland_Preservation_Zoning/index.aspx)  
26 [on\\_Zoning/index.aspx](http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Working_Lands_Initiative/Farmland_Preservation_Zoning/index.aspx)

27 (b) All parts of the zoning ordinance affected by the farmland preservation  
28 district for which the political subdivision is seeking certification.

29 (c) All spatial location data used to delineate the farmland preservation zoning districts  
30 proposed for certification.

1           (3) ORDINANCE TEXT. The ordinance text shall comply with the requirements in s. 91.38  
2 (1), Stats.

3           (4) ORDINANCE MAP. A farmland preservation zoning ordinance shall include a map that  
4 clearly delineates each farmland preservation zoning district so that a reader can determine  
5 whether a parcel is within a farmland preservation district. The farmland preservation zoning  
6 ordinance map shall do all of the following:

7           (a) Be comprised of one county map or a series of town maps for a county ordinance, or  
8 one map for a city, town, or village ordinance.

9           (b) Be titled “Zoning Ordinance Map” preceded or followed by the name of the political  
10 subdivision depicted on the map.

11           (c) Specify the county in which the farmland preservation zoning district is located, if  
12 the map covers only one town, city, or village.

13           (d) Clearly delineate areas zoned for farmland preservation, designating parcels as  
14 included in the farmland preservation district or included in another zoning district and following  
15 parcel boundaries to the extent possible.

16           **Note:** The zoning district does not need to follow parcel boundaries, although the  
17 department prefers that districts follow parcel boundaries. For purposes of the tax  
18 credit, landowners covered by the farmland preservation zoning district are  
19 responsible for claiming the correct number of acres of land they own that are  
20 covered by the farmland preservation district, regardless of whether the political  
21 subdivision follows parcel boundaries.

22           (e) Display environmental or other overlay areas in a way that does not obscure or  
23 confuse the boundaries of an underlying farmland preservation zoning district.

24           (f) Be drawn at a map scale no greater than one inch to 2,000 feet (1:24,000).

25           **Note:** For submission of a county ordinance, the county may fulfill this requirement by  
26 submitting maps at the required scale only for the towns which are to include  
27 farmland preservation districts.  
28

1 (g) Show political boundaries, parcel boundaries, section lines, section numbers, roads,  
2 and water bodies.

3 (h) Include a map legend that includes corresponding symbols or colors for all data  
4 represented on the map.

5 (i) Identify all mapped farmland preservation districts with titles that correspond to the  
6 titles in the zoning ordinance text that apply to those districts.

7 (j) Specify map scale, north arrow direction, map date, and map producer.

8 **ATCP 49.27 Applying for certification of an ordinance amendment.** (1) An  
9 amendment to a certified farmland preservation zoning ordinance is automatically considered to  
10 be certified as part of the certified farmland preservation zoning ordinance, except as provided in  
11 sub. (2).

12 **Note:** A political subdivision may submit to the department, at any time, an amendment  
13 to a certified farmland preservation zoning ordinance, and request a written  
14 determination from the department as to whether the amendment requires  
15 certification by the department.  
16

17 (2) An amendment to a certified farmland preservation zoning ordinance shall be  
18 submitted to the department for certification review under s. 91.36, Stats., and s. ATCP 49.26,  
19 and is not considered to be automatically certified, if the amendment does any of the following:

20 (a) Adds uses not previously allowed in the farmland preservation district.

21 (b) Eliminates findings or conditions that must be met before approving a use for a  
22 location in the farmland preservation district.

23 (c) Increases the number of nonfarm residences or the number of nonfarm acres allowed  
24 in the farmland preservation district.

25 (d) Changes the findings required for allowing a rezone out of a farmland preservation  
26 district.

1 (e) Results in a farmland preservation zoning ordinance map that is no longer meets the  
2 requirements of s. ATCP 49.25(2).

3 **Note:** Changing the numbering or formatting of the ordinance, changing the minimum  
4 lot size, rezoning land out of a farmland preservation district unless the rezone  
5 would result in a farmland preservation zoning map that no longer meets the  
6 specified consistency requirements with the currently certified farmland  
7 preservation plan map, or making changes that only affect districts outside of the  
8 farmland preservation zoning district do not require certification by the  
9 department.  
10

11 **ATCP 49.29 Withdrawal of certification.** (1) Pursuant to s. 91.36 (8) (c), Stats., the  
12 department may by written notice, without prior notice or hearing, withdraw certification of a  
13 farmland preservation zoning ordinance under this section. The withdrawal is a summary special  
14 order under ch. ATCP 1.

15 (2) The secretary may withdraw certification under sub. (1) if any of the following  
16 occur:

17 (a) The certification of a county farmland preservation plan for the lands under the  
18 certified farmland preservation zoning ordinance has expired.

19 (b) An amendment, adopted after July 1, 2009, to a certified farmland preservation  
20 zoning ordinance fails to comply with the requirements of s. 91.38, Stats.

21 (3) The notice under sub, (1) shall state the reason for the withdrawal of certification.

22 **Note:** The department may withdraw certification of an ordinance under this section  
23 regardless of the date the ordinance was certified, and regardless of whether the  
24 ordinance was developed under the provisions of s. 91.06, 2007 Stats., or ch. 91,  
25 Stats., (*see* s. 91.36 (8) (c), Stats.).  
26  
27

## 28 SUBCHAPTER IV

### 29 FARMLAND PRESERVATION AGREEMENTS

1           **ATCP 49.30 FARMLAND PRESERVATION AGREEMENTS; DENIAL OF APPLICATION.**

2   The department may deny an application to enter into a farmland preservation agreement if any  
3   of the following apply:

4           **(1)** The department determines that lands to be excluded from the proposed agreement  
5   are being withheld for purposes that conflict with the goals of the agricultural enterprise area  
6   program under s. 91.84, Stats.

7           **(2)** The department determines that lands to be excluded from the agreement are being  
8   withheld for purposes that will likely impair or limit agricultural use on other lands in the  
9   agricultural enterprise area or lands proposed for inclusion under a farmland preservation  
10   agreement.

11           **SECTION 2. EFFECTIVE DATE:** This rule takes effect on the first day of the month  
12   following publication in the Wisconsin administrative register, as provided in s. 227.22 (2)  
13   (intro.), Stats.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ben Brancel  
Secretary