

Agriculture and Natural Resources

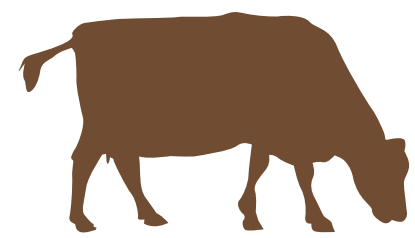
WICCI 2021 report sheds light on the impact of climate change on Wisconsin agriculture. According to the report, Wisconsin's agriculture sector is experiencing the effects of climate change. The report indicates that land, water, and built environment in the state will be negatively impacted as Wisconsin's climate continues to rise. It also includes responses to these changes and the implementation process.

Warmer and wetter weather patterns in Wisconsin have led to management and economic difficulties for producers, causing delays in planting and harvesting, harming water quality, and reducing milk production. Implementing climate smart agricultural and conservation practices can reduce emissions and support improved carbon storage, soil health, and water quality.

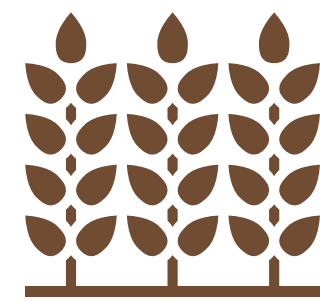
Agriculture & Natural Resources Goals



Increase native habitat and tree canopy within the County.



Increase participation in programs that support climate smart agriculture, energy savings, etc.



Increase enrollment in Farmland Preservation Program & Ag Enterprise Area

The goals and strategies in this section of the plan aim to support initiatives that encourage producers and landowners to implement practices that are mutually beneficial to soil health, water quality, biodiversity, and when applicable a producer's revenue. While there is a heavy emphasis on the agriculture sector, it is important to acknowledge the impact that impervious surfaces in the built environment have on soil health, water quality, and biodiversity. This section is also not all encompassing of the conservation efforts already established in other plans within Eau Claire County but instead highlights areas of existing initiatives and how this plan could support them.

Community Highlight - No Till Drill

Farmers in Eau Claire County can rent a 10-foot-wide Great Plains No-Till Drill from the Land Conservation Division. In 2023, 28 renters and seeded approximately 605 acres of farmland in Eau Claire County with a cover crops, native plantings, and row crops.

No-till farming is a conservation technique that involves refraining from tillage operations before planting a crop. The practice of no-till planting has numerous advantages for both the soil and the cultivated crop. Firstly, it helps to maintain the soil structure by reducing the amount of disturbance it undergoes. Additionally, it preserves residue on top of the soil, which acts as a protective layer against wind and rain. Once a successful no-till system is established, many farmers report increased yield and profitability on their farms.



Agriculture & Natural Resources Implementation Strategies

Objective 1: Retain, restore, and enhance natural spaces.

Strategy 1.1: Support Land Stewardship Committee and expansion of County Parks & Forest land

Strategy 1.2: Promote County and community native plant and tree sales.

Strategy 1.3: Collaborate with community organizations to provide education & outreach about native plants, alternative lawns, natural buffers, rain gardens, etc.

Objective 2: Educate landowners on the ins and outs of solar energy development to encourage landowner confidence and protections when approached by developers.

Strategy 2.1: Provide guides and resources online.

Strategy 2.2: Host workshops and seminars with industry experts.

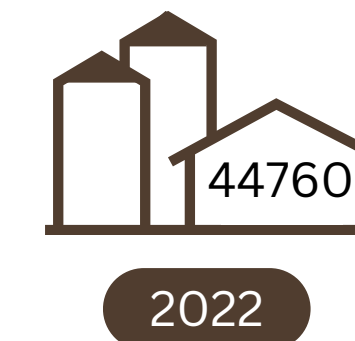
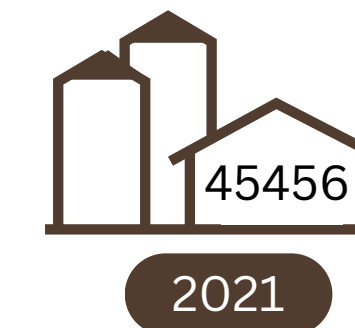
Objective 3: Support the implementation of the Land, Water, and Resource Management (LWRM) Plan.

Strategy 3.1: Partner with organizations like National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), FOE, and LCD to distribute information to agriculture community through a variety of methods.

Strategy 3.2: Increase awareness and participation in agriculture programs and incentives.



Agriculture & Natural Resources Baseline Indicator Data



The Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) provides landowners with an opportunity to claim an income tax credit by meeting soil and water conservation standards. For participants of the FPP with Agricultural Preservation zoning (AP), they can receive an income tax credit of \$7.50 per acre. Additionally, those within the Golden Triangle Ag Enterprise Area who sign a 15-year Farmland Preservation Agreement can receive further income tax credits.

In Eau Claire County, there are a total of **246 participants** and **45,456 acres enrolled in FPP**. To date, the Farmland Preservation Tax Credit has returned almost \$10 million in income tax credits to Eau Claire County landowners since its inception in 1977.



County Forest

57,712 acres managed for public recreation, wildlife habitat development, and timber production.

Ag Enterprise Area (Golden Triangle)

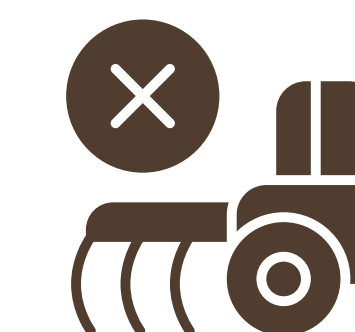
Since 2016, Eau Claire County farmers have established the Golden Triangle as an Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA). The staff has since worked with landowners to sign a voluntary 15-year farmland preservation agreement in these designated areas. Currently, **7,618** acres of land are under this agreement, accounting for over 30% of the total land area in the Golden Triangle AEA. Thanks to these agreements, the local farms receive an additional \$20,226 in tax credits every year.



Nutrient Management Planning

8 workshops hosted, 37 farmers in 2022

40+ Plans with over 15,000 acres in 2022



No-Till Drill Program (2023)

28 renters

605 acres planted



Tree & Native Plant Sale

1.1 million+ trees since 1982

2,000+ native plants since 2019