

Farmland Preservation

WHAT IS FARMLAND PRESERVATION?

It is the purchase of conservation easements in order to combat the loss of productive farmland to residential and commercial development. A conservation easement is the purchase of the development rights from the landowner. These easements are perpetual.

AGRICULTURAL SECURITY AREAS (ASAs)

They are tools for strengthening and protecting our quality farmland from the urbanization of our rural areas. A minimum of 250 acres is required to form an ASA. In order to qualify for preservation, a farm must be enrolled in an ASA.

HOW IS AN EASEMENT CHOSEN FOR PURCHASE?

The parcel is rated against other eligible parcels according to several criteria.

Quality of Farmland

Farms must be a minimum of 20 acres. There are a few exceptions.

½ of the tract must be harvested cropland, pasture or grazing land and must contain 50% soil capability classes I-IV.

Stewardship

Farms are rated on the use of conservation practices and best management practices of nutrient management and soil erosion control practices. Farms must have a conservation plan to be eligible for the program.

Likelihood of Conversion

Factors include: proximity to sewer and water lines, amount of non-farm development nearby, amount of other preserved farms in that area.

Determination of Easement Values

Each county's preservation board selects an independent licensed real estate appraiser to determine the market value and the agricultural value of the land. The difference between

the two values is the value of the perpetual conservation easement. Most counties have a maximum price per acre that they are able to offer. Our county is currently offering a maximum purchase price of \$2000.00.