

Waverly Township
 Van Buren County, Michigan
Farmland Preservation Program
Community Survey

Dear resident,

We are asking for your help. By completing the questionnaire below you will help us decide whether or not Waverly Township should participate in the Van Buren County Farmland Preservation Program. Please take a few moments to complete the questionnaire. Your answers and any comments will be kept confidential and treated as anonymous inputs. Your help is very much appreciated; thank you for your assistance.

Please return this survey with your tax payment or, bring or mail it separately to the Township Hall by 28-Feb-2007.

- Do you own farmland? Yes No
- How many acres do you own? _____
- Do you own farmland that is not in use? Yes No
- Do you rent or lease out farmland? Yes No

Please place a "checkmark" indicating the answer which best represents your opinion.

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage the protection of farming and agricultural operations in the Township.					
2. In the future, Planning and Zoning should allow for development of farmland for other uses than farming.					
3. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage protection of farmland.					
4. The Township should consider formal programs to assist in the perseveration of farmland.					
5. The Township should encourage development of homes on smaller lots where they are surrounded by permanently preserved open spaces or farmland.					
6. I would consider support for using Township tax revenue to assist in preserving active farmland in the Township.					

Comments: _____

Total Number of Surveys:	220
Surveys indicating ownership of farmland exceeding 20 acres:	80
Surveys indicating ownership of non-farmland exceeding 20 acres:	16
Surveys indicating ownership of farmland not in use:	61
Surveys indicating rental or lease out of farmland:	25

Acreage not indicated	60
Acres = >0 to <10	38
Acres = >10 to <20	26
Acres = >20 to <30	22
Acres = >30 to <40	9
Acres = >40 to <50	27
Acres = >50	38

Questions	No Opinion	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage the protection of farming and agricultural operations in the Township.	19 9%	10 5%	20 9%	53 24%	118 54%
2. In the future, Planning and Zoning should allow for development of farmland for other uses than farming.	31 14%	63 29%	58 26%	44 20%	24 11%
3. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage protection of farmland.	28 13%	13 6%	26 12%	45 20%	108 49%
4. The Township should consider formal programs to assist in the perseveration of farmland.	30 14%	16 7%	22 10%	58 26%	94 43%
5. The Township should encourage development of homes on smaller lots where they are surrounded by permanently preserved open spaces or farmland.	41 19%	36 16%	37 17%	60 27%	46 21%
6. I would consider support for using Township tax revenue to assist in preserving active farmland in the Township.	35 16%	38 17%	37 17%	45 20%	64 29%

**Waverly Township Community Survey
Farmland Preservation – February 2007
Graphic Summary of Survey Results**

Total Number of Surveys: 220

Questions	No Opinion	Strongly Disagree / Disagree					Agree / Strongly Agree					
		-100%	-80%	-60%	-40%	-20%	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
1. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage the protection of farming and agricultural operations in the Township.	9%						5%	9%	24%	54%		
2. In the future, Planning and Zoning should allow for development of farmland for other uses than farming.	14%					29%	26%	20%	11%			
3. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage protection of farmland.	13%						6%	12%	20%	49%		
4. The Township should consider formal programs to assist in the perseveration of farmland.	14%						7%	10%	26%	43%		
5. The Township should encourage development of homes on smaller lots where they are surrounded by permanently preserved open spaces or farmland.	19%					16%	17%	27%	21%			
6. I would consider support for using Township tax revenue to assist in preserving active farmland in the Township.	16%						17%	17%	20%	29%		

Total Number of Surveys:	220
Surveys indicating ownership of farmland:	103

Questions	No Opinion	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage the protection of farming and agricultural operations in the Township.	4 4%	6 6%	10 10%	23 22%	60 58%
2. In the future, Planning and Zoning should allow for development of farmland for other uses than farming.	12 12%	32 31%	29 28%	18 17%	12 12%
3. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage protection of farmland.	6 6%	7 7%	14 14%	21 20%	55 53%
4. The Township should consider formal programs to assist in the perseveration of farmland.	10 10%	7 7%	7 7%	28 27%	51 50%
5. The Township should encourage development of homes on smaller lots where they are surrounded by permanently preserved open spaces or farmland.	17 17%	23 22%	22 21%	20 19%	21 20%
6. I would consider support for using Township tax revenue to assist in preserving active farmland in the Township.	14 14%	14 14%	18 17%	22 21%	35 34%

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Surveys indicating farmland ownership: 103

Questions	No Opinion	Strongly Disagree / Disagree					Agree / Strongly Agree					
		-100%	-80%	-60%	-40%	-20%	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
1. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage the protection of farming and agricultural operations in the Township.	4%						6%	10%	22%	58%		
2. In the future, Planning and Zoning should allow for development of farmland for other uses than farming.	12%				31%	28%	17%	12%				
3. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage protection of farmland.	6%						7%	14%	20%	53%		
4. The Township should consider formal programs to assist in the perseveration of farmland.	10%						7%	7%	27%	50%		
5. The Township should encourage development of homes on smaller lots where they are surrounded by permanently preserved open spaces or farmland.	17%				22%	21%	19%	20%				
6. I would consider support for using Township tax revenue to assist in preserving active farmland in the Township.	14%						14%	17%	21%	34%		

Total Number of Surveys:	220
Surveys indicating ownership of less than 20 acres:	124

Questions	No Opinion	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage the protection of farming and agricultural operations in the Township.	15 12%	3 2%	13 10%	32 26%	61 49%
2. In the future, Planning and Zoning should allow for development of farmland for other uses than farming.	20 16%	32 26%	34 27%	28 23%	10 8%
3. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage protection of farmland.	21 17%	5 4%	15 12%	27 22%	56 45%
4. The Township should consider formal programs to assist in the perseveration of farmland.	22 18%	9 7%	15 12%	32 26%	46 37%
5. The Township should encourage development of homes on smaller lots where they are surrounded by permanently preserved open spaces or farmland.	23 19%	14 11%	21 17%	43 35%	23 19%
6. I would consider support for using Township tax revenue to assist in preserving active farmland in the Township.	21 17%	22 18%	25 20%	26 21%	29 23%

**Waverly Township Community Survey
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Surveys from landowners having less than 20 acres: 124

Questions	No Opinion	Strongly Disagree / Disagree					Agree / Strongly Agree					
		-100%	-80%	-60%	-40%	-20%	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
1. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage the protection of farming and agricultural operations in the Township.	12%					2%	10%	26%	49%			
2. In the future, Planning and Zoning should allow for development of farmland for other uses than farming.	16%				26%	27%	23%	8%				
3. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage protection of farmland.	17%					4%	12%	22%	45%			
4. The Township should consider formal programs to assist in the perseveration of farmland.	18%					7%	12%	26%	37%			
5. The Township should encourage development of homes on smaller lots where they are surrounded by permanently preserved open spaces or farmland.	19%					11%	17%	35%	19%			
6. I would consider support for using Township tax revenue to assist in preserving active farmland in the Township.	17%					18%	20%	21%	23%			

Total Number of Surveys:	220
Surveys indicating ownership of more than 20 acres:	96

Questions	No Opinion	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage the protection of farming and agricultural operations in the Township.	4 4%	7 7%	7 7%	21 22%	57 59%
2. In the future, Planning and Zoning should allow for development of farmland for other uses than farming.	11 11%	31 32%	24 25%	16 17%	14 15%
3. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage protection of farmland.	7 7%	8 8%	11 11%	18 19%	52 54%
4. The Township should consider formal programs to assist in the perseveration of farmland.	8 8%	7 7%	7 7%	26 27%	48 50%
5. The Township should encourage development of homes on smaller lots where they are surrounded by permanently preserved open spaces or farmland.	18 19%	22 23%	16 17%	17 18%	23 24%
6. I would consider support for using Township tax revenue to assist in preserving active farmland in the Township.	14 15%	16 17%	12 13%	19 20%	35 36%

**Waverly Township Community Survey
Farmland Preservation – February 2007
Graphic Summary of Survey Results**

Surveys from landowners having 20 acres or more: 96

Questions	No Opinion	Strongly Disagree / Disagree					Agree / Strongly Agree						
		-100%	-80%	-60%	-40%	-20%	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	
1. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage the protection of farming and agricultural operations in the Township.	4%							7%	7%	22%	59%		
2. In the future, Planning and Zoning should allow for development of farmland for other uses than farming.	11%					32%	25%	17%	15%				
3. The Township should do everything in its power to encourage protection of farmland.	7%							8%	11%	19%	54%		
4. The Township should consider formal programs to assist in the perseveration of farmland.	8%							7%	7%	27%	50%		
5. The Township should encourage development of homes on smaller lots where they are surrounded by permanently preserved open spaces or farmland.	19%					23%	17%	18%	24%				
6. I would consider support for using Township tax revenue to assist in preserving active farmland in the Township.	15%							17%	13%	20%	36%		

WAVERLY TOWNSHIP FARMLAND PRESEVATION SURVEY
 FROM THE SURVEY SHEETS WITH COMMENTS (61 out of 222)

Farmland Preserve	<10 acres	10-40 acres	>40 acres	
Supports	19	8	12	
Ambivalent	4	2	2	
Does not support	5	2	6	

COMMENTS IN SUPPORT:

- A. [10 acres] We are very frustrated with open land being bought by developers to put in yet another “subdivision”. Some of us still enjoy living in more rural areas and enjoying nature in our own back yards! Its no wonder animals become extinct or are forced to leave the area. Their natural habitat is constantly being destroyed. Not to mention without farmers, where do citizens expect their produce, eggs, & meats to come from??? -----needs a serious Reality Check!!! We will support any & all efforts our Twp adopts to save this land for nature, more secluded living, the farmers for their livelihood & valuable commodities they grow & produce!
- B. [3 acres][in answer to #4-formal program] As long as they are not so restrictive that we lose control of final outcomes & decisions.
 [in answer to #5-small lots in AG] Unless some of the smaller or even larger tracts 10-20 acres (small) are not allowed to be subdivided in the future. I hate to sell large subdivisions put in especially in the more clay laden areas of the Township. I would hope that Waverly could develop yet be able to retain its wildlife and rural agricultural feeling that we all enjoy today. Hopefully, any commercial endeavors that might locate here will be in the more major highway/byway road areas, and not in the residential areas. I wouldn’t be opposed to a campground/wildlife lodge type operation being developed or smaller manufacturing or agricultural related business locating here. What I hope we don’t allow is the development to be mall-like, urban sprawl type ventures.

- C. [2 acres] Save farmland.
- D. [2 acres] The reason we moved to Van Buren County is because of all the beautiful farmland.
- E. [10 acres] Do not want land used for any housing divisions or commercial purposes.
- F. [80 acres] When you eliminate farmland, people migrate from the city to live in rural areas. When they get there, the first thing they want to do is to change the rural areas to be more like the city. You then lose the character of the area as well as the existing property owner's rights. Higher taxation and more restrictive ordinances almost always follow. There are enough suburban areas for those who want to live in that environment rather than moving to a rural area and changing our way of life.
- G. [10 acres] I feel the township should also try and preserve not only farmland, but also wooded areas.
- H. [20 acres] Help the farmer out! Help the ones who own 15 + acres. Keep the City people away!! We are dying off fast enough, Don't --- it.
- I. [2 acres] Township should participate in the VBC Farmland Preservation Program.
- J. [178 acres] We don't need more people or homes in the township.
- K. [2 acres] Lower taxes on farming and agricultural zoned land.
- L. [3 acres] Too many parcels of farmland are bought with the intention of dividing them to be sold in a subdivision. Pretty soon there will be no country. That's why I moved here.
- M. [300 + acres] I live here because I enjoy the rural community.
- N. [? - farmer] I am very much in favor of keeping Waverly Township agricultural and in nature, wild life habitat, open lands, and discourage subdivisions, gated estates and other big city congestion & restrictions. There is enough of that kinds of b.s. just to the east of Waverly Township. A former Chicago suburbanite.
- O. [37 acres] I agree with conservation planning which does allow for smaller lots & the use surrounding land for preservation. This allows for land owners to realize value of property while still preserving open space.
- P. [60 acres] Relative to #2, development of farmland that is currently in production should be discouraged. Active farmers should be encouraged to apply for the purchase of development rights program. Productive farmland represents a national resource, very important to feeding our citizens & for national defense.
- Q. [11 acres] Thank you for this survey.
- R. [120 acres] Population growth should stay in Paw Paw Township or closer to Kalamazoo.
- S. [40 acres] Waverly Twp should retain being a farmland community.
- T. [40 acres] We do not need more new houses in a farm. Van Buren County is for farming only.
- U. [? Non-farmer] The Township is in need for walking and hiking trails; parks etc.
- V. [1 acre] Our farmland needs to be preserved – Some could certainly be planted to trees if it doesn't seem feasible to plow, etc. We need our farmland to stay farmland.

- W. [5 acres] Farmland is heart of Michigan. Brings in food and now will bring in corn to process for fuel. Very important for our future.
- X. [? Non-farmer] The rural nature of Waverly Twp. is our best asset, let's keep it that way!
- Y. [1 acres] I plan on selling the acre we own in 2007 so don't think I should answer #6.
- Z. [? Non-farmer] Keep Waverly Township exactly like it is. No new development. No more taxes or fees. No more additional government or control – We have enough as is. Can't you pass a law that costs nothing?
- AA. [300 acres] Farmland is getting harder to come by. We should preserve it while we can before houses clutter all the open land. Farmers feed many people. People need farmers.
- BB. [2 ½ acres] I feel more and more people want to move to the country and are bringing the city limits with them. If it takes preserving farmland to keep the country-country, I support it. It makes me sick to see so many new homes going up where cow pastures used to be – where deer used to be able to feed. Yes, preserve our country atmosphere.
- CC. [3 ½ acres] This is one of the most beautiful places I've lived. Please keep it that way with no major housing developments. We must be stewards of nature and keep out township clean.
- DD. [20 acres] We should do everything we can to prevent the invasion of CAFOs (Confined Animal Feeding Operations). We should also do whatever we can to prevent pollution from chemical fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides.
- EE. [40 acres] I can't rent out or farm any of my land because of sink holes and flooding in the spring time.
- FF. [130 acres] Preserve farms by allowing them to sell development rights. Zoning ordinance needs to be completely re-worked and use better judgement next time around.
- GG. [64 acres] What was once a farming community has now turned into a low income subdivision. Minimal acreage plots have not only taken a toll on productive land, but have also created an embarrassing dumpy area to live in! In the 20 years I have lived here, the change has been negative and disappointing.
- HH. [40 acres] We need NO development. Too many vacant homes currently. Bush is going to cause World War III and we need land to survive. We need farms.
- II. [? Nonfarm] We need to preserve all the farmland that is left.
- JJ. [?] Farmland must be preserved everywhere if our existence is to continue not only for us here now, but for our generations to follow!
- KK. [? Non farm] Having been raised on a farm I'm *partial* (?) to farmland.
- LL. [17 acres] Open space for wildlife is very important considering the development in our area – we should preserve.
- MM. [30 acres] Unless a proactive plan is initiated the loss of precious land to development is inevitable. I saw, first hand, the demise of Texas Township to developers and the tragic loss of farmland and open spaces. May it not occur in Waverly!
- NN. [30 acres] Should do whatever it takes to preserve farmland. Sure would love to have something done to this road on 47th Ave.

COMMENTS IN OPPOSITION:

- A. [35 acres] We fought wars to be able to defend & own our land. Please don't forget "I" own my land NOT Waverly Township, or any government entity. I should choose how to use "my" land.
- B. [?] Why should the township get involved?
- C. [22 acres] You don't explain the word "preserve". If a formal program assist the "Farmer" to help save his land from debt or assist many because of insect or disease then YES we should help. If a farmer wants to sell his land for development, let him. This will only increase the tax base for the township.
- D. [1 acre] with modern fertilizers the production per acre has made farmland something that can be used for other purposes such as housing, estates or county parks. Plant pheasants on idle land?
- E. [200+ acres] There are many ways other than the Van Buren County Farmland Preservation program to protect the land within the Township. Proper zoning & land use planning should be adopted by the Township.
- F. [40 acres] After approx. 20 years of trying to farm for the average small farmer it's a total waste of time. The only people that would benefit from trying to protect farmland in our area are the large farmers that are leasing other land which in most cases the money paid to lease the land does not even cover taxes & insurance.
- G. [40 acres] After app. 20 years of farming I found the best thing you can do with farmland is split it in small parcels and plant houses.
- H. [?] I would like to see the Township put more effort into getting the blight cleaned up. I would like to see the subdivisions placed on farmland. I would also like to see the Township promote more businesses in the Township. I don't like to drive to Kalamazoo for everything.
- I. [80 acres] I think we need more commercial property in our township to help provide more jobs for our families.
- J. [80 acres] I am not sure if anyone should be able to tell another how they can use their property (within reason). A farmer may need to break up his or her farm to make ends meet if farming is not profitable.
- K. [? Non-farmer] I do not believe it is the township's duty to create programs for land use on private property. I believe time and resources are better served improving infrastructure such as paving and maintaining roads.
- L. [1 ½ acres] We feel that the ones that farm should be able to do just that. But when the farmers have no one to leave their farm to family or no one wants to buy it for farming, they should have the right to sell it to anyone. We have the right to sell our home, so should they.
- M. [? Non-farmer] I do not believe Township taxes should in any way be used to assist preserving farmland. The farmer can deed the land anyway they see fit.
- N. [1/3 acre] Why do we have to do this? We encourage the use of township revenue to enforce the removal of blight.
- O. [6 acres] If I wanted to pay for farmland I would have bought some.

COMMENTS THAT ARE AMBIVILENT:

- A. [?] I am extremely supportive of preserving the family farms. I do not believe that one penny of tax payers money should go to support corporate farms.
- B. [100 acres] #2 Property on the main roads should be allowed for other uses.
- C. [? Non farm] Property owners should decide on the use they want for their property. *{editor's note: the form supported farmland preservation}*
- D. [4 acres] Taxes are so high it's getting very difficult to keep our houses going, we can't afford higher taxes – you raise them every year as it is. *{also supported farmland preservation}*
- E. [60 acres] #6 Keep the government out of the farming business. Leave the farmers alone to run their business as they know how to do. No subsidies/No restrictive legislation. *{also supported farmland preservation}*

EDITOR'S NOTE: In this last group most of the respondents seemed confused by the questionnaire. Moreover, their written responses were at odds with the way they answered the questions.