

Kent County Farmland Preservation Program

Purchase of Development Rights:

2024 Ranking System for Landowner Applications

Background

State of Michigan P.A. 262 of 2000 created the state Agricultural Preservation Fund, whose purpose is to provide state matching funds for local farmland preservation programs. The Kent County points-based appraisal method, as authorized under P.A. 262 of 2000, provides a consistent and objective value for all applicants and allows property owners to determine the value of the agricultural conservation easement prior to applying.

After all parcels have been scored, the Agricultural Preservation Board will then review and evaluate the highest scoring parcels and recommend to the Kent County Board of Commissioners parcels for their approval to proceed with the purchase of the agricultural conservation easement.

This document is subject to change on an annual basis.

Preliminary Information

There are mandatory criteria to be eligible for funding. If the answer to any these questions is “no”, the application will likely not be considered for funding.

Has the application form been signed by the landowner(s) of all nominated parcels? Yes___ No___

Is at least 51% of all parcels devoted to agricultural use (pasture, cropland, etc.)? Yes___ No___

(Management of a woodlot is not considered an agricultural use but may be a part of a property.)

Is the landowner donating at least 21% of the estimated value of the easement? Yes___ No___

Are all parcels located outside of cities or villages? Yes___ No___

Are all parcels listed as Agricultural in the Township’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan? Yes___ No___

Are agriculture activities a permitted use on the parcel under current zoning? Yes___ No___

Can the property be developed under current zoning? Yes___ No___

Does the landowner control all rights associated the parcels (e.g. mineral)? Yes___ No___

(Rights may be leased out and will be reviewed on a case by case basis)

If approved to move forward with a conservation easement purchase, the local Township must formally approve the application by way of resolution.

Due to limited funding, not all applications will be selected for funding consideration.

Selection Criteria

How to complete: In each blank line, calculate the points for each item as determined by responses in the application. At the end of the document, total the application's points.

1. Percent of prime soils on parcel	Points: _____
(Acres of Prime or Unique soils/Total Acres) x 50	50 points
2. Ratio of active land to nonactive land	Points: _____
(Acres of Active Farmland/Total Acres) x 20	20 points
3. Total acres for all parcels in application	Points: _____
120 or More Acres in size	20 points
75 to 119.9 Acres in size	16 points
38 to 74.9 Acres in size	12 points
20 to 37.9 Acres in size	0 points
Less than 20 acres in size	-10 points
4. Proximity of parcel to other permanently protected land	Points: _____
Parcel is adjacent to protected land	20 points
Parcel is not adjacent to but within ½ mile of protected land.	15 points
Parcel is not adjacent to but is more than ½ mile to within 1 miles of protected land.	10 points
Parcel is not adjacent to but is more than 1 mile to within 2 miles of protected land.	5 points
Parcel is not adjacent and is greater than 2 miles away from protected land	0 points
5. A succession plan to address farm viability for future use	Points: _____
Yes	10 points
No	0 points
6. Surrounding land in agriculture	Points: _____
75% or more of the surrounding land area is in agriculture production	10 points
50% or more but less than 75% of the surrounding area is in agriculture production	6 points
25% or more but less than 50% of the surrounding area is in agriculture production	4 points
Less than 25% of the surrounding area is in agriculture production	0 points
7. Adjacent road frontage amount	Points: _____
Road frontage is ¾ of a mile or more	10 points
Road frontage is ½ mile or more but less than ¾ of a mile	8 points
Road frontage is a ¼ mile or more but less than ½ mile	6 points
Road frontage is less than a ¼ mile	4 points
No road frontage	0 points
8. Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program certification	Points: _____
Yes	10 points
No	0 points
9. Currently enrolled in PA 116 program	Points: _____
Yes	10 points
No	0 points
10. Percent matching funds	Points: _____
30% or more	10 points
25% to 29.9%	7 points
21.1% to 24.9%	3 points
21%	0 points
11. Certified Organic Farm	Points: _____
Yes	2 points

No	0 points
12 Any listings for critical species	Points: _____
Yes	4 points
No	0 points
13 Enrolled in Conservation Reserve Program	Points: _____
Yes	4 points
No	0 points
14 Benefits grassland	Points: _____
Yes	4 points
No	0 points
15 Contains sizeable natural features (river, forest, lakes, wetland)	Points: _____
Yes	4 points
No	0 points
16 Non-motorized public recreational use	Points: _____
Yes	2 points
No	0 points
17 Practice no till/ permanent hay/pasture/orchard/tiling/irrigation	Points: _____
Yes	4 points
No	0 points
18 Socioeconomic factors	Points: _____
Yes (Veteran, Limited Resources, Disadvantaged)	2 points
No	0 points
19 Existence of a Conservation Plan	Points: _____
Yes	2 points
No	0 points
20 Future Building Sites for Non-Farm Buildings	Points: _____
One reserved future building site	-10 points
Two reserved future building sites	-15 points
Three reserved future building sites	-20 points
Removal of non-prime farmland to meet federal/state requirements	0 points

Application Points = _____
Maximum Points = 200

Appendix A

These definitions reflect the use as detailed in the USDA Agricultural Conservation Easement Program form NRCS CPA 41A.

Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher means a producer who is a member of a group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices without regard to its members' individual qualities. For a legal entity, at least 50 percent ownership in the legal entity must be held by socially disadvantaged individuals. A socially disadvantaged group is a group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. These groups consist of the following:

- American Indians or Alaska Natives
- Asians
- Blacks or African Americans
- Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics

The term entities reflect a broad interpretation to include partnerships, couples, legal entities, etc.

Veteran Farmer or Rancher - means a producer who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof; was released from the service under conditions other than dishonorable, and:

- Has not operated a farm or ranch; or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years; or
- Who first obtained status as a veteran during the most recent 10-year period. A legal entity or joint operation can be a veteran farmer or rancher only if all individual members independently qualify.

Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher means either: (1)(i) A person with direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the current indexed value in each of the previous two fiscal years (adjusted for inflation using Prices Paid by Farmer Index as compiled by National Agricultural Statistical Service), and (ii) Has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years (to be determined annually using Commerce Department Data); or (2) A legal entity or joint operation if all individual members independently qualify under paragraph (1). A legal entity or joint operation if all individual members independently qualify under paragraph (1) of this definition. A Self-Determination Tool is available to the public and may be completed online or printed and completed hardcopy at: <https://lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/DeterminationTool.aspx?fyYear=2020>