



Farmland Conservation Easements

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While the tax credits provided under the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (PA 116) provide temporary protection from farmland being developed into non-agricultural uses, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development also enters into and monitors permanent conservation easements on agricultural land. A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement between a landowner and the State of Michigan, which keeps land available for agricultural or open space uses.

IMPACT FOR MICHIGAN:

The availability of permanent conservation easements on agricultural land and open space provides a focal point for local land use planning, zoning, and associated farmland preservation efforts. More than 25,000 acres of land in conservation easements contributing to the estimated \$22 million in agricultural products each year.

2018 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- The Conservation Easement Program entered into eight new agreements, covering 480 acres in 2018.
- Staff completed on-site monitoring of 132 easements for prohibited land-use changes.

MEASURING SUCCESS:

Metric	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
New Conservation Easements					
Conservation easements recorded	6	5	2	2	8
Acreage enrolled	718	656	87	276	480
Program Total Conservation Easements					
Conservation easements recorded	124	129	131	133	141
Local conservation easements	11	11	11	11	11
Acreage enrolled	24,102	24,758	24,815	25,038	25,325
Easement Monitoring					
Donated development rights	45	50	51	53	61
State purchase of development rights	50	50	50	50	50
USDA farm and ranch land	21	21	21	21	21
Total	116	121	122	124	132

2019 PROGRAM GOALS:

- Work with the agriculture community, open space conservancies, and the legislature to receive appropriation approval for an application cycle for the Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund in 2019.
- Utilize new database to administer the program.
- Work towards developing GIS capabilities in order to create baseline reports in-house.
- Add five new donated conservation easements.
- Work collaboratively with the Federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

- Michigan farmers
- Agribusiness
- Consumers of Michigan grown food
- Those who enjoy the open space and farmland

LEGAL AUTHORITY:

- Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, Public Act 451 of 1994, as amended, MCL 324.36101 *et seq.*
- Conservation and Historic Preservation Easement Act, Sub Part 11 of Part 21 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 Public Act 451, as amended, MCL 324.2140 *et seq.*
- Public Act 451 of 1994, as amended, MCL 324.36201 *et seq.*