



Marathon County Farmland Preservation Survey Report, 2013

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to gather opinions with respect to farmland preservation and agricultural issues in Marathon County. County officials identified two populations to include in the survey: agricultural stakeholders and the general public. The questionnaires for these two populations were very similar. The primary difference was the addition of several questions on the agriculture stakeholder version.

In May 2013, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls mailed surveys to a random sample of 1,149 Marathon County households and to the entire list of 745 agricultural stakeholders provided by Marathon County officials. The response rate from agricultural stakeholders was 45 percent (338 completed returns). The response rate from the general public was 40 percent (462 completed returns). The results provided in this report are expected to be accurate to within plus/minus 3.9 percent with 95 percent confidence for the agricultural stakeholders and plus/minus 4.6 percent with 95 percent confidence for the general public.

The first group of questions was included only on the agricultural stakeholder version and asked about agricultural resources in Marathon County. A majority of agricultural stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed that parcel fragmentation and the cost of farmland are negatively impacting farming in the County. About half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the need to increase the availability of direct farm marketing locations/facilities. Nearly half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they could find productive farmland to rent or buy. Nearly half disagreed or strongly disagreed that finding land for manure spreading is difficult.

Respondents had mixed opinions about the adequacy of the County's road network for agricultural needs over the next 20 years and about the future availability of productive farmland. With respect to the need for more farm support services (parts, repairs, and processing), there was no majority opinion; however, the largest proportion, about four in ten, agreed, strongly agreed, which may suggest a desire for more options.

Next, agricultural stakeholders were asked to rate the importance of programs and policies. A majority said voluntary programs to keep land in agriculture are high or very high priorities and half said financial incentives for farmland preservation are a high or very high priority. About four in ten said regulations to keep land in agriculture are a high or very high priority. Respondents had mixed opinions about the priority of cost share programs for conservation practices and policies to attract/expand agricultural service providers, agricultural processing businesses and agricultural supply retailers. Programs to train agricultural managers were seen as a high or very high priority by about one in four respondents.

The remaining questions in the survey were asked both of agricultural stakeholders and the general public. Interestingly, there were few differences of opinion between agricultural and non-agricultural respondents.

Half of respondents gave high or very high priority ratings to increasing accessibility to locally grown food and programs supporting agricultural economic development. Respondents had mixed opinions about the importance increasing the capacity of roads to support large machinery equipment and about enforcing regulations on large machinery and equipment on roads.

Half or more of respondents said increasing both agricultural regulations and increasing non-agricultural regulations is a low or very low priority. Neither group of respondents favor reducing the current level of regulations either on agricultural operations or non-agricultural activities.

Respondents overwhelmingly favored paying for increasing the capacity of roads to support large machinery equipment by user fees rather than the County levy.

When asked to rank a group of five policies, the top priority was to protect groundwater. Protecting surface water quality ranked second, followed by using conservation practices to protect soil productivity, protecting farmland through incentives to farmland owners, and directing development to areas of existing development.

Half of respondents favor or strongly favor using farmland preservation zoning. The largest portion of respondents favored creating Agricultural Enterprise Areas, but the percentage was less than half (44%).

More than seven in ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that rural development should be concentrated in or near areas already developed. Similarly, over 70 percent agreed or strongly agreed that if development does occur in areas away from existing development, it should be directed to non-agricultural areas.

Six in ten respondents prefer a cluster design, which preserves more open space by reducing and clumping lots, for rural subdivisions.

Survey Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gather opinions from Marathon County agricultural stakeholders and the general public with respect to farmland preservation and agricultural issues in Marathon County. The County Department of Conservation, Planning and Zoning chose to work with the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls to collect these data and analyze the results.

Survey Methods

Marathon County officials identified two populations to include in the survey. The first group was agricultural stakeholders, for which County officials provided a mailing list of 745. The second population consisted of the general public in Marathon County. The SRC drew a random sample of households from this area.

The survey instruments for the two populations were very similar. The primary difference was the addition of several questions on the agricultural stakeholder version that addressed topics and issues specific to farm operations and businesses.

In May 2013, the SRC mailed surveys to 1,149 randomly selected residential addresses (“general public”) and to all 745 names on the agricultural stakeholder list. The surveys were followed at roughly 14-day intervals with reminder postcards and a second mailing to non-respondents. The response rate from agricultural stakeholders was 45 percent (338 completed returns). The response rate from the general public was 40 percent (462 completed returns). The results provided in this report are expected to be accurate to within plus/minus 3.9 percent with 95 percent confidence for the agricultural stakeholders and plus/minus 4.6 percent with 95 percent confidence for the general public.

The responses from the two populations are compiled as one set of data throughout the report. The SRC used analytical tests to compare the responses of the agricultural stakeholders and the general public on questions common to both versions. Unless otherwise noted in this report, the responses of the general public and agricultural stakeholders align with each other. The report will identify instances when there were notable differences between the responses of the agricultural stakeholders and the general public.

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who do not return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. **Based upon a standard statistical analysis that is described in Appendix A, the SRC concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a concern for this study.**

A small number of questions contained an optional “other” option in which the respondent could provide an answer. In addition, the agricultural stakeholder version had a comment box for respondents to add comments about farmland preservation. **These written responses are contained in Appendix B.**

Appendix C contains a copy of the survey questionnaire with a quantitative summary of responses by question containing the combined responses from agricultural stakeholders and the general public. Appendix D contains the agricultural stakeholder tabulation, and

Appendix E contains the general public tabulation. All appendices include the “no opinion” responses.

Profile of Respondents

Table 1a (page 6) and Table 1b (page 7) summarize the demographic profile of the general public and the agricultural stakeholder samples. The SRC utilized the 1-year estimates from the US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) to compare the demographic profile of respondents to the overall profile of all adults in Marathon County.

General Public Sample. The general public sample very closely matches the employment status and the percentage of households with children in the overall population of the County. The general public sample contains slightly more respondents who have some college education or who had completed a technical college program.

Among the general public respondents, there are fewer people age 18 to 34 and fewer renters than would be expected. Our experience is that younger residents and renters in most jurisdictions are less likely to participate in surveys. The report will describe the relatively small number of instances where there are noteworthy differences in the response pattern between older and younger respondents and between homeowners and renters.

With respect to household income, there were fewer low-income households (<\$25,000/year) among the general public sample and slightly more in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 range.

However, there were substantially more men in the general public sample (70%) than in the overall rural population (50%). The analysis found statistically significant differences in the response pattern of men compared to women in 12 of the 45 variables on the survey. Further analysis showed that there were only 5 variables in which the magnitude of the difference were large enough to be noteworthy. These will be identified and described in the body of the report.

Overall, the SRC is comfortable with the overall representativeness of the general public sample.

Table 1a. Demographic Profile of Respondents							
Gender (Age 18+)	Count	Male	Female				
Ag Stakeholder sample	323	88%	12%				
Public sample	443	70%	30%				
Census (ACS)	102,254	50%	50%				
Age 18+	Count	18 – 24	25 – 34	35 – 44	45 – 54	55 – 64	65+
Ag Stakeholder sample	324	0%	3%	11%	28%	30%	27%
Public sample	446	1%	9%	14%	21%	23%	31%
Census (ACS)	102,254	10%	17%	17%	20%	17%	19%
Employment Status (16+)	Count	Full-Time	Part-Time	Self	Unemp.	Retired	Other
Ag Stakeholder sample	324	22%	56%	7%	1%	13%	1%
Public sample	453	48%	9%	4%	1%	35%	2%
Census (ACS)	106,485	60% ¹		4%	6%	31% ²	
Highest Level of Education	Count	Less than High Sch.	High Sch. Diploma	Some College/ Tech	Tech/ College Grad.	Bachelor Degree	Graduate/ Profess. Degree
Ag Stakeholder sample	325	10%	35%	29%	14%	8%	3%
Public sample	455	4%	25%	27%	16%	19%	8%
Census (ACS) (Age 25+)	91,980	10%	40%	16%	11%	16%	7%
Households with Children	Count	0	1	2	3	4	5+
Ag Stakeholder sample	330	73%	9%	7%	4%	3%	5%
Public sample	454	75%	8%	11%	4%	1%	0%
Census (ACS)	53,343	71%	29%				
Residential Status	Count	Own	Rent				
Ag Stakeholder sample	329	99%	1%				
Public sample	458	90%	10%				
Census (ACS)	53,343	73%	27%				
Household Income	Count	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 – \$34,999	\$35,000 - \$49,999	\$50,000 - \$74,999	\$75,000 - \$99,999	\$100,000+
Ag Stakeholder sample	294	14%	27%	16%	16%	13%	15%
Public sample	422	14%	14%	16%	27%	14%	15%
Census (ACS)	53,343	23%	10%	15%	22%	13%	18%

¹ Census does not differentiate between full time and part time employment

² Includes all persons age 16 years and older who are not in the workforce

Agricultural Stakeholder Sample. The SRC did not have demographic information about the 745 agricultural stakeholders in the mailing list provided by Marathon County officials and was unable to compare the demographic profile of the agricultural stakeholder respondents to the overall list. The following is a summary of the demographics provided by the agricultural stakeholder respondents.

- 47 percent have gross annual farm income over \$100,000
- 52 percent have farm operations between 150 acres and 500 acres in size
- 67 percent both own and rent crop land
- 49 percent receive at least three-fourths of their total household income from farming
- 42 percent participate in farmland preservation programs
- 61 percent do not anticipate transferring ownership of their farmland for at least 10 years

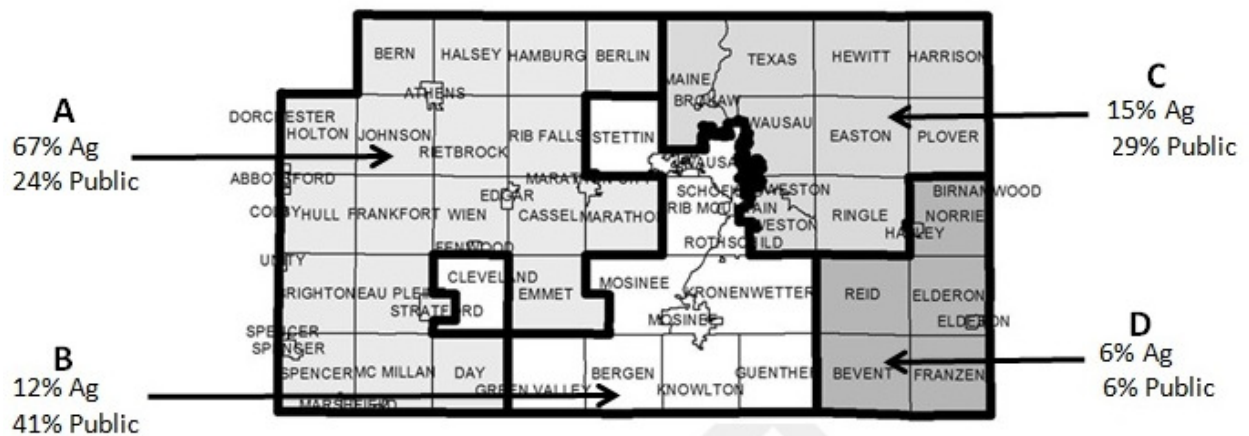
Table 1b. Farm-Related Characteristics of Agricultural Stakeholder Sample							
Type of farm	Count	Retirement farm	Residential lifestyle farm (primary income from off-farm job)	Farm occupation (<\$100K gross)	Farm Occupation (\$100K-\$250K gross)	Large commercial farm (\$250K-\$500K gross)	Very large commercial (>\$500K gross)
Ag Stakeholder sample	315	13%	17%	23%	29%	11%	7%
Acres Operated		Count	40	40-150	150-500	500-1000	1000+
Ag Stakeholder sample	316	5%	27%	52%	10%	6%	
Percentage Rented		Count	0%	1% – 25%	26% - 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
Ag Stakeholder sample	319	33%	29%	19%	11%	9%	
Household Income from Farming		Count	0%	1% – 25%	26% - 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
Ag Stakeholder sample	319	6%	19%	12%	13%	49%	
Participation in farmland preservation programs		Count	Yes	No			
Ag Stakeholder sample	322	42%	58%				
Anticipated transfer of ownership		Count	< 5 yrs.	5-9 yrs.	10-19 yrs.	20+ yrs.	
Ag Stakeholder sample	312	16%	23%	31%	30%		

Place of Residents of Respondents. The survey included a map of Marathon County divided into four areas marked A, B, C, and D. Respondents were asked to indicate which of the four areas contains their place of residence. The results are shown in Map 1.

Two thirds of the agricultural stakeholder responses came from area A, followed by 15 percent from area C, 12 percent from area B, and 6 percent from area D.

Area B was the home to 41 percent of the general public respondents, followed by 29 percent from area C, 24 percent from area A, and 6 percent from area D.

Map 1. Place of Residence of Respondents by Area

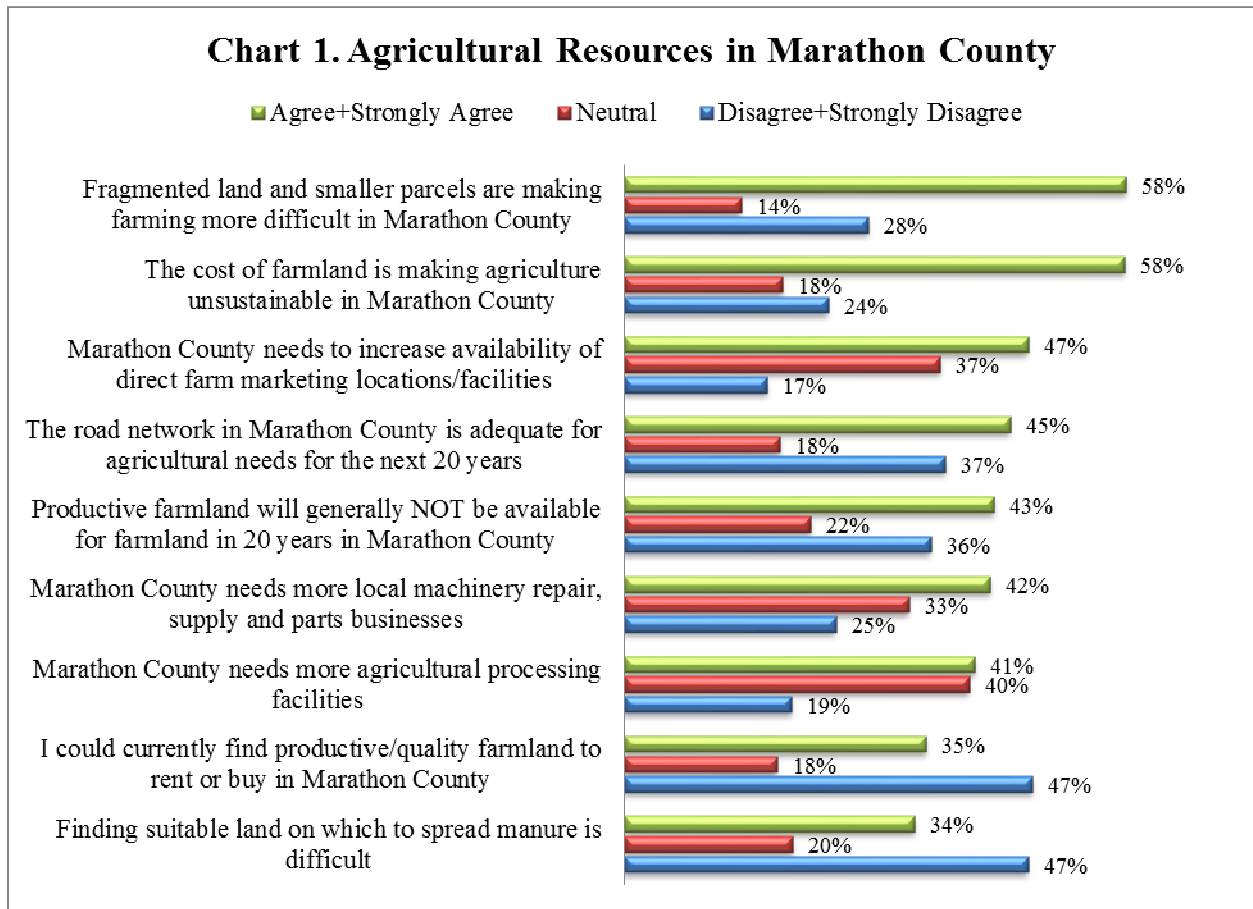


Agricultural Resources in Marathon County

Agricultural stakeholders were asked their level of agreement with nine statements. The answer choices were “strongly agree,” “agree,” “neutral,” “disagree,” “strongly disagree,” and “no opinion.” The results are shown in Chart 1. The top bar is the combined percentage of strongly agree and agree responses, the middle bar represents the neutral responses, and the bottom bar is the sum of the strongly disagree and disagree responses. Among this group of questions, only about 5 percent of respondents said they had no opinion. These responses were excluded from the analysis. This group of questions was only asked on the agricultural stakeholder version.

The strongest opinions were with respect to farmland fragmentation and the cost of farmland. About six in ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that parcel fragmentation is making farming more difficult and that the cost of farmland is making agriculture unsustainable. At the same time, about half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they could find productive farmland to rent or buy in the County and that finding land for manure spreading is difficult.

When asked about increasing the availability of direct farm marketing locations and facilities, half agreed or strongly agreed. Over a third had a neutral opinion. As will be noted later in the report, the general public places a greater level of importance to increased access of locally grown food.



Respondents had mixed opinions about the adequacy of the road network for agricultural needs over the next 20 years. Slightly less than half agreed or strongly agreed that it would be adequate, but 37 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Respondents also had mixed opinions about the future availability of productive farmland in the County. About four in ten agreed or strongly agreed that productive farmland will generally be available in 20 years, but nearly as many (36%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

When it comes to the need for more local businesses for machinery repair, supply and parts, there was no majority opinion. However, the largest percentage (a plurality of 42%) agreed or strongly agreed, and a third of respondents were neutral. Similarly, there was no majority opinion with respect to the need for more agricultural processing facilities; the largest percentage agreed or strongly agreed (41%) or were neutral (40%). This plurality may suggest a desire for more options among a sizeable portion of the agriculture stakeholder population.

Demographic Comparisons Among Agricultural Stakeholders.

Respondents who participate in the farmland preservation programs were more likely to rate the following as high or very high priorities: cost share assistance to landowners for soil and water conservation practices, financial incentives to owners of agricultural land for farmland preservation, regulations (land use restrictions) to keep land in agriculture over the next 20 years

A higher proportion of women strongly agree that productive farmland will not be available in 20 years.

Agricultural stakeholders less than age 45 were more likely to strongly agree that the cost of farmland is making agriculture unsustainable in Marathon County.

Respondents with annual household incomes above \$50,000 were more likely to agree or strongly agree that they could find productive farmland to buy or rent. Conversely, higher income agricultural stakeholders were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that productive farmland will not be available in 20 years. A higher proportion of respondents with annual household incomes below \$50,000 agreed or strongly agreed that the cost of farmland is making agriculture unsustainable.

Respondents from area D (see Map 1) were more likely to agree or strongly agree that finding suitable land on which to spread manure is difficult. A larger percentage of respondents from area C and D agreed or strongly agreed that Marathon County needs to increase availability of direct farm marketing locations/facilities.

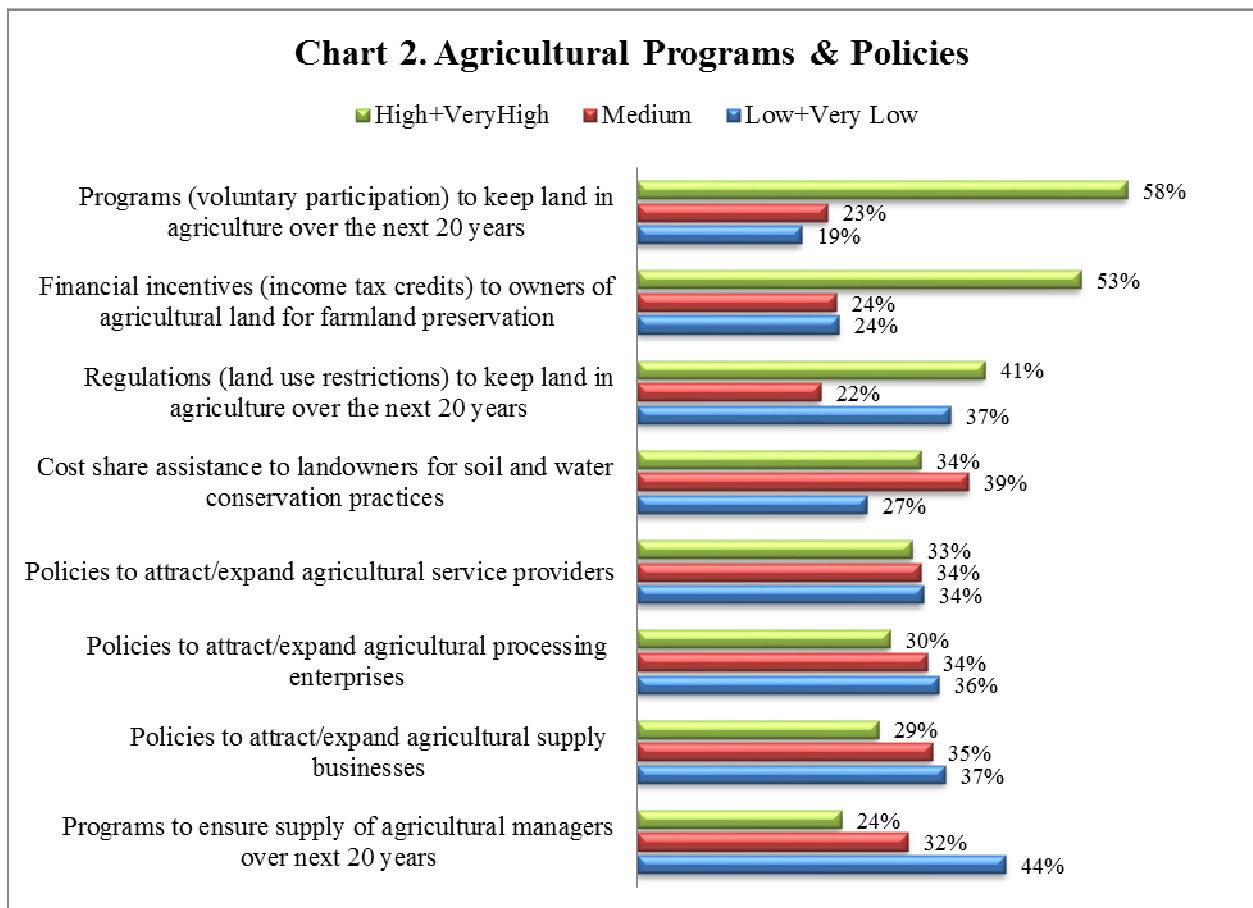
Agricultural stakeholders were asked to rate the priority of eight programs and policies. The answer choices were “very high,” “high,” “medium,” “low,” “very low,” and “no opinion.” The results are shown in Chart 2. The top bar is the combined percentage of very high and high responses, the middle bar represents the medium responses, and the bottom bar is the sum of the low and very low responses. Among this group of questions, the percentage of no opinion responses was in the single digits. These responses were excluded from the analysis. This group of questions was only asked on the agriculture stakeholder survey instrument.

The highest priority ratings went to voluntary programs to keep land in agriculture, with about six in ten respondents saying this was a high or very high priority. However, when asked about regulations to keep land in agriculture, only about four in ten said it was a high or very high priority and nearly as many said it was a low or very low priority.

Half of respondents said financial incentives to landowners who preserve farmland are high or very high priorities and an additional 25 percent said financial incentives are a medium priority.

Cost share programs for conservation were rated somewhat lower in priority, with about four in ten respondents saying these programs are a medium priority, and a third rating them as high or very high.

Respondents had mixed opinions about the priority of policies to attract agricultural service providers, agricultural processing businesses, and agricultural supply retailers. With respect to attracting or expanding agricultural service providers, about a third said this is high or very high priority, a third rated it a medium priority, and a third rated it as a low or very low priority.



Respondents said policies to encourage more agricultural processors and supply businesses were slightly lower in priority than attracting service providers. About 30 percent of respondents said these are high or very high priorities, but about 35 percent rated them as medium and about 37 percent said they are low or very low priorities.

Programs to ensure a supply of agricultural managers received the lowest priority ratings among the programs and policies listed in this question. The largest percentage (44%) said these are low or very low priorities. Only a quarter of respondents said these are high or very high priorities, while a third rated them as medium priorities.

Demographic Comparisons Among Agricultural Stakeholders.

Women were more likely to feel that a program of financial incentives (income tax credits) to owners of agricultural land for farmland preservation is a very high priority.

Respondents age 45 and older were more likely to say that cost share assistance to landowners for soil and water conservation practices is a very high or high priority.

Larger majorities of households without children said voluntary programs to keep land in agriculture and financial incentives for farmland preservation are very high or high priorities.

Participants in farmland preservation programs were more likely to say that the following are high or very high priorities: cost share assistance to landowners for soil and water conservation practices, financial incentives to owners of agricultural land for farmland preservation, and regulations to keep land in agriculture over the next 20 years.

A smaller percentage of respondents from area A (see Map 1) said policies to attract/expand agricultural supply businesses are a high or very high priority.

Additional Comments

The agricultural stakeholder version contained an open-ended question in which respondents could add comments and suggestions about programs, incentives, regulations, support, etc. that Marathon County should initiate or support to preserve farmland. Fifty-one respondents added comments, and the SRC placed those comments into 4 categories plus a miscellaneous group. Some comments contained multiple topics, and were split into their appropriate topical groups, resulting in 55 comments. They are summarized in Table 2. Appendix B contains the complete list of comments.

The most frequent comments were about government regulation and taxes, which comprised about a third of the comments. The following quotes are examples of comments about regulations and taxes.

“Don’t over regulate and make it a county that nobody wants to farm in.”

“Every program costs the taxpayer more money and we can't afford it anymore!”

Comments about farm size were the second most frequent topic area, with 29 percent of the total. The following quotes illustrate the common theme of these comments.

“Limit the size of large farms or CAFO's and where they can be located...”

“The county should not give support to factory farms. They are buying land all the time. Labor comes from outside the area. We cannot compete with this.”

Topic	Count	%
Government Regulations and Taxes	19	35%
Farm Size	16	29%
Farmland Preservation Tools	9	16%
Environment and Natural Resources	7	13%
Miscellaneous	4	7%
Total	55	100%

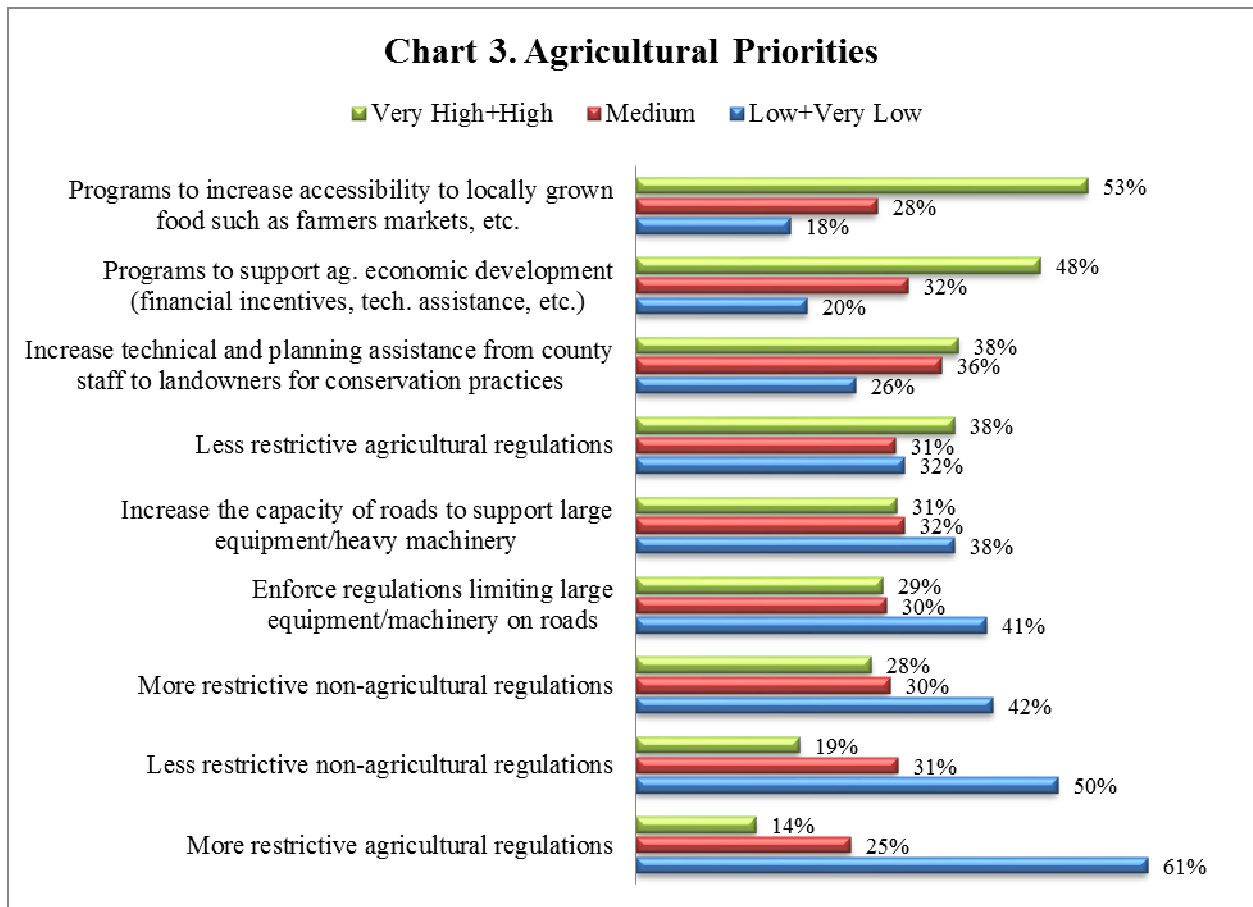
Priority Programs

The remaining questions on the survey were included both on the agricultural stakeholder version and the general public version of the survey.

The general public and agricultural stakeholders were asked to assign a priority rating to nine programs or regulations. The answer choices were “very high,” “high,” “medium,” “low,” “very low,” and “no opinion.” The results are shown in Chart 3. The top bar is the combined percentage of very high and high responses, the middle bar represents the medium responses, and the bottom bar is the sum of the low and very low responses. Among this group of questions, the percentage of no opinion responses was in the single digits for seven of the nine questions. These responses were excluded from the analysis.

The highest priority ratings went to programs to increase accessibility to locally grown food (farmer’s markets, etc.) and to programs supporting economic development related to agriculture such as financial incentives, technical assistance and low-interest loans. About half of respondents said these are very high or high priority programs, and about one in three said they are a medium priority.

Increasing the availability of technical and planning assistance to landowners for conservation practices were rated somewhat lower in priority. Compared to the top rated priorities, the percentage who said increasing this assistance is a high or very high priority dropped to 38 percent, while the medium ratings increased to 36 percent.



Respondents had mixed opinions about the importance of increasing the capacity of roads to support large equipment and heavy machinery. About a third of respondents said this was a high or very high priority, and an additional third said it was a medium priority. However, nearly 40 percent of respondents said it is a low or very low priority. A similar question about the importance of enforcing regulations on large equipment on roads drew nearly the same response. About 40 percent rated enforcement as a low or very low priority.

When asked about changes in regulations affecting agriculture, over 60 percent of respondents said more restrictive regulations are a low or very low priority. At the same time, only 38 percent said reducing the regulations was a high or very high priority. Taken together, the results of these two questions do not indicate a mandate in either direction. An additional pair of questions was asked about changes in non-agriculture regulations, and the pattern of results was similar. Half of respondents said less restrictive non-agricultural regulations were a low or very low priorities, while only 28 percent said more restrictive non-agricultural regulations were high or very high priorities.

Comparisons between agricultural stakeholders and the general public. Within this group of questions, the differences in the response patterns between agricultural stakeholders and the general public tended to be a matter of degree and did not impact the overall interpretation of the data. The exception is with respect to the importance of increasing accessibility to locally grown food. In this instance, two-thirds of the general public rated this as a high or very high priority. In comparison, only third of agricultural stakeholders said this is a high or very high priority.

Demographic Comparisons. A larger proportion of women rated the following as high priorities: to increase the accessibility of locally grown food, to support agricultural economic development, and to increase technical and planning assistance from county staff to landowners for conservation practices.

Participants in farmland preservation programs were more likely to rate programs to support agricultural economic development as high or very high priorities.

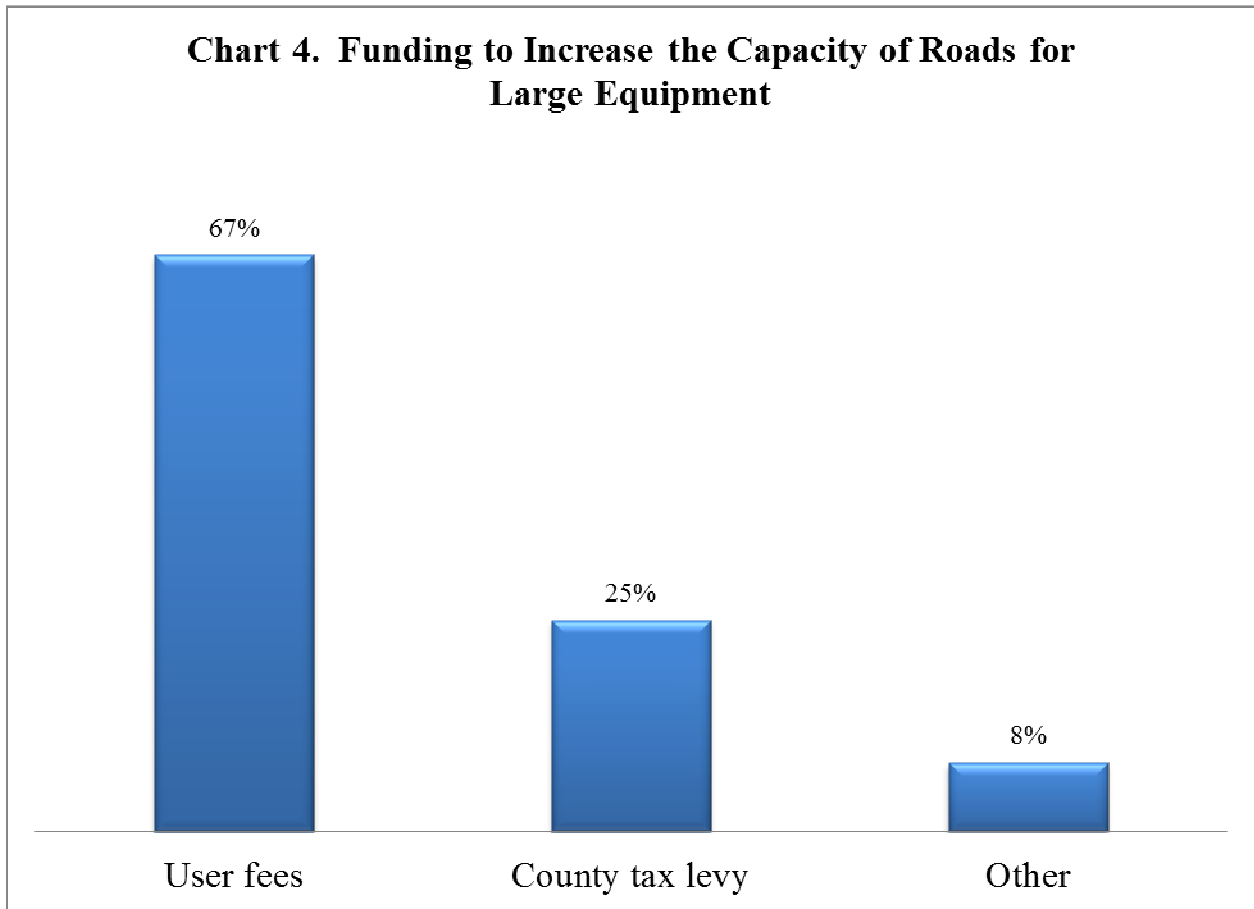
A larger proportion of retirees said increasing technical and planning assistance from county staff to landowners for conservation practices and enforcement of regulations limiting large equipment/machinery on roads are high priorities.

Respondents with post-secondary education were more likely to say that less restrictive agricultural regulations are low high or very low priorities.

A higher proportion of renters said increasing access to local food and increasing technical and planning assistance from county staff to landowners for conservation practices are very high or high priorities.

General public respondents who live in area B and area C of the County (see Map 1) were more likely to believe that programs to increase accessibility to locally grown food and programs to support agricultural economic development are high or very high priorities.

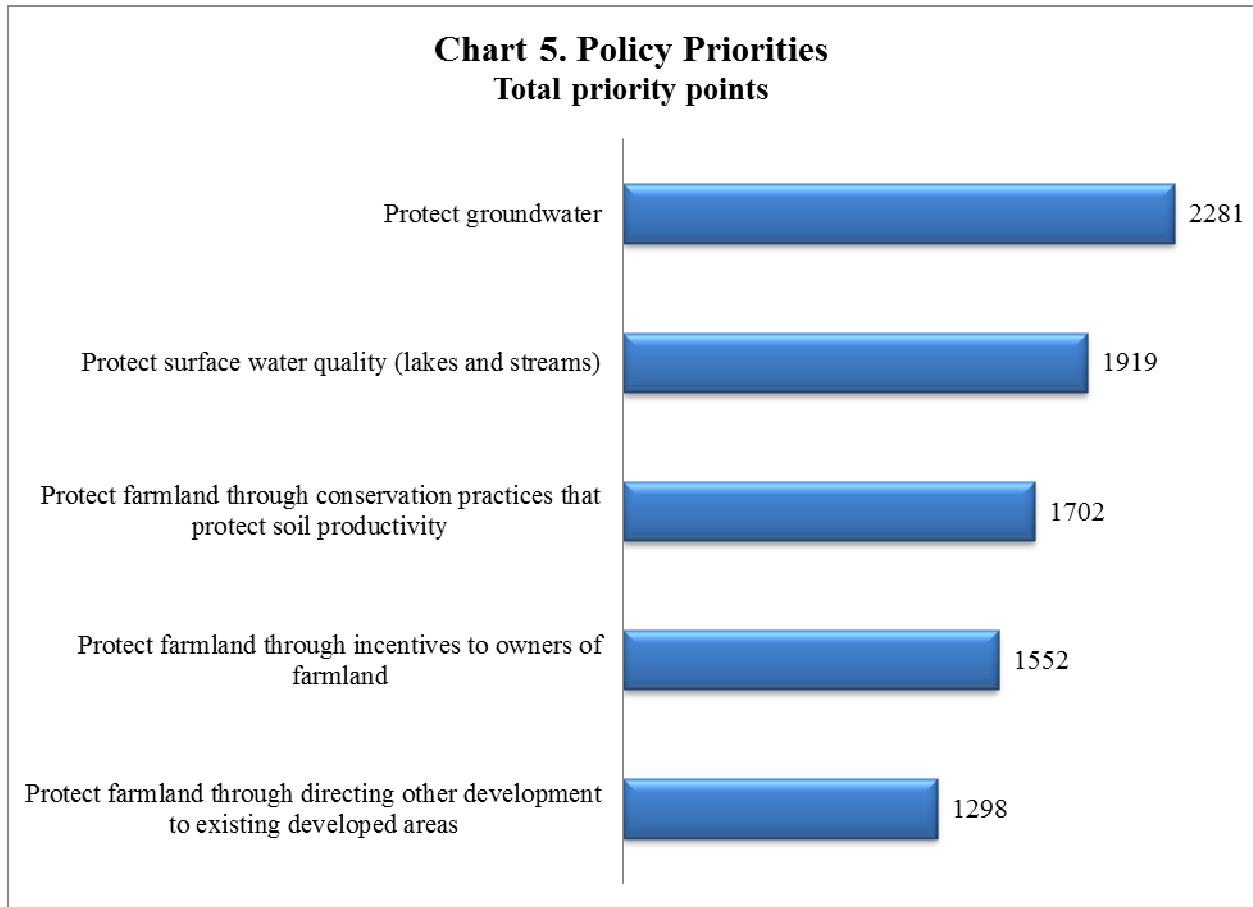
A follow-up question asked respondents who gave high or very high priority ratings to increasing the capacity of roads to support large equipment how to pay for it. As shown in Chart 4, respondents heavily favored user fees rather than the County tax levy.



Comparison between agricultural stakeholders and the general public. Again, the difference was a matter of degree. Majorities of both groups favored user fees; the majority was larger among the general public.

Demographic Comparisons. There were no differences among the demographic groups.

Agricultural stakeholders and rural residents were asked to rank their top four policy priorities from a list of five policies related to agriculture and planning. The SRC assigned four points to each respondent's top priority, three points to the second priority, two points to the third priority and one point to the fourth priority. The results are shown in Chart 5 and indicate that the protection of groundwater and surface water are the top priorities from the list. Protecting soil productivity through conservation practices ranked third, followed by protecting farmland through incentives to farmland owners and protecting farmland by directing development to areas of existing development.



Comparisons between agricultural stakeholders and the general public. Agricultural stakeholders and the general public had differing rank orders for the five items. Agricultural stakeholders gave more priority ranking points to protecting farmland through incentives to farmland owners, to protecting farmland through directing other development to existing developed areas, and to protecting farmland through conservation practices that protect soil productivity. The general public gave more priority ranking points to protecting groundwater and surface water quality. It is important to note that this question addresses only the relative priority of the policies included in the question to each other. Assigning fewer priority points to a particular policy or group of policies does not necessarily mean that respondents believe those policies are unimportant.

Demographic Comparisons. Retirees were more likely to give higher priority rankings to the three environmentally related choices on this list: protecting farmland through conservation practices that protect soil productivity, protecting surface water quality, and protecting groundwater.

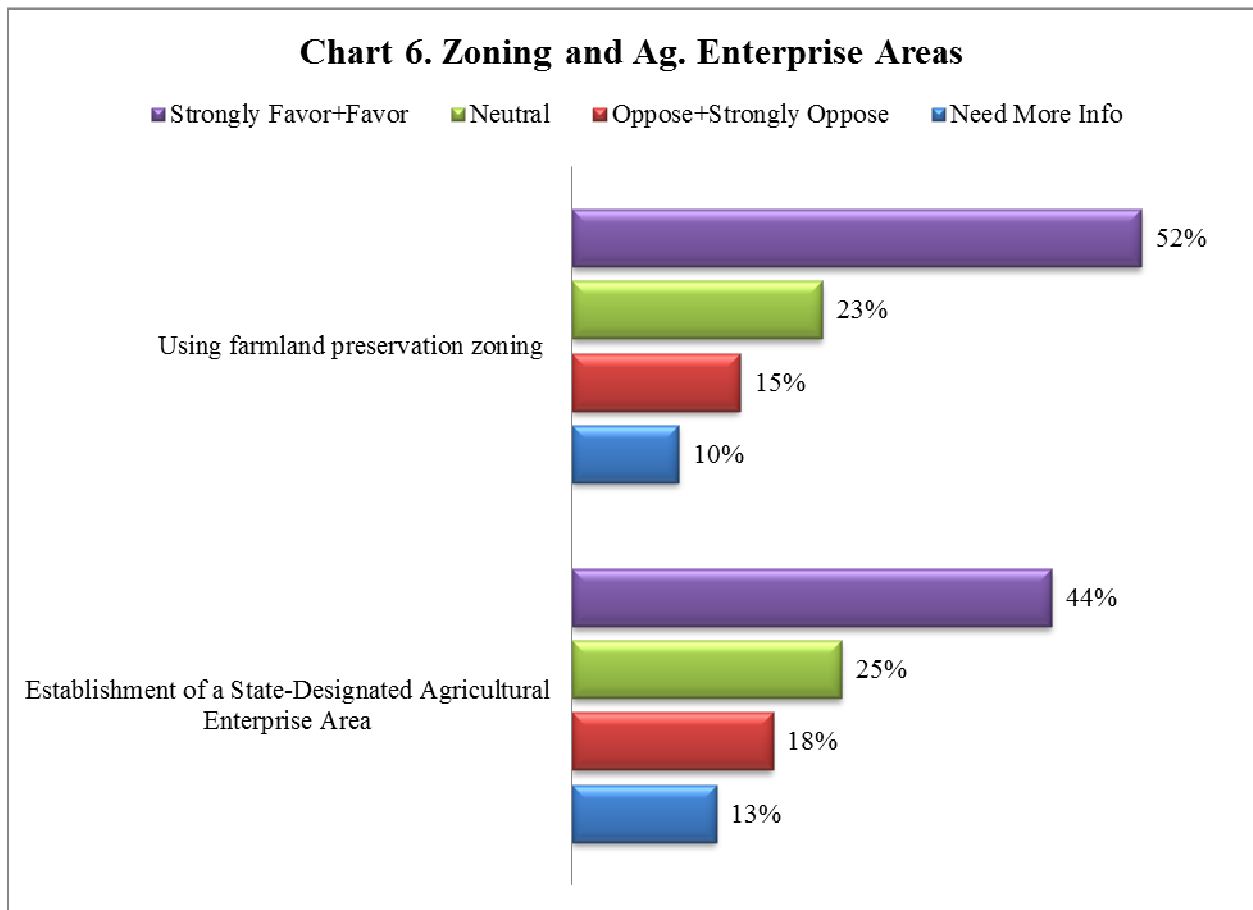
Respondents without children in their households were more likely to give a higher priority ranking to protecting farmland through conservation practices that protect soil productivity.

Farmland Preservation Tools

Agricultural stakeholders and the general public were asked if they favor using farmland preservation zoning in the County and establishing Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA). Respondents were given brief descriptions of what these policies entail. The answer choices were “strongly favor,” “favor,” “neutral,” “oppose,” “strongly oppose,” and “need more information.” The results are shown in Chart 6. The top bar is the combined percentage of favor and strongly favor responses, the second bar represents the neutral responses, the third bar is the sum of the oppose and strongly oppose responses, and the bottom bar represents those who need more information.

Half of respondents favored or strongly favored using farmland preservation zoning, while 15 percent opposed or strongly opposed this type of zoning. About a third said they are either neutral (23%) or need more information (10%).

There was no majority opinion with respect to creating Agriculture Enterprise Areas; however the largest percentage said they favored or strongly favored designating AEAs (44%). As was the case with farmland preservation zoning, the percentage of respondents who oppose or strongly oppose AEA was relatively small (18%).



Comparisons between agricultural stakeholders and the general public. The responses of agricultural stakeholders and the general public were similar.

Demographic comparisons. Respondents with post-secondary education were more likely to favor or strongly favor establishing Agricultural Enterprise Areas.

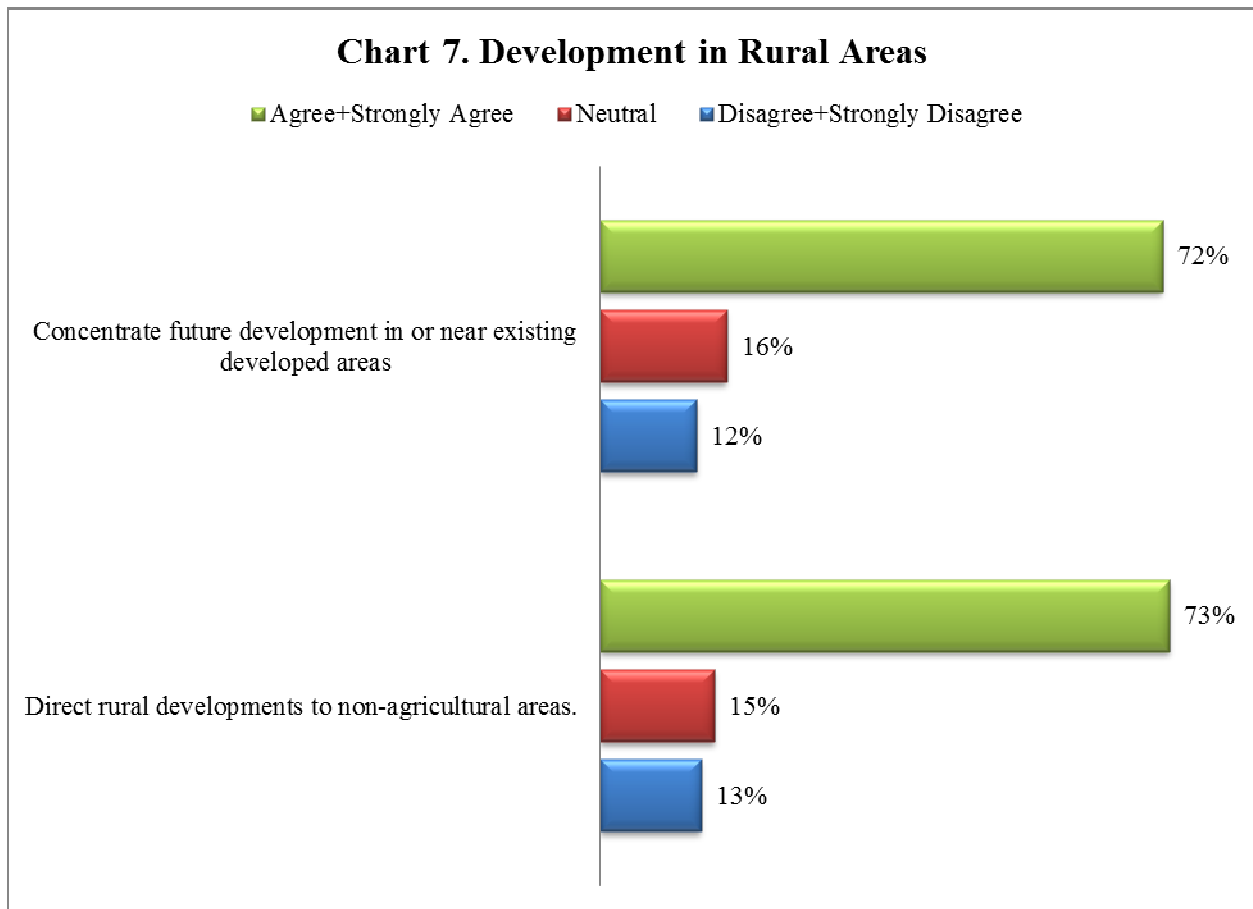
Participants in farmland preservation programs were more likely to favor or strongly favor the use of farmland preservation zoning and to favor or strongly favor establishment of Agricultural Enterprise Areas.

A greater percentage of respondents from area D (see Map 1) were neutral with respect to using farmland preservation zoning.

Development in Rural Areas

The survey next asked agricultural stakeholders and the general public two questions about non-agricultural development in rural areas of the County and a question about rural subdivision design. As shown in Chart 7, over 70 percent of respondents said they strongly agree or agree (top bar) that non-agricultural development should be concentrated near existing communities or other developed areas. Only 12 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed (bottom bar), while 16 percent were neutral (middle bar).

Similarly, over 70 percent agreed or strongly agreed that if development does occur in areas away from existing development, it should be directed to non-agricultural areas. Only 13 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 15 percent were neutral.

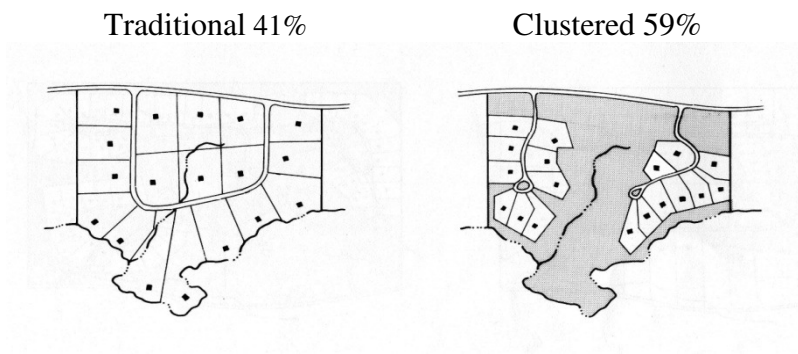


Comparisons between agricultural stakeholders and the general public. The differences were matters of degree; larger majorities of agricultural stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed with both these statements.

Demographic Comparisons. A larger majority of respondents with household annual incomes below \$50,000 agreed or strongly agreed with both statements about development in rural areas.

Agricultural stakeholders and rural residents were asked to indicate their design preferences for rural housing developments. Options were for traditional rural housing development on large individual lots or for cluster design with smaller individual lots in which the remaining area is held as shared open space.

About six in ten respondents said they prefer the cluster design compared to four in ten who preferred the traditional rural residential layout. The SRC has asked a similar question in nearly 100 other surveys, with comparable results.



Comparison between agricultural stakeholders and the general public. There was no difference of opinion between agricultural stakeholders and the general public.

Demographic comparisons. There were no notable differences among the demographic groups.

Conclusions

Respondents to this survey identified issues and trends that are a source of concern about the future of farmland in Marathon County and indicated support for some policies and tools to address their concerns.

- Six in ten agricultural stakeholders said that land fragmentation and the cost of farmland are concerns.
- More than four in ten believe that productive farmland won't be available in 20 years in the County.

With respect to addressing these concerns:

- Half of agricultural stakeholders and the general public favored or strongly favored using farmland preservation zoning.
- About seven in ten agricultural stakeholders and the general public agreed or strongly agreed that non-agricultural development should be concentrated near existing communities or other developed areas.
- About seven in ten agricultural stakeholders and the general public agreed or strongly agreed that if development is allowed in rural areas, it should be directed to non-agricultural areas.

For the most part, agricultural stakeholders and rural residents hold similar opinions with respect to questions asked on both versions of the survey. Differences tended to be matters of degree that did not impact the overall interpretation of the data.

While agricultural stakeholders and the public generally supported selected governmental intervention to address concerns about agriculture and farmland, there was a significant minority of agricultural stakeholders who believe that it is not the role of government to intervene. As shown in Chart 2, 37 percent of agricultural stakeholders said regulations to keep land in agriculture are a low or very low priority. In a similar vein, agricultural stakeholders who believe that it is not the role of government to intervene in these situations frequently wrote statements to that effect in the open-ended comment box.

Appendix A – Non-Response Bias Test

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who do not return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. For example, suppose most non-respondents prefer cluster design for rural housing developments, whereas most of those who returned their questionnaire prefer traditional layout. In this case, non-response bias would exist, and the raw results would overstate the preference for traditional rural subdivision layout.

The standard way to test for non-response bias is to compare the responses of those who return the first mailing of a questionnaire to those who return the second mailing. Those who return the second questionnaire are, in effect, a sample of non-respondents (to the first mailing), and we assume that they are representative of that group.

We found six variables with statistically significant differences between the mean responses of these two groups of respondents (Table A1) out of 45 tested. Table A1 indicates that even when statistical differences exist, the magnitude of this difference is very small.

There were slightly fewer beef operators and tree farm operators in the responses to the second mailing. Respondents to the second mailing gave slightly higher importance ratings for developing less restrictive agricultural regulations and for less restrictive non-agricultural regulations. Respondents to the first mailing were more likely give a higher priority through conservation practices and to agree that future development should be concentrated in or near existing cities/villages or other developed areas.

Based on the small number of variables (6) with statistically significant differences and the small differences in the results among those six variables, the Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a concern for this sample.

Table A1 – Statistically Significant Differences Between Responses of First and Second Mailings			
Variable	Statistical Significance	Mean First Mailing	Mean Second Mailing
Beef operator	.021	.33	.18
Tree farm operator	.037	.06	.00
Less restrictive agricultural regulations	.008	3.00	2.71
Less restrictive non-agricultural regulations	.001	3.57	3.21
Protect farmland through conservation practices that protect soil productivity	.007	2.46	2.71
Future development not related to agriculture should be concentrated in or near existing cities and villages or other already developed areas	.041	2.09	2.28

Appendix B –Marathon County Farmland Preservation Planning Survey: Open-ended and “Other” Responses.

Which of the following activities/enterprises do you have on your farm/business: “Other” responses. (20 responses)

- Hay Sales (4x)
- Chicken/Eggs (2x)
- Retired (2x)
- Dairy heifers
- Forestry, alfalfa
- Honey
- Hops
- I do not farm/own a business
- Large animal dairy vet service
- Machinery repair
- Mink
- Rent farmland to charge day
- Sold milking herd cost summer
- Sweet corn sales
- We are not active in farming at this time

Activities/Enterprises on Farm/Business: “Other livestock.” (19 responses)

- Chickens (4x)
- Dairy (3x)
- Pigs (3x)
- Sheep (3x)
- Beef
- Dogs
- Draft horses
- Heifer Raising
- Mink ranching
- Public is welcome

Are there other programs/incentives/regulations/support, etc. that you think Marathon County should initiate or support to preserve farmland?

Government Regulations and Taxes (19 responses)

- All government programs cost money. We need to pay our bills. The state and county government need to pay their bills. No need taxes and quit looking for a way to expand government. This would mean higher taxes and new taxes then we don't need.
- Better tax credit for farmland to preserve the farmland.
- Don't over regulate and make it a county that nobody wants to farm in. You can't make everybody happy. We farm because we are independent. If we wanted to be regulated to death we would work for somebody.

- I believe in freedom - government out. Then agri producers will find their markets and the support markets will be created as needed that way tax money can stay in the pockets of the people. Farmers should be allowed sell raw milk.
- I strongly feel that a regulation should be put in place to restrict the placement of houses within farm fields. There is only so much farmland available and placing a house in the middle of a tillable field seriously affects the value of that land. Farming is no longer done with a horse and one bottom plow; today's equipment requires room to work. This regulation would allow a residence to be built only in a corner of a tillable field thereby preserving the most useable farmland.
- If you want more farmland do away with this CRP. It's very stupid to let good farmland grow up in weeds and brush for wildlife. Fly over the US and see all the land there is for wildlife. Don't pay people to let good farmland grow up in weeds. Is the government that stupid?!
- Lower Taxes.
- Luxury tax on plot of farmland used for residential use.
- Marathon County is over regulated. Examples: 1. Even though we sold our cattle and just grow crops we still need a manure management plan which is very expensive. It is too complicated for someone without agronomy training to fill out. 2. There has never been a case of sickness due to consuming maple syrup but now producers need to get inspected. The regulations for the building are ridiculous.
- More cost sharing for farmyards and manure pits, etc. Cost sharing for farm wiring upgrades. Marshfield and electric has none. FSA beginning farmer loans are for people farming 10 years or less but if you had to rent for years and years you don't qualify even though you don't own your farm. That should be changed.
- No I think it's better if government stays out of farming endeavors.
- Offer more incentives to farmers who pasture their animals that aren't necessarily "intensive rotational grazers" such as cow lane cost sharing, watering, fencing etc.
- Probably would be best if the government would take care of the roads and leave the land to the farmers.
- Quit harassing manure haulers and trying to blame them for poor road quality.
- There are more than enough regulations!
- Too much government too many programs. DNR up your butt. Can't do this & that. Damn wild animals threatening livestock including turkey shit everywhere.
- Use ATC funds only environment projects.
- We need a program that puts an end to all the free grab bag that the government thinks is theirs. Keep the government out of the pockets of small businesses. Every program costs the taxpayer more money and we can't afford it anymore!
- We need better roads! We pump manure that hose to keep off the roads, but neighbors don't want the hose to cross the [profanity deleted]. Now what? Also the cement double standard of CAFO farms and daily winter spreading and cattle in stream beds, who is infecting the water?

Farm Size (16 responses)

- Allow small family farms to have equal chances to farm programs and provide money to fix the things you want us to fix without making us do stupid stuff with it like bat houses just to take care of things like eve troughs. Listen to the farmers and be flexible with what they want to change in the plans. Working with you in the past I found even if the plan is not the best most efficient or the best way to keep manure runoff happening you won't let changes be made.
- Cut out mega farms, keep family farms.
- Encourage family farms not CAFOs!
- Help young farmers get started. Cut programs to large corporate farms and grazers.
- I am sorry but farming is becoming an obsolete job. You work 24/7 for little to no return. Owing the bank. Regulation and penalties with strings attached to any help. The small farmer is a dying breed. Most farmers are caretakers of the land as it is their life and livelihood. If you don't make it more profitable for a person to become a farmer and to stay a farmer within the next 20 years we will soon see a shortage of necessary food in this country. Look at the trend of farms in each county and loss of dairy and county opposition. You have stopped the small farmer already and the large farm that is able to operate now is under fire. I'm sorry but if you can help the small farms return we might be OK.
- I do not like what I see coming in the future. It will not be good for our country. If it were up to me, I would want to see farming in the future like this. Farming should be on the small side. No more than sixty cows. They should be milked by a robot milking three to four times a day and the farming should be done by the family only. Father and mother and some of your children only. Or by someone by themselves with a little or no help. I think a farmer should love their work and their animals. You have to be on the small side, and then you will become attached to your cattle. Then and your cattle will get better care. If you would farm like this you would not want to sell your land. Farmers and children should have four years of good education on the type of farming they want to do before they become a farmer and I mean the right education. It took me thirty years to learn how to do it right and there are things I should know yet. There should be a good price for the things you sell so you can make a good income.
- I think there should be regulations on the mega-farms. They are the ones driving up land prices because they need the acres to haul manure; making it impossible for smaller younger people to get started.
- Limit the size of large farms or CAFO's and where they can be located like 1 CAFO per township.
- Money for manure pits on smaller farms.
- No breaks for big/large farm operations. Dairy farms become first, commodity 2nd for incentives, since dairy feeds the world more than one way and they have cows to feed.
- Stop large farm from renting whole farms and putting the farms in all corn or beans.
- The county should not give support to factory farms. They are buying land all the time. Labor comes from outside the area. We cannot compete with this.

- There are too many incentives and grants for large farms - small farms used to support families that in turn supported villages and people were loyal to businesses and farmers will only get as much money as government wants them to have, because in order to control people - you control food. The next generation on farms will be owned by financial institutions or corporations (absentee owners).
- They should support the smaller farmers and take some support away from the larger farmers. When the smaller farms are gone they're gone forever! Which I feel hurts the economy and our local businesses!
- We are a small family farm and the only program we use is strip cropping to keep our top soil. The rest of your programs and regulations you can keep.
- Worthless people signing up for grants to get big buildings, livestock, big equipment and have Mexican slaves milk hundreds of cows to get better milk & input goals while the rest of us foot the bill. And when we can't make it we're broke. But the big guys get bailed out while they sit on their ass and we work ours off!!!! You set up big farms and break small ones. You hardly see a small herd of cows in a pasture. Humane? Yeah right.

Environment and Natural Resources (7 responses)

- Grazing - continue to support at every level but especially help people with fencing and watering and planting management. Crucial for small dairy operations and new young farmers of the future.
- I think all farmers should have nutrient management regardless if they spread manure or fertilizer. What I see happening is dairy farmers rotate with hay in rotation and grain farmers have big 40-60 acre fields that could be called highly erodible diesel or plowed in fall. The next spring those fields have brown water running off them.
- More ditching assistance.
- Prevent fish kills on Marathon County lakes and streams. Zoning to keep out houses. Programs to keep sediment from reaching rivers.
- Promote agricultural practices specific to our location. This is not Iowa and no-till may not always be the right thing to do.
- Supporting renewable energy on farms would preserve farmland indirectly because it would be another income stream for farmers. Also policies that support livestock over cash grain would be good for both economic and environmental sustainability. Especially if livestock are grazed. This has been proven over the past 10 to 20 years. Also grass based operations are one of the few ways a young person can afford to get into the industry in an ownership capacity.
- We need to ensure all residents are drinking clean water from their wells.

Farmland Preservation Tools (9 responses)

- Ag zoning for county.
- Conservations easements.
- Get info out there! I've worked on trying to get into farmland preservation for over 1 year now! Still not there! A checklist would be nice to help those that are interested!

- I feel very strongly about farmland preservation. I feel this country should get into the purchase of development rights on some of these farms that are going out of business. It would slow down the terrible waste of quality farmland into development; the farmer could farm this land with a long-term contract keeping it in production ag. It should have been in effect a long time ago. Once the land is ruined with development it's too late! I would gladly participate in this program if it was offered to us. We farm NW of Wausau (family farm 134 years, 5th generation). Development around here is killing us and making it too far out of reach financially to acquire this land. I know this is supposed to be a confidential survey but I feel so strong about this subject I will put my name on it and hope to be contacted for it.
- I think there should be an incentive or something for old retirement age farmers to rent or sell farms or farmland to beginning farmers farming less than 10 years.
- Investigate feasibility of public purchase of development rights, any program needs to be lucrative to landowners in order to preserve prime agricultural lands for older owners the 70 allowable now isn't sufficient to hold agricultural lands out of the development marked.
- Redevelopment of unused property within city limits.
- Slow the building of homes on agriculture land!
- This may be only a township local being issue but I strongly support our township requiring 35+ acres as a minimum land requirement for new residential construction. I feel this minimizes development where development does occur a larger portion of the acreage is left in tillable land. Feel that this would be beneficial one county level ag designated areas.

Miscellaneous (4 responses)

- Disabled farmer's a program to help an injured person to improve or change their farm to continue in farming.
- Find a manufacturer that can produce a container for milk as good as glass. Plastic containers ruin the taste of milk. This would really get people to drink milk again. Think that would do for the dairy farmers and Marathon County. That would do more good than any taxpayers' dollars. Take that request to UW Madison and see if they can develop this with God's help.
- Land will continue to go to the highest value use. Example is houses. Corn, beans, hay programs are designed to fail always did always will.
- My answers aren't from a normal farmer. I am 70, did 45 years of dairy 24/7 with hubby. He retired for 3 months now and at 73 is still taking care of a beef herd 25-40 hours a week. Still love dairy farming in Wisconsin. We sold the buildings of the farm we retired from on a land contract to young couple who now rent the land. In 3 more years they can buy that on land contract. Two years ago we picked up a dairy that a bank held but only have 14 acres so no crops. Son is running it and will buy on land contract 18 months from now. We own the cattle but will sell to him by May. He is the 8th young person that we've given a chance to dairy farm but the only one with financial help. We've purchased

4 dairy farms over the years that were bank owned or in trouble - such a joy to set them to rights!

If you think that increasing the capacity of roads to support large equipment is a high or very high priority, what sources do you feel should be used to pay for the associated costs? “Other” responses.

Agricultural Stakeholder Responses (34 responses)

- State Dollars. (5x)
- Road repairs and updating. (3x)
- A fair balance. (2x)
- Combination of both. (2x)
- Exempt all farm related equipment and vehicles from road weight limits. (2x)
- Increased pay per load. (2x)
- Build farms on all season roads not town granite roads.
- Build incinerators burn all the garbage and sell electricity to pay the loads no landfills needed.
- Enforce current laws.
- If you knew the # per square in on large equipment is less than the small equipment you don't need better roads equipped for the large manure tracks which should be made to handle small loads.
- Interim licensing.
- Many of these farmers are using roads when they could run on their own land.
- Need less restrictive regulations.
- No tax increase.
- Permits (Designated for road construction only!)
- The roads are okay as they are!
- The size of machinery allowed is too excessive. The concept of bigger faster is wrong.
- Those that have big equipment.
- Township input.
- Transportation fund - stop robbing it!!!
- Watch trucks loaded on posted roads in spring wood fiber hauls.
- Weight limits heavy manure traffic.
- What about everybody else who drive large loads on the road. I only need to cross the road & drive 1/2 mile and I have to fill out all this paperwork.
- With big tires pound per square inch is less so most roads would already hold up.

General Public Responses (21 responses)

- State transportation dollars and federal tax funds. (3x)
- A combination of tax dollars and increased user fees. (2x)
- State grants. (2x)
- 30/70 split between 30% tax and 70% user fees.
- Ag producers.
- All production land is rented out.
- Do not increase capacity on roads. It tears them up.
- Enforce laws we now have. "No more new laws."
- Existing gas tax, supposed to be used to maintain and improve roads.

- Farmer and users who rely on it.
- Fines for non-compliance.
- Fuel tax money from state and fed.
- I think the large equipment, tractor and big machinery should pay for our dust control on our dirt roads.
- Limited times for heavy equipment use.
- State road taxes, truck licensing increases.
- This depends on where road is and necessary means.
- Weight limit and enforce them. Not just \$3500 for use of roads.

48. Employment Status: Other responses (9 responses)

- Disabled. (3x)
- Farming.
- Full-time student.
- Hobby farm.
- Laid off.
- Semi-retired.
- Stay at home mom.

Appendix C – Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question – Combined Agricultural Stakeholders and General Public

Marathon County Farmland Preservation Survey – 2013

What is your opinion about the following agricultural resource issues/concerns?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
1. I could currently find productive/quality farmland to rent or buy in Marathon County	4%	29%	17%	31%	14%	6%
2. Productive farmland will generally NOT be available for farmland in 20 years in Marathon County	13%	27%	20%	25%	8%	6%
3. Finding suitable land on which to spread manure is difficult	7%	24%	18%	35%	9%	6%
4. Fragmented land and smaller parcels are making farming more difficult in Marathon County	17%	39%	13%	23%	4%	4%
5. The road network in Marathon County is adequate for agricultural needs for the next 20 years	7%	36%	17%	22%	13%	4%
6. Marathon County needs more local machinery repair, supply and parts businesses	11%	30%	31%	21%	2%	5%
7. Marathon County needs more agricultural processing facilities	9%	30%	38%	17%	2%	5%
8. Marathon County needs to increase availability of direct farm marketing locations/facilities	10%	34%	34%	13%	2%	6%
9. The cost of farmland is making agriculture unsustainable in Marathon County	19%	36%	18%	19%	4%	4%

In terms of a priority for Marathon County, how would you rate the following:	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	No Opinion
10. Cost share assistance to landowners for soil and water conservation practices	12%	18%	36%	16%	8%	9%
11. Financial incentives (income tax credits) to owners of agricultural land for farmland preservation	22%	28%	22%	15%	7%	5%
12. Programs (voluntary participation) to keep land in agriculture over the next 20 years	23%	33%	22%	12%	7%	3%
13. Regulations (land use restrictions) to keep land in agriculture over the next 20 years	16%	23%	21%	19%	17%	5%
14. Programs to ensure supply of agricultural managers over next 20 years	5%	17%	29%	25%	15%	9%
15. Policies to attract/expand agricultural supply businesses (feed, seed, implement dealers, chemical, etc.)	8%	19%	33%	22%	13%	6%
16. Policies to attract/expand agricultural service providers (veterinary clinic, manure spreading, milk haulers, equipment service/maintenance)	8%	23%	32%	21%	11%	6%
17. Policies to attract/expand agricultural processing enterprises (dairy processing, meat processing, etc.)	10%	18%	32%	24%	10%	6%

18. Which of the following activities/enterprises do you have on your farm/business? (mark all that apply)

- 67% Dairy
- 30% Beef
- 1% Game farm (deer, pheasant, etc.)
- 5% Ginseng
- 5% Tree farm
- 7% Other _____
- 2% Nursery
- 5% Fruit/Vegetable
- 13% Maple syrup
- 1% Potatoes
- 2% Community Supported Agriculture
- 57% Grain (corn, soybeans, small grain)
- 2% Ag Tourism (sleigh/hay rides, corn maze, pumpkin patch, etc.)
- 0% Other livestock _____

19. Which of the following describes your farm/business? (• mark one only)

- 13% Retirement farm
- 17% Residential lifestyle farm (primary income from off-farm job)
- 23% Farm occupation (<\$100K gross)
- 29% Farm Occupation (\$100K-\$250K gross)
- 11% Large commercial farm (\$250K-\$500K gross)
- 7% Very large commercial (>\$500K gross)

20. How many acres do you operate?

<40 acres	40-149 acres	150-499 acres	500-999 acres	1000+ acres
5%	27%	52%	10%	6%

21. What percentage of acres farmed are rented?

0%	1% - 25%	26% - 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
33%	29%	19%	11%	9%

22. What percentage of last year's annual household income came from farming?

0%	1% - 25%	26% - 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
6%	19%	12%	13%	49%

23. Do you participate in farmland preservation programs?

Yes	No
42%	58%

24. When do you anticipate transfer of ownership of your farmland?

< 5 yrs.	5-9 yrs.	10-19 yrs.	20+ yrs.
16%	23%	31%	30%

25. Are there other programs/incentives/regulations/support, etc. that you think Marathon County should initiate or support to preserve farmland? Please use the space below.

See Appendix B

In terms of a priority for Marathon County, how would you rate the following:	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	No Opinion
26. Programs to increase accessibility to locally grown food such as farmers markets and other means to purchase directly from farmers	24%	27%	27%	12%	5%	5%
27. Programs to support agricultural economic development (financial incentives, technical assistance, low interest loans, etc.)	17%	29%	31%	12%	7%	5%
28. More restrictive agricultural regulations	4%	9%	23%	23%	32%	8%
29. Less restrictive agricultural regulations	12%	22%	28%	17%	12%	9%
30. More restrictive <u>non-agricultural</u> regulations	8%	16%	26%	19%	18%	13%
31. Less restrictive <u>non-agricultural</u> regulations	5%	12%	27%	23%	21%	12%
32. Increase technical and planning assistance from county staff to landowners for conservation practices	10%	26%	34%	14%	10%	6%
33. Enforce regulations limiting large equipment/machinery on roads	11%	16%	28%	19%	21%	6%
34. Increase the capacity of roads to support large equipment/heavy machinery	12%	18%	30%	20%	16%	5%

35. If you think that increasing the capacity of roads to support large equipment is high or very high priority, what resources do you feel should be used for the associated costs?

25% County levy (tax dollars)

67% User fees (charges to users of large equipment)

8% Other _____

From the following list, please mark the FOUR most important policies you think the County should pursue. (**please select no more than 4 items – no more than one in each response column**)

Policy Option:	Most Important	2nd Most Important	3rd Most Important	4th Most Important
36. Protect farmland through incentives to owners of farmland	21%	13%	12%	23%
37. Protect farmland through directing other development to existing developed areas	12%	15%	16%	30%
38. Protect farmland through conservation practices that protect soil productivity	14%	18%	40%	18%
39. Protect surface water quality (lakes and streams)	17%	34%	20%	14%
40. Protect groundwater	36%	20%	13%	15%

41. Would you favor or oppose the establishment of a state-designated Agricultural Enterprise Area, which would provide income tax incentives to owners of agricultural property to preserve farmland, require soil and water conservation on some farmlands, and target agricultural economic development funds to these areas?

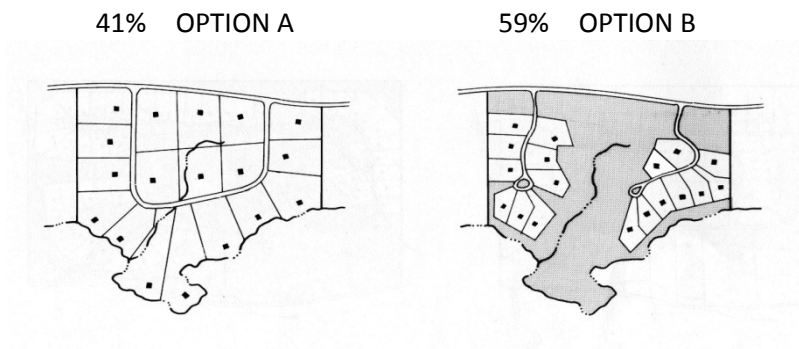
Strongly Favor	Favor	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Need More Information
11%	33%	25%	11%	7%	13%

42. Would you favor or oppose using farmland preservation zoning (restricts non-agricultural development in designated areas), which would provide income tax incentives to owners of agricultural property to preserve farmland, and require soil and water conservation on some farmlands?

Strongly Favor	Favor	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Need More Information
11%	41%	23%	9%	6%	10%

Please state your level of agreement with the following:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
43. Future development not related to agriculture should be concentrated in or near existing cities and villages or other already developed areas.	31%	40%	16%	8%	4%	2%
44. If development does occur in rural areas, it should be directed to non-agricultural areas.	29%	41%	14%	8%	4%	4%

45. Would you prefer housing built in a traditional design (Option A) with larger individual lots and no shared open space or a cluster design (Option B) with smaller individual lots and shared open space? Please fill the circle for either Option A or Option B below to indicate your preference.



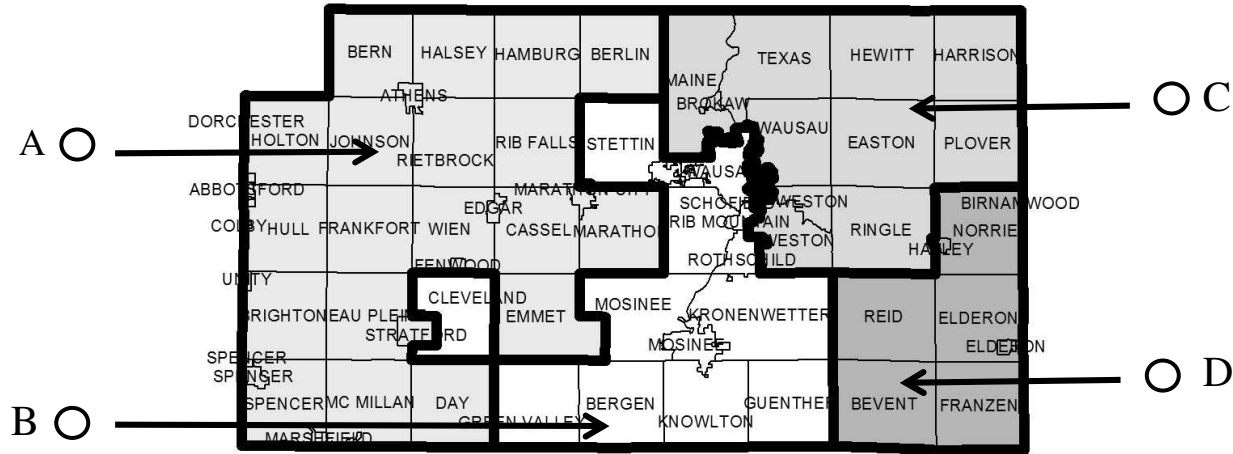
DEMOGRAPHICS

46. Gender	Male	Female	47. Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	77%	23%		0%	7%	13%	24%	26%	30%
48. Employment Status	Employed full-time	Self-employed	Employed part-time	Unemployed	Retired	Other:			
	37%	29%	5%	1%	26%	2%			
49. Highest level of education	Less than high school	High school diploma	Some college/tech	Tech college graduate	Bachelor's degree	Grad or professional deg			
	7%	29%	28%	16%	15%	6%			
50. Place of Residence	Own	Rent							
	94%	6%							
51. Children under age 18 in household	0	1	2	3	4	5+			
	74%	9%	9%	4%	2%	2%			

	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 – 34,999	\$35,000 – 49,999	\$50,000 – 74,999	\$75,000 – \$99,999	\$100,000+
52. Household income range	14%	19%	16%	23%	13%	15%

53. Using the map below, please indicate the part of Marathon County where you reside.

- Area A: 41%
- Area B: 29%
- Area C: 24%
- Area D: 6%



Please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by May 1, 2013 to:

Survey Research Center,
 University of Wisconsin – River Falls
 124 Regional Development Institute
 410 S. Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022-5001

Appendix D – Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question – Agricultural Stakeholders

Marathon County Farmland Preservation Survey – 2013

What is your opinion about the following agricultural resource issues/concerns?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
1. I could currently find productive/quality farmland to rent or buy in Marathon County	4%	29%	17%	31%	14%	6%
2. Productive farmland will generally NOT be available for farmland in 20 years in Marathon County	13%	27%	20%	25%	8%	6%
3. Finding suitable land on which to spread manure is difficult	7%	24%	18%	35%	9%	6%
4. Fragmented land and smaller parcels are making farming more difficult in Marathon County	17%	39%	13%	23%	4%	4%
5. The road network in Marathon County is adequate for agricultural needs for the next 20 years	7%	36%	17%	22%	13%	4%
6. Marathon County needs more local machinery repair, supply and parts businesses	11%	30%	31%	21%	2%	5%
7. Marathon County needs more agricultural processing facilities	9%	30%	38%	17%	2%	5%
8. Marathon County needs to increase availability of direct farm marketing locations/facilities	10%	34%	34%	13%	2%	6%
9. The cost of farmland is making agriculture unsustainable in Marathon County	19%	36%	18%	19%	4%	4%

In terms of a priority for Marathon County, how would you rate the following:	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	No Opinion
10. Cost share assistance to landowners for soil and water conservation practices	12%	18%	36%	16%	8%	9%
11. Financial incentives (income tax credits) to owners of agricultural land for farmland preservation	22%	28%	22%	15%	7%	5%
12. Programs (voluntary participation) to keep land in agriculture over the next 20 years	23%	33%	22%	12%	7%	3%
13. Regulations (land use restrictions) to keep land in agriculture over the next 20 years	16%	23%	21%	19%	17%	5%
14. Programs to ensure supply of agricultural managers over next 20 years	5%	17%	29%	25%	15%	9%
15. Policies to attract/expand agricultural supply businesses (feed, seed, implement dealers, chemical, etc.)	8%	19%	33%	22%	13%	6%
16. Policies to attract/expand agricultural service providers (veterinary clinic, manure spreading, milk haulers, equipment service/maintenance)	8%	23%	32%	21%	11%	6%
17. Policies to attract/expand agricultural processing enterprises (dairy processing, meat processing, etc.)	10%	18%	32%	24%	10%	6%

18. Which of the following activities/enterprises do you have on your farm/business? (mark all that apply)

- 67% Dairy
- 30% Beef
- 1% Game farm (deer, pheasant, etc.)
- 5% Ginseng
- 5% Tree farm
- 7% Other _____
- 2% Nursery
- 5% Fruit/Vegetable
- 13% Maple syrup
- 1% Potatoes
- 2% Community Supported Agriculture
- 57% Grain (corn, soybeans, small grain)
- 2% Ag Tourism (sleigh/hay rides, corn maze, pumpkin patch, etc.)
- 0% Other livestock _____

19. Which of the following describes your farm/business? (• mark one only)

- 13% Retirement farm
- 17% Residential lifestyle farm (primary income from off-farm job)
- 23% Farm occupation (<\$100K gross)
- 29% Farm Occupation (\$100K-\$250K gross)
- 11% Large commercial farm (\$250K-\$500K gross)
- 7% Very large commercial (>\$500K gross)

20. How many acres do you operate?

	<40 acres	40-149 acres	150-499 acres	500-999 acres	1000+ acres
	5%	27%	52%	10%	6%

21. What percentage of acres farmed are rented?

	0%	1% - 25%	26% - 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
	33%	29%	19%	11%	9%

22. What percentage of last year's annual household income came from farming?

	0%	1% - 25%	26% - 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
	6%	19%	12%	13%	49%

23. Do you participate in farmland preservation programs?

Yes	No
42%	58%

24. When do you anticipate transfer of ownership of your farmland?

< 5 yrs.	5-9 yrs.	10-19 yrs.	20+ yrs.
16%	23%	31%	30%

25. Are there other programs/incentives/regulations/support, etc. that you think Marathon County should initiate or support to preserve farmland? Please use the space below.

See Appendix B

In terms of a priority for Marathon County, how would you rate the following:	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	No Opinion
26. Programs to increase accessibility to locally grown food such as farmers markets and other means to purchase directly from farmers	12%	20%	34%	20%	7%	7%
27. Programs to support agricultural economic development (financial incentives, technical assistance, low interest loans, etc.)	14%	25%	31%	18%	6%	6%
28. More restrictive agricultural regulations	2%	5%	21%	23%	43%	6%
29. Less restrictive agricultural regulations	18%	26%	29%	15%	7%	7%
30. More restrictive <u>non-agricultural</u> regulations	10%	17%	28%	17%	15%	12%
31. Less restrictive <u>non-agricultural</u> regulations	5%	6%	28%	24%	24%	13%
32. Increase technical and planning assistance from county staff to landowners for conservation practices	7%	17%	36%	21%	12%	7%
33. Enforce regulations limiting large equipment/machinery on roads	10%	13%	23%	21%	27%	7%
34. Increase the capacity of roads to support large equipment/heavy machinery	16%	19%	26%	23%	11%	6%

35. If you think that increasing the capacity of roads to support large equipment is high or very high priority, what resources do you feel should be used for the associated costs?

- 36% County levy (tax dollars)
- 55% User fees (charges to users of large equipment)
- 10% Other

From the following list, please mark the FOUR most important policies you think the County should pursue. (**please select no more than 4 items – no more than one in each response column**)

Policy Option:	Most Important	2nd Most Important	3rd Most Important	4th Most Important
36. Protect farmland through incentives to owners of farmland	31%	16%	9%	21%
37. Protect farmland through directing other development to existing developed areas	17%	19%	13%	20%
38. Protect farmland through conservation practices that protect soil productivity	18%	20%	32%	20%
39. Protect surface water quality (lakes and streams)	9%	26%	27%	17%
40. Protect groundwater	25%	19%	19%	21%

41. Would you favor or oppose the establishment of a state-designated Agricultural Enterprise Area, which would provide income tax incentives to owners of agricultural property to preserve farmland, require soil and water conservation on some farmlands, and target agricultural economic development funds to these areas?

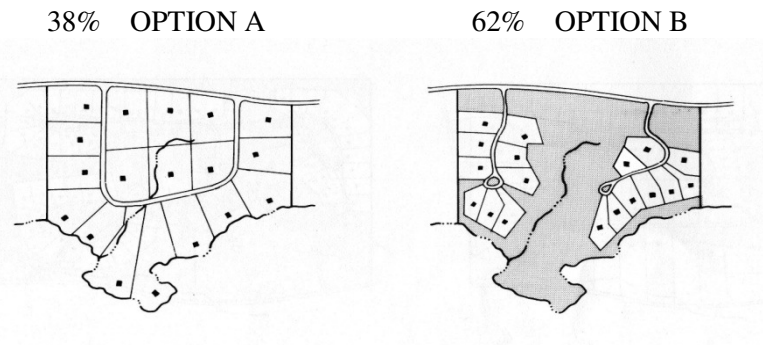
Strongly Favor	Favor	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Need More Information
15%	32%	21%	11%	8%	13%

42. Would you favor or oppose using farmland preservation zoning (restricts non-agricultural development in designated areas), which would provide income tax incentives to owners of agricultural property to preserve farmland, and require soil and water conservation on some farmlands?

Strongly Favor	Favor	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Need More Information
13%	40%	21%	8%	7%	10%

Please state your level of agreement with the following:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
43. Future development not related to agriculture should be concentrated in or near existing cities and villages or other already developed areas.	36%	39%	16%	5%	2%	2%
44. If development does occur in rural areas, it should be directed to non-agricultural areas.	37%	42%	10%	6%	2%	3%

45. Would you prefer housing built in a traditional design (Option A) with larger individual lots and no shared open space or a cluster design (Option B) with smaller individual lots and shared open space? Please fill the circle for either Option A or Option B below to indicate your preference.



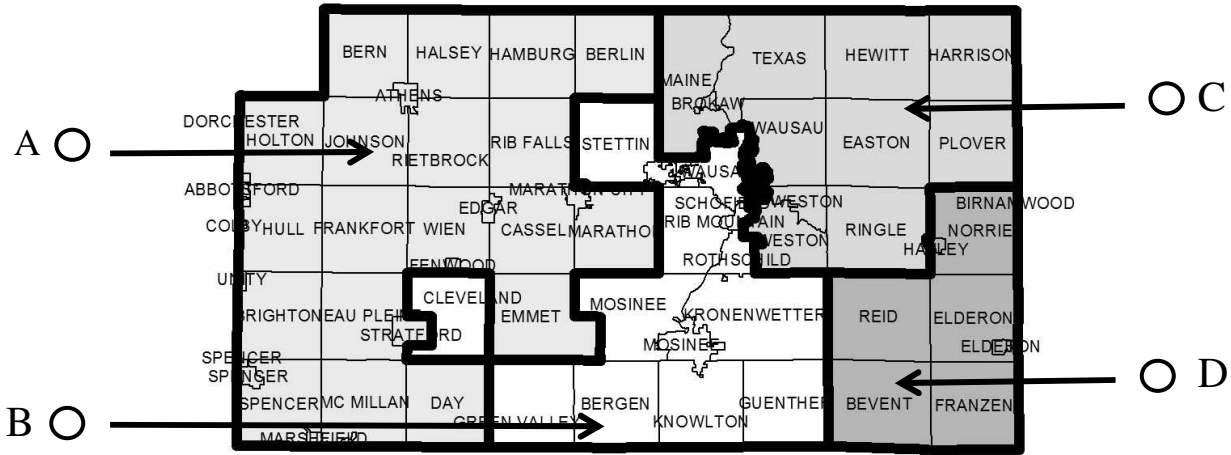
DEMOGRAPHICS

46. Gender	Male	Female	47. Age	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
	88%	12%		0%	3%	11%	28%	30%	27%
48. Employment Status	Employed full-time	Self – employed	Employed part-time	Unemployed	Retired	Other:			
	22%	56%	7%	1%	13%	1%			
49. Highest level of education	Less than high school	High school diploma	Some college/tech	Tech college graduate	Bachelor’s degree	Grad or professional deg			
	10%	35%	29%	14%	8%	3%			
50. Place of Residence	Own	Rent							
	99%	1%							
51. Children under age 18 in household	0	1	2	3	4	5+			
	73%	9%	7%	4%	3%	5%			

52. Household income range	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 – 34,999	\$35,000 – 49,999	\$50,000 – 74,999	\$75,000 – 99,999	\$100,000+
	73%	9%	7%	4%	3%	5%

53. Using the map below, please indicate the part of Marathon County where you reside.

- Area A: 67%
- Area B: 12%
- Area C: 15%
- Area D: 6%



Please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by May 1, 2013 to:

Survey Research Center,
 University of Wisconsin – River Falls
 124 Regional Development Institute
 410 S. Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022-5001

Appendix E - Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question – General Public

Marathon County Farmland Preservation Survey – 2013

<u>In terms of a priority for Marathon County, how would you rate the following:</u>	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	No Opinion
1. Programs to increase accessibility to locally grown food such as farmers markets and other means to purchase directly from farmers	32%	32%	22%	6%	4%	3%
2. Programs to support agricultural economic development (financial incentives, technical assistance, low interest loans, etc.)	18%	32%	30%	9%	7%	4%
3. More restrictive agricultural regulations	5%	12%	25%	23%	25%	10%
4. Less restrictive agricultural regulations	9%	19%	27%	19%	15%	11%
5. More restrictive <u>non-agricultural</u> regulations	7%	15%	25%	21%	19%	13%
6. Less restrictive <u>non-agricultural</u> regulations	5%	16%	26%	23%	18%	12%
7. Increase technical and planning assistance from county staff to landowners for conservation practices	12%	32%	32%	9%	9%	6%
8. Enforce regulations limiting large equipment/machinery on roads	12%	19%	31%	17%	16%	5%
9. Increase the capacity of roads to support large equipment/heavy machinery	9%	17%	33%	18%	19%	5%

10. If you think that increasing the capacity of roads to support large equipment is high or very high priority, what resources do you feel should be used for the associated costs?

16% County levy (tax dollars)

77% User fees (charges to users of large equipment)

7% Other _____

From the following list, please mark the FOUR most important policies you think the County should pursue. (**please select no more than 4 items – no more than one in each response column**)

Policy Option:	Most Important	2nd Most Important	3rd Most Important	4th Most Important
11. Protect farmland through incentives to owners of farmland	14%	12%	14%	25%
12. Protect farmland through directing other development to existing developed areas	9%	12%	18%	36%
13. Protect farmland through conservation practices that protect soil productivity	11%	17%	45%	17%
14. Protect surface water quality (lakes and streams)	23%	39%	14%	13%
15. Protect groundwater	43%	20%	8%	10%

16. Would you favor or oppose the establishment of a state-designated Agricultural Enterprise Area, which would provide income tax incentives to owners of agricultural property to preserve farmland, require soil and water conservation on some farmlands, and target agricultural economic development funds to these areas?

Strongly Favor	Favor	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Need More Information
9%	33%	27%	11%	7%	14%

17. Would you favor or oppose using farmland preservation zoning (restricts non-agricultural development in designated areas), which would provide income tax incentives to owners of agricultural property to preserve farmland, and require soil and water conservation on some farmlands?

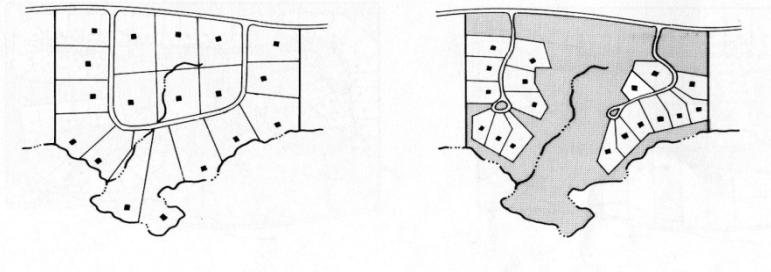
Strongly Favor	Favor	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Need More Information
10%	41%	24%	10%	5%	9%

Please state your level of agreement with the following:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
18. Future development not related to agriculture should be concentrated in or near existing cities and villages or other already developed areas.	26%	40%	16%	10%	5%	3%
19. If development does occur in rural areas, it should be directed to non-agricultural areas.	24%	40%	17%	10%	5%	5%

20. Would you prefer housing built in a traditional design (Option A) with larger individual lots and no shared open space or a cluster design (Option B) with smaller individual lots and shared open space? Please fill the circle for either Option A or Option B below to indicate your preference.

43% OPTION A

57% OPTION B



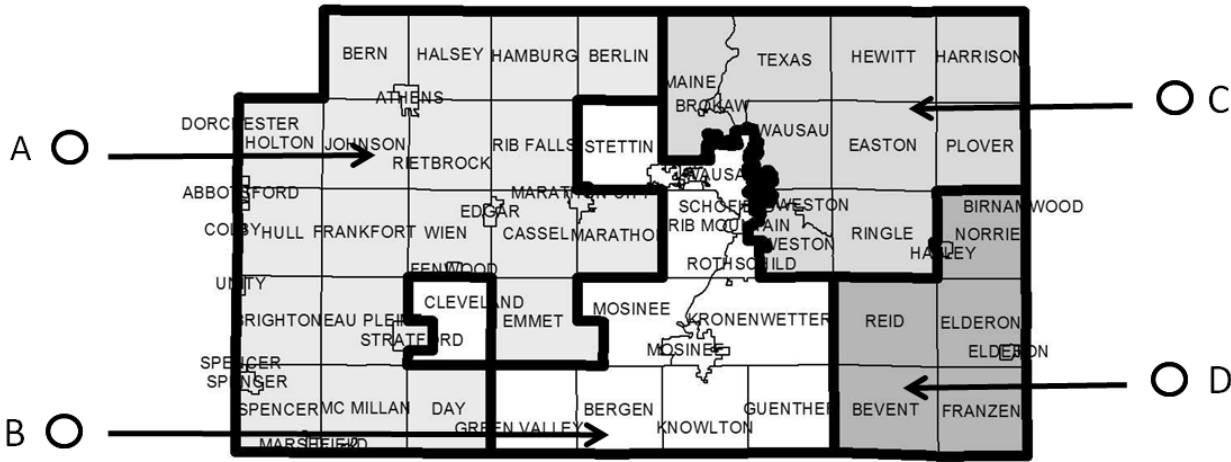
DEMOGRAPHICS

21. Gender	Male	Female	22. Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	70%	30%		1%	9%	14%	21%	23%	31%
23. Employment Status	Employed full-time	Self-employed	Employed part-time	Unemployed	Retired	Other:			
	48%	9%	4%	1%	35%	2%			
24. Highest level of education	Less than high school	High school diploma	Some college/tech	Tech college graduate	Bachelor's degree	Grad or professional deg			
	4%	25%	27%	16%	19%	8%			

25. Place of Residence	Own	Rent				
	90%	10%				
26. Children under age 18 in household	0	1	2	3	4	5+
	75%	8%	11%	4%	1%	0%
27. Household income range	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 – 34,999	\$35,000 – 49,999	\$50,000 – 74,999	\$75,000 – \$99,999	\$100,000+
	14%	14%	16%	27%	14%	15%

28. Using the map below, please indicate the part of Marathon County where you reside.

- Area A: 24%
- Area B: 41%
- Area C: 29%
- Area D: 6%



Please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by May 1, 2013 to:

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 University of Wisconsin – River Falls
 124 Regional Development Institute
 410 S. Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022-5001