

Wisconsin Department of

Revenue

2015 Agricultural Assessment Guide for Wisconsin Property Owners

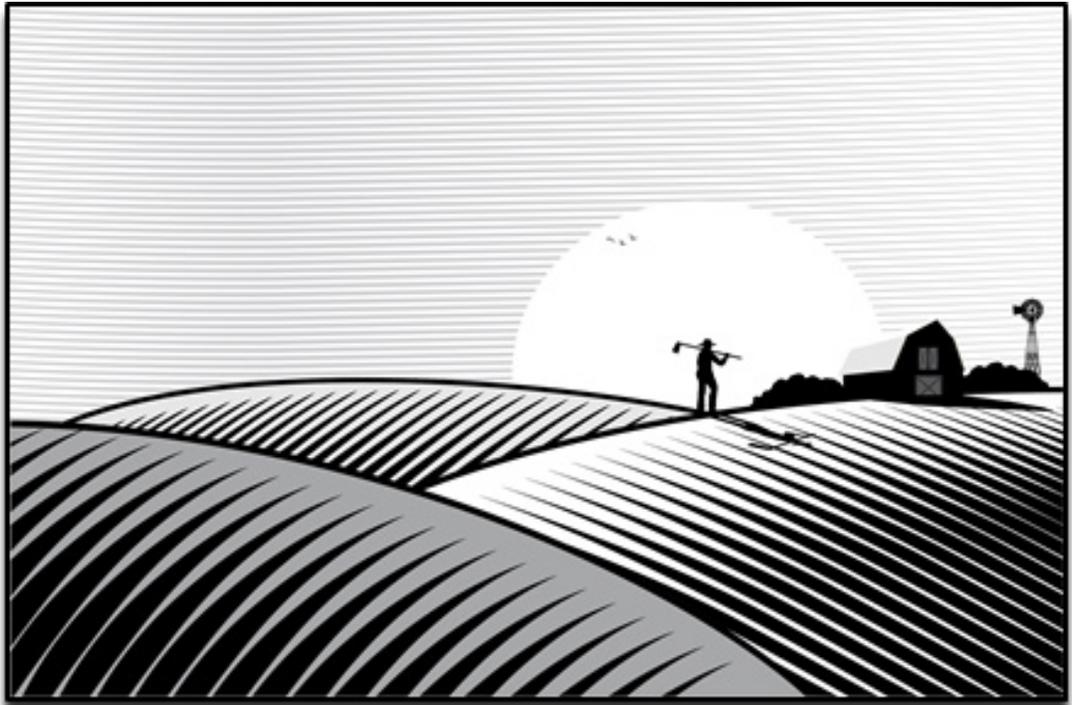


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I. Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to help owners of agricultural property in Wisconsin understand their real property assessments. This publication is particularly important because the Wisconsin State Constitution and state laws allow for agricultural property to be assessed differently than other classes.

II. Use-value Assessment

A. Use-value information

The standard for assessing agricultural land in Wisconsin is use-value. In a use-value assessment, the use of the land is the most important factor in determining its assessed value.

Use-value is specific to land only. Use-value requires that the assessed value of farmland is based on the income that could be generated from its rental for agricultural use. Income and rental from farming are a function of agricultural capability. Since any land can theoretically be used for agricultural purposes, statutes and administrative rules limit the benefit of use-value assessment to lands that are devoted primarily to agricultural use.

The goal of this valuation is to protect Wisconsin's farm economy and curb urban sprawl by assessing farmland based on its agricultural productivity, rather than its potential for development.

B. Agricultural land

State law defines agricultural land as land, exclusive of buildings and improvements and the land necessary for their location and convenience, which is devoted primarily to agricultural use as defined by rule.

Descriptions and definitions, including the definitions of "parcel of agricultural land" and "land devoted primarily to agricultural use," are provided in the Administrative Rule, Chapter Tax 18, Assessment of Agricultural Property.

C. Farmland Advisory Council

The Farmland Advisory Council oversees agriculture use-value. The Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) Secretary chairs the ten member council. These members represent agricultural, financial, academic, assessment, environmental and governmental interests. State law ([sec. 73.03\(49\), Wis. Stats.](#)), directs the council to perform the following duties:

- Advise DOR on the rules and guidelines for inclusion in the Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual (WPAM) regarding implementation of use-value assessment of agricultural land
- Recommend an appropriate charge for converting agricultural land to another use
- Annually report on the effectiveness of use-value assessment as a way to preserve agricultural land and reduce its conversion to other uses
- Recommend a method of adjusting the shared revenue formula and other formulas using equalized values to compensate taxing jurisdictions adversely affected by use-value assessment
- Calculate the federal land bank's five-year average capitalization rate and per-acre values for agricultural land based on estimated income generated from rental for agricultural use
- Work cooperatively with the Governor's Interagency Land Use Council

III. Classification

Classifying land by use

Since land classification directly affects its assessed value, assessors must carefully review all property classifications to ensure that each classification follows its definition, according to state law.

State law requires an assessor to classify land on the basis of use. This can involve a judgment of the predominant use.

The eight statutory classifications for real property:

1. Residential
2. Commercial
3. Manufacturing
4. Agricultural
5. Undeveloped
- 5m. Agricultural Forest
6. Productive Forest Land
7. Other

IV. Agricultural Land (Class 4)

Class 4 agricultural consists of all unimproved property devoted to farming, which includes land that produces a crop or supports livestock. State law defines this to include any activity listed under the NAICS Subsectors 111 and 112. Agricultural use includes growing Christmas trees or ginseng, and land eligible for enrollment in specific federal and state agricultural programs. Wis. Administrative rule ([tax 18.05 \(1\) par. \(d\) & \(e\), Wis. Adm. Code](#)), list the eligible programs. Land enrolled in the following programs qualifies for use-value assessment regardless of its agricultural use status at the time of enrollment.

A. Assessor must classify land

Under Chapter Tax 18.06 (1), an assessor must classify land devoted primarily to agricultural use as agricultural. Agricultural land must have physical evidence of agricultural use (ex: furrows, crops, fencing, livestock) appropriate to the production season. If physical evidence is not sufficient to determine agricultural use, the assessor may ask the owner or owner's agent for information to determine if the land is devoted primarily to agricultural use.

Assessors must consider all relevant factors and definitions to determine land classification. For more information, view Chapter Tax 18.

The assessor will annually determine the number of acres in each category(s) of agricultural land on a parcel when the land:

- Is devoted primarily to a qualifying agricultural use during the prior year's production season
- Is compatible with agricultural use on the assessment date of January 1

Note: An assessor may check to see if the farm filed a Schedule F with its income tax return. This form can help validate the use-value eligibility claims and subsequent conversion charge deferral. Use-value claims on a domestic horse breeding operation not in possession of a current Schedule F may not validate use-value for some of the property; consequently, a deferral may not be granted without applicable use and appropriate tax fillings.

B. Agricultural land categories

1. Land productivity and grading

Land productivity varies depending on soil texture, soil structure, complement of plant nutrients, contour, water resources, moisture retention qualities and climate. Due to variability in productivity, an assessor should grade agricultural croplands using information available from the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (formerly

the Soil Conservation Service). The grading of soils should suggest the differential and measurable qualities existing between soils.

2. Soil

Each category is based on soil productivity - the amount of corn yield. This amount can also be used to determine a fair price for land rental. Regardless of the crop grown, the method of valuation remains the same.

Note: The classification of land capable of being tilled but used as pasture is a function of capability and not use. (ex: Grade 2 tillable land may be used for growing corn, beans, potatoes. Nevertheless, it remains grade 2 tillable based on its capability to grow corn).

Generally, the physical qualities and characteristics of the underlying soil affect its use. Except for tillable lands used for rotational grazing, the actual land use supports a general categorization as cropland or pasture. For cropland, assessors can use soil characteristics to determine the grade category. The grade category usually applies to the entire municipality.

An agricultural property's greatest asset is its soil. An area's soil makeup usually determines the type of farming. The soil conditions of a farm often dictate the amount and kind of soil management necessary to produce a crop. Since soil play such an important part in rural agricultural valuation, it is essential to have sound knowledge of soil makeup and productivity. There are three categories/grades of tillable cropland based on soil survey production capabilities, slope and erosion ratings.

Soil types:

a. 1st Grade tillable

- Farm purposes that are tilled or otherwise planted
- Has the best production capabilities with suitable slope and erosion ratings
- **Includes:** Land planted in tame hay that is harvested for use on the farm or for sale, and land enrolled in federal programs

b. 2nd Grade tillable

- Farm purposes that are tilled or otherwise planted
- Less production capability than 1st grade soils
- **Includes:** Lands with the best production capability, but poorer slopes and erosion ratings exclude them from being classed as 1st grade

c. 3rd Grade tillable

- Poorest productivity rating or poorest slope and erosion
- Marsh or other wild land that is not cultivated
- Land entered into federal conservation programs is typically marginal (third grade tillable) cropland

d. Pasture

1) **Land devoted to grazing or feeding of livestock** – for the sale of livestock or livestock products

2) **Poor soil characteristics in productivity, slope, drainage, erosion or rockiness:**

- » Distinct areas where livestock do not enter (ex: slope, rocks, water, or natural boundaries are classified as undeveloped or forest land)
- » Open pasture land with first, second or third grade soil productivity ratings should be categorized as such

3) **Pasture types/information**

a) **Open Pasture and Cut-over Land**

- Open pasture - is only classified as pasture if the soil cannot ever be tilled due to poor soil conditions
- Cut-over land - includes land with timber removed and its current predominant use is pasture

b) Wooded and Wetland Pasture

Active grazing keeps the undergrowth in check. This condition is apparent when one compares wooded/wetland pasture to un-pastured woodland or wetland. Generally, un-pastured woodland not grazed on will have much thicker undergrowth, especially during the growing season.

An assessor should consider if the predominant use of woodland or wetland is pasture. The land should be pastured daily or on a reasonably periodic basis. To be classified as pastured, a wooded area needs more evidence than a few paths or occasional use. Land with non-existent or severely limited growth is not considered pasture.

Marshland used for pasture is not classified as undeveloped (Class 5). Cultivated pastured marshland should be categorized as first, second or third grade tillable cropland.

c) Pasture eligibility

To be eligible as pastureland, the land must fit the definition in Chapter Tax 18 and meet all these requirements:

- Primary use - keeping, grazing or feeding livestock
- Land was never successfully plowed or if it was plowed, cultivation must be abandoned due to poor soil characteristics
- Land must be:
 - » Devoted primarily to be predominantly used as pasture
 - » Substantially grazed by the livestock
 - » Fenced to adequately prevent animals from straying

3. Cropland

Generally, cropland is tilled land used for cultivating plants or agricultural produce (ex: grain, vegetables, fruit).

Examples of cropland include:

- Plowed land
- Tame hay
- Marsh hay
- Land in federal programs
- Tillable land used for rotational grazing. This land should be classified as the appropriate grade of tillable land.

4. Specialty land

Specialty land is land devoted primarily to an agricultural use that is unable to support “typical” crops or the pasturing of livestock:

- Cranberry beds are usually located on low wetlands that are not generally adaptable to other agricultural uses
- Aquaculture, also known as fish-farming Ponds used to raise fish are the “pastures” that support production of crops and livestock

C. Agricultural property classification using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)

For land to fit the agricultural classification, the activities and use of the property must follow the definitions under state administrative rule ([tax 18.05, Wis. Adm. Code](#)). Generally, the agricultural use of a property is obvious. Chapter Tax 18.05 refers to Subsectors 111 and 112 of the NAICS Manual of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget for defining agricultural uses. Consulting the NAICS manual definitions help assessors determine whether a particular use is an “agricultural use” and whether the property has land devoted primarily to agricultural use.

NAICS codes:

1. Sector 11

Agricultural establishments within NAICS Sector 11 (Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting) - are primarily engaged in agricultural production. Farms are the establishment units used for the industrial classification of agricultural production. **A farm may be:**

- Single tract of land
- Multiple tracts of land
- Owned or leased by one or more people, partnership or a corporation

Each operating establishment is assigned an industry code based on the primary product or group of products produced.

2. Subsector 111/112

- NAICS Manual classifies establishments primarily engaged in crop (Subsector 111) or livestock and livestock product (Subsector 112) production when production accounts for 50 percent or more of the total value of sales for its agricultural products
- Within a subsector, establishments are classified to a specific industry when a product or industry family of products account for 50 percent or more of the establishment’s agricultural production
- Several uses of land may seem agricultural on the surface, but fail to meet the definitions under state law and are not eligible for classification as agricultural land

3. Other codes/activities that do not qualify for agricultural use

These activities listed above are commercial, not agricultural. The important distinction is that land used for any of these activities is not used for the production of crops, livestock or livestock products.

- Timber Tract Operations (for sale of timber), (113110)
- Forest Nurseries (for reforestation) and Gathering of Forest Products (ex: barks, needles, moss), (113210)
- Fishing preserves (114210)
- Game preserves (114210)
- Hunting preserves (114210)
- Game propagation (114210)
- Support Activities for Animal Production (115210)
 - » Boarding horses
 - » Training horses, except racing
- Support Activities for Forestry (115310)
- Animal hospitals and shelters (541940)
- Riding instruction academies & schools (611620)

- Racetrack operation (ex: horse, dog) (711212)
- Horses: race and training (711219)
- Racing stables, operation of (711219)
- Fishing piers and lakes, operation of (713990)
- Rental of saddle horses (713990)
- Riding stables (713990)
- Boarding kennels (812910)
- Training animals (812910)

D. Programs that qualify:

1. Land enrolled in these programs qualify for use-value assessment regardless of its agricultural use status at the time of enrollment.

- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) under 7 CFR 1410
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 1986-1990 under CFR 704
- Water Bank Program under 7 CFR 752
- Agricultural Conservation Program under 7 CFR 1466

2. Land enrolled in these programs qualify for agricultural classification and use-value assessment if the land is devoted primarily to an agricultural use under administrative rule ([tax 18.05\(1\) \(a\), \(b\), or \(c\), Wis. Adm. Code](#)), at the time of enrollment:

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Contract Program
- Land subject to an easement under the Stream Bank Protection Program
- Land subject to an easement under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Land subject to an easement under the Non-point Source Water Pollution Abatement Program
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) under 7 CFR 1410
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) 1986-1990 under CFR 704
- Water Bank Program under 7 CFR 752
- Agricultural Conservation Program under 7 CFR 1466

3. Programs and Eligibility for Use-Value Assessment

In the tables below are the eight programs qualifying as agricultural use under Chapter Tax 18.05(1) (d) and (e). Five of the eight programs require that the land is primarily used as agricultural use (Chapter Tax 18.05(1) (a), (b), or (c)) at the time of program enrollment.

There are also some examples of programs that are not a qualifying agricultural program. If land is enrolled in a program that is not a qualifying agricultural use, the land must be devoted primarily to an agricultural use under Chapter Tax 18.05(1) paragraphs (a), (b), or (c) to receive use-value assessment.

Programs	Abbrev.	Use-value Eligible	Program Description
Conservation Reserve	CRP	Yes	Provides technical and financial assistance to farmers and ranchers for soil, water and related natural resources on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner
Water Bank	WBP	Yes	Designed to conserve surface waters, preserve and improve wetlands, and increase migratory waterfowl habitat in nesting, breeding and feeding areas
Agricultural Conservation	ACP	Yes	Assures a continued supply of food and fiber to maintain strong/ healthy people and economy, and to provide for environmental conservation or enhancement
Environmental Quality Incentives	EQIP	Yes *	Voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers promoting agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goal
Conservation Contract	---	Yes *	Voluntary legal agreement that restricts development of a landowner's property. Contracts may be established on marginal cropland and other environmentally sensitive lands for conservation, recreation and wildlife purposes.
Stream Bank Protection	---	Yes *	Protects water quality and the fish habitat of streams. DNR may acquire a permanent stream bank easement from the owner of land adjacent to the priority
Conservation Reserve Enhancement	CREP	Yes *	Enrolls agricultural lands into conservation practices (ex: riparian buffers, filter strips, wetland restorations, waterways and establishment of native grasslands)
Non-Point Source Water Pollution Abatement	---	Yes *	Provides grants to local governmental units in both urban and rural watersheds
Agricultural Management Assistance	AMA	No **	Cost-share payments to agricultural producers to voluntarily address issues (ex: water management, water quality and erosion control) by incorporating conservation into their farming operations
Conservation of Private Grazing Lands	CPGL	No **	Help for owners and managers of private grazing land to address natural resource concerns while enhancing the economic and social stability of grazing land enterprises and the rural communities that depend on them
Conservation Security	CSP	No **	Provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation of Tribal and private working land's soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life
Conservation Technical Assistance	CTA	No **	Conservation technical assistance for land-users, communities, units, government agencies in planning and implementing conservation systems

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Programs	Abbrev.	Use-value Eligible	Program Description
Direct & Counter-Cyclical Payment	DCP	No **	Provides payments to eligible production on farms enrolled for the 2002 through 2007 crop years based on acres and payment yields established for the farm
Emergency Watershed Protection	EWP	No **	Safeguard lives and property from floods, drought, and the products of erosion on any watershed whenever fire, flood or any other natural occurrence caused a sudden impairment of the watershed
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection	FRPP	No **	Matches funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and rangeland in agricultural uses
Forestry Incentives	FIP	No **	Supports good forest management practices on privately owned, non-industrial forest lands nationwide. Designed to benefit the environment while meeting future demands for wood products. Eligible practices include tree planting, timber stand improvement, site preparation for natural regeneration, and other related activities.
Grassland Reserve	GRP	No **	Offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore and enhance grasslands on their property
Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative	GLCI	No **	Nationwide collaborative process of individuals and organizations working to maintain and improve the management, productivity and health of privately owned grazing land
Healthy Forests Reserve	HFRP	No **	Restore and enhance forest ecosystems to: 1. Promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species 2. Improve biodiversity 3. Enhance carbon sequestration
Production Flexibility Contract			Provided payments for eligible farms from 1996 to 2002. PFCs were replaced by the direct payment program.
Rural Abandoned Mine		No **	Reclaims soil and water resources of rural lands adversely affected by past coal mining practices
Soil and Water Conservation Assistance	SWCA	No **	Cost share and incentive payments to farmers and ranchers addressing threats to soil, water, and related natural resources. Helps landowners comply with environmental laws and make beneficial changes to cropping systems, grazing management, nutrient management, and irrigation.
Stewardship Incentive (Forest Service)	SIP	No **	Technical and financial assistance to encourage non-industrial private forest landowners to keep their lands and natural resources productive and healthy
Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention	---	No **	Soil conservation, flood prevention; conservation, development, utilization and disposal of water; and conservation and proper utilization of land. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) uses three programs: • Watershed Surveys and Planning • Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Operations • Watershed Rehabilitation



Programs	Abbrev.	Use-value Eligible	Program Description
Watershed Rehabilitation	---	No **	Constructs dams to ensure public health and safety issues
Wetlands Reserve	WRP	No **	Encourages landowners to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on their property
Wildlife Habitat Incentives	WHIP	No **	Develops and improves wildlife habitat primarily on private land

* Enrollment in the program qualifies the land for agricultural classification and use-value assessment if the land is devoted primarily to an agricultural use under administrative rule ([tax 18.05\(1\) \(a\), \(b\), or \(c\), Wis. Adm. Code](#)), at the time of enrollment.

** The program is not a qualifying agricultural use. The land must be devoted primarily to an agricultural use under Chapter Tax 18.05(1) (a), (b), or (c) to qualify for agricultural classification and use-value assessment.

E. Calculating municipal use-values

Assessing Agricultural Land

Each year, the Farmland Advisory Council adopts guideline use-values (per acre) for each land category for every Wisconsin municipality. To determine use-value, estimate the net rental income per acre from agricultural use, for each category, in every municipality and divide by a localized municipal capitalization rate. Administrative rule ([tax 18.07\(1\), Wis. Adm. Code](#)) specifies the method and data sources for determining use-value.

Under [tax 18.07\(3\)](#), an assessor should determine the use-value of each parcel of agricultural land in the municipality based on the published guideline use-values; and make one or both of the following adjustments (if necessary):

1. Assessor may adjust the guideline use-values to more accurately reflect the use-value of the parcel of agricultural land
2. To ensure equity between classes of property, an assessor must equate the use-value of each agricultural land parcel to the general assessment level in the taxation district where that parcel is located

Chapter Tax 18 has instructions for calculating the agricultural land parcel's use-value. The published municipal guideline use-values per acre must be equated to the general level of assessment by multiplying the published guideline use-value for each category of agricultural land by the community's estimated general assessment level for the current year. Assessors must document they estimated the ratio.

V. Undeveloped Land

Under state law ([sec. 59.692, Wis. Stats.](#)), undeveloped land includes bog, marsh, lowland brush, and uncultivated land zoned as shoreland, including:

- Marshes
- Swamps
- Thickets
- Bogs
- Wet meadows
- Soils that are “somewhat poorly drained,” “poorly drained,” or “very poorly drained,” or “water”
- Areas where aquatic or semi-aquatic vegetation is dominant
- Fallow tillable land (assuming agricultural use is the land’s highest and best use)
- Road right of ways
- Ponds
- Depleted gravel pits
- Land that, because of soil or site conditions, is not producing or capable of producing commercial forest products

Undeveloped land is assessed at 50 percent of its full value. After determining the full value of qualifying undeveloped land under state law ([sec. 70.32\(1\), Wis. Stats.](#)), state case law and professionally accepted appraisal practices, the value is reduced by 50 percent under state law ([sec. 70.32\(4\), Wis. Stats.](#)).

VI. Agricultural Forest Land

State law ([sec. 70.32\(2\)\(c\)1d, Wis. Stats.](#)), defines agricultural forest as land that is capable of producing commercial forest products, if the land satisfies any of the following:

- Contiguous to a parcel that is classified in whole as agricultural land. The forest land and the contiguous agricultural parcel must have the same owner. Contiguous includes separated only by a road.
- Any parcel that contains agricultural land for the January 1, 2004 assessment, and on January 1 of the current assessment year
- Where at least 50 percent of the acreage was converted to agricultural land for the January 1, 2005, assessment year or thereafter

Agricultural forest land is assessed at 50 percent of its full value. After determining the full value of qualifying agricultural forest land under state law ([sec. 70.32\(1\), Wis. Stats.](#)), state case law and professionally accepted appraisal practices, the value is reduced by 50 percent. Refer to the Agricultural Forest section later in this guide for classification scenarios.

Note: See [pages 27-39](#) for examples.

VII. Other—Class 7

A. Definition

State law ([sec. 70.32\(2\)\(c\)1m, Wis. Stats.](#)), provides defines “Other”:

- Buildings and improvements; including any residence for the farm operator’s spouse, children, parents, or grandparents; and the land necessary for the location and convenience of those buildings and improvements.
- Residences located directly on farm operator’s land are classes as “Other.” Residences of the farm operator’s spouse, children, parents or grandparents are eligible.
- Land and improvements classified Other are valued at their market value

Important:

- Agricultural land cannot include any buildings or improvements
- Only unimproved land may be classified as agricultural
- However, minor auxiliary improvements (irrigation well or shed) not part of the farm set may only justify a nominal land allocation to “Other”

The critical factor defining “Other” property is its actual use supporting a farm enterprise. If an assessor obtains verifiable evidence that buildings on a farm are used for agricultural purposes, they qualify as “Other.”

B. Farm set

Another key characteristic qualifying a group of buildings as “Other” is their ability to support farming. The property can be classified as “Other” if the improvements meet the following criteria:

1. Agricultural use is reasonably probable:

- It is a farm set
- Improvements agricultural in nature (barn, shed, silo)
- Agricultural use is legally permissible
- Land zoned agricultural
- Farming or raising livestock is permitted
- Agricultural use is physically possible and appropriately supported
- There adequate access to cropland and/or pasture

2. Agricultural use is financially feasible:

- Agricultural use adequately supports the farm set

C. Assessing Other – Class 7

Agricultural building sites (farm sets) and residences of the farm operator’s spouse, children, parents or grandparents, located directly on land that is part of the farm operator’s land, now classified as “Other,” must be valued at market value ([sec. 70.32\(1\), Wis. Stats.](#)). The assessor must apply generally acceptable appraisal practices and principles when valuing “Other” property.

The valuation of farm sets presents a unique appraisal problem to the assessor. Traditionally, the best evidence of a property’s market value comes from the sale of other reasonably comparable properties. However, a farm set is part of an enterprise (farm) and does not sell without agricultural land.

The principle of highest and best use guides the assessor to the appropriate valuation approach.

VIII. Examples – Agricultural and Other Classifications

Example 1:

Scenario

- House, barn, silos and sheds are on three acres of an operating 40 acre farm
- Farm set is used in agriculture and meets all of the highest and best use criteria

Answer

- This farm set is classified as “Other” (Class 7)

Example 2:

Scenario

- 40 acre parcel where the owner rents 38 of the acres for agricultural use
- House and garage are located on the remaining two acres
- House and garage are not used in agriculture
- House is not the residence of the farm operator’s spouse, children, parents or grandparents
- Highest and best use of the house and garage by themselves cannot be agricultural since they could not support a farming operation

Answer

- House and garage cannot be classified “Other” and are classified as “Residential” (Class 1)
- Remaining 38 acres are in agricultural use and qualify as “Agricultural” (Class 4) land

Example 3 – Land held for future development:

- Real estate developer purchases a 40-acre parcel of agricultural land for future development
- Developer leases the 40 acres back to the farmer and the entire 40 acres remains in agricultural production
- Forty acres continue to be a parcel of agricultural land as long as it remains in agricultural production

Example 4 – Other:

Using residential lot sales to value “Other” land where restrictive agricultural zoning would prohibit residential development would be inappropriate. In this case, the assessor must recognize the farm set as an integral part of the farm enterprise.

Analyzing agricultural sales shows information, about the agricultural land and improvements market value, the assessor might use to determine the farm set’s contributory value.

For more information, visit:

- Chapter Tax 18
- Agricultural Assessment Guide
- WI Department of Natural Resources
- WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
- Wisconsin State Statutes
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- US Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency

IX. Conversion

A. Conversion charge

State law (sec. 74.485, Wis. Stats.), addresses the conversion of agricultural land to other uses or classifications. The statute provides direction on when a conversion charge is applied, how it is calculated, who administers the charge, sharing of the charge, and deferrals of and exceptions to the charge.

- Municipal assessor determines if a conversion charge is issued
- County treasurer is notified of the properties requiring a conversion charge
- County treasurer issues conversion charge bill to property owner who made the conversion.

Note: May or may not be the current property owner.

- Payment must be made to the county treasurer within 30 days of receiving the bill

A conversion charge is issued when land used for agricultural purposes, changes its use. Use change to residential, commercial, or manufacturing results in a conversion charge. Land changing from agricultural (class 4) to classes 5, 5m, 6 or 7 is not subject to a conversion charge.

Note:

- A conversion charge is based on change of use, not classification
- When a property formerly classified as agricultural is subdivided into lots and classified as residential, but still in agricultural use, a conversion charge is not issued until the use is actually changed.

On occasion, a conversion charge is not issued due to an error. When this happens, the county treasurer is allowed to issue the conversion charge in the following year. When the conversion charge is calculated, the values for the year the conversion took place are used in the calculation. The conversion charge bill is sent to the property owner who made the conversion, regardless who currently owns the property.

Conversion charges are only issued when agricultural land is converted to another use. Conversions in the following year are not relevant.

Example:

Scenario

- Year 1 - 10 acres of agricultural land is converted to agricultural forest in the current year
- Year 2 - the 10 acres of agricultural forest land is converted to residential land

Answer

- No conversion charge is due for either year
- First conversion was to a class of property where it is allowed to convert to without a charge
- In year two, since the property being converted was not agricultural land, no conversion charge is issued

B. Conversion charge calculation

The conversion charge and number of acres is based on the total number of acres converted by the same owner in the same municipality. It is calculated based on the number of acres that are converted and when the conversion took place.

Example:

- If a seller divides a 40-acre agricultural parcel into eight (8) five-acre lots, but does not convert the use, no conversion charge is due
- If he converts the use and then sells one or more of the lots, a conversion charge is calculated using the number of acres that were converted to another use
 - » Seller would pay the conversion charge if he converted the use before the sale
 - » Buyer would pay the conversion charge if they converted the use after the sale

Formula for the charge for converting use under state law (sec. 74.485(2), Wis. Stats.):

Number of acres converted	Times (x)	County's prior year average fair market value* of an acre of agricultural land	Minus (-)	County's prior year average equalized value (use-value)* of an acre of agricultural land
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- 5 percent (greater than 30 acres)
- 7.5 percent (between 10-30 acres)
- 10 percent (less than 10 acres)

* Provided by DOR

C. Conversion charge payment

Under state law ([sec. 74.485\(5\), Wis. Stats.](#)), the conversion charge must be paid to the county treasurer within 30 days after the conversion charge assessment. One percent interest per month is added to charges not paid timely. The county collects unpaid charges as a special charge against the land.

D. Exceptions

Payment is not required if:

- Calculated conversion charge is less than \$25 per acre ([sec. 74.485\(4\)\(a\), Wis. Stats.](#))
- Owner is not charged when the land is valued ([sec. 70.32\(2r\), Wis. Stats.](#)), and the land is converted to the following uses:
 - » 5 - Undeveloped
 - » 5m - Agricultural forest
 - » 6 - Productive forest land
 - » 7 - Other

E. Deferral

State law ([sec. 74.485\(4\)\(b\), Wis. Stats.](#)), provides for conversion charge deferral. If a conversion charge is due under [sec. 74.485\(2\), Wis. Stats.](#), the county treasurer may defer the payment if the land will be used as agricultural under [sec. 70.32\(2r\), Wis. Stats.](#), in the next tax year. If the land is not in an agricultural use in the next tax year, the owner who received a deferral must pay the conversion charge plus one percent interest per month from the deferral date to the date of payment.

F. Notice to buyers

When selling land classified as agricultural, the seller is required to provide the buyer the following:

- Land was assessed as agricultural
- Seller received:
 - » Conversion charge
 - » Payment deferral

If the seller does not disclose the above required information, the buyer of the property may pursue legal action against the seller.

For more information on conversion charge amounts by county, review the conversion charge common questions.

X. Appeals

A. Assessment appeal

As a property owner, you have the right to appeal your property assessment. The process for appealing the assessed value of your property containing agricultural land is similar to other property types.

To appeal:

1. Prior to the BOR, contact your assessor to view the assessment records (often referred to as the Open Book) and discuss your assessment
2. At the Open Book, the assessor, who is the local municipal valuation expert, should assist the property owner and/or Board of Review members with the calculations required to determine the use-value of any agricultural land parcel
3. After you meet with the assessor, if you are still not satisfied with your assessed value, make arrangements with your local clerk to appear before the BOR

B. Classification appeal

You may appeal your property's classification when it affects the assessed value. Classification affects the assessment of land classified as agricultural, undeveloped and agricultural forest.

The agricultural land's assessed value is based on its use in agriculture, rather than its fair market value. This valuation standard is referred to as use-value assessment. Land classified as undeveloped or agricultural forest is assessed at 50 percent of its full value.

After determining the full value of qualifying undeveloped land and agricultural forest land under state law ([sec. 70.32\(1\), Wis. Stats.](#)), state case law and professionally accepted appraisal practices, the value is reduced by 50 percent.

1. Appeal frequency

You may appeal your property's assessed value each year. You may also appeal the property's classification when it affects the assessed value. As an example, you may appeal to the BOR if you contend the property qualifies for agricultural classification.

The process for appealing your property's classification is essentially the same as appealing the assessed value.

To appeal:

1. Prior to the BOR, contact your assessor to view the assessment records (often referred to as the Open Book) and discuss your assessment
2. After you meet with the assessor, if you are still not satisfied with your assessed value, contact your local clerk to appear before the BOR

For detailed information on appealing your property assessment, review our Property Assessment Appeal Guide For Wisconsin Real Property Owners.

2. Evidence

If you are appealing the classification of your land that was in agricultural use during the prior year, but not classified as agricultural land for assessment purposes, be prepared to present evidence to the assessor or BOR verifying its use in agriculture. Evidence of agricultural use may include leases or financial records demonstrating an attempt to produce crops or livestock.

Each year, DOR calculates guideline use-values for every municipality in the state. These guidelines are available from your local assessor or DOR.

Your parcel's agricultural use-value is determined by:

1. Guideline use-values for the current year
2. Local assessment level for your municipality

For an appeal of assessed value on agricultural land, review the example calculation in this guide.

An appeal of agricultural forest or undeveloped land must demonstrate how the land meets the appropriate definition under state law.

Note: A residential class includes most property where the predominant use is for living purposes. The residential class also includes vacant land where the most likely use would be residential development, if the land in question does not meet the definition of agricultural use.

C. Conversion charge appeal

If a person owes a conversion charge the county treasurer may defer payment of the conversion charge to the following taxable year if the land will be used as agricultural land in the following taxable year. A person who receives a deferral under this paragraph is not subject to the conversion charge under state law related to the deferral, if the person's land is used as agricultural land in the following taxable year. If the land is not used as agricultural in the following taxable year, the person must pay the conversion charge with interest at the rate of one percent a month, or fraction of a month, from the date the treasurer granted a deferral to the date the conversion charge is paid.

XI. Examples and Scenarios

A. Classification Examples

The following examples illustrate the considerations necessary to properly classify property with parcels of agricultural land:

1. Example 1:

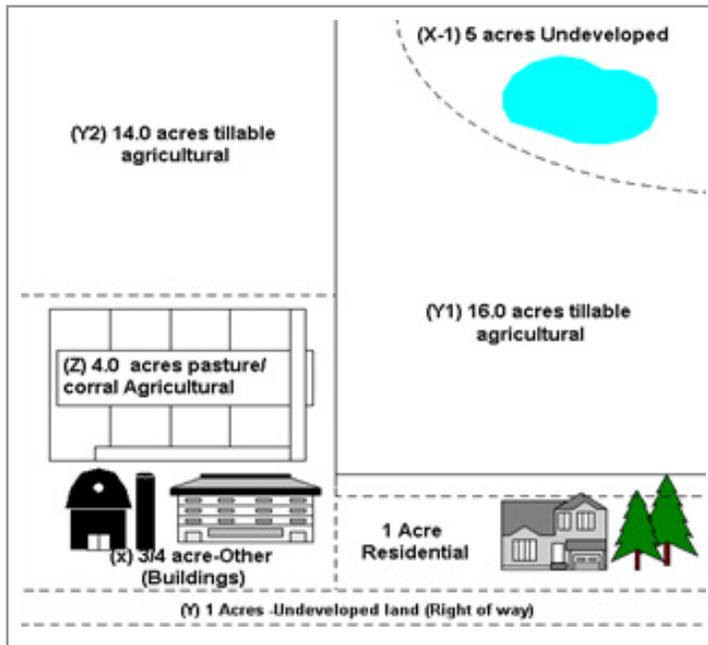


Figure 1

- In Figure 1 the owner converts 41.75 acres of agricultural land to one acre of "Other" (residential) and .75 acre "Other" buildings
 - » 30 acres remained as agricultural
 - » 5 acres remained undeveloped
- According to the owner, the primary use of the buildings, pasture and tillable lands is in support of the primary use of the lands for the production of horses for sale
- Presently there are no sales of horses; however, the owner proposes that in the next year there will be sales that validate the claim that the operation is actively engaged in horse production
- Though 5.75 acres was converted from exclusively an agricultural use to (Other) a conversion charge is deferred pending the use as agricultural in the following year. The owner may need to provide to the assessor with receipts and or sales information and income information related to the operation and any premise ID or registrations required by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection.
- If the owner does not provide appropriate support documents before the next year's assessment, a conversion charge is due on the lands not actively engaged in a use-value eligible classification. The lands in Fig 6 that are not use-value eligible are the one acre residence and 4.75 acres for pasture/corral and (other) buildings.

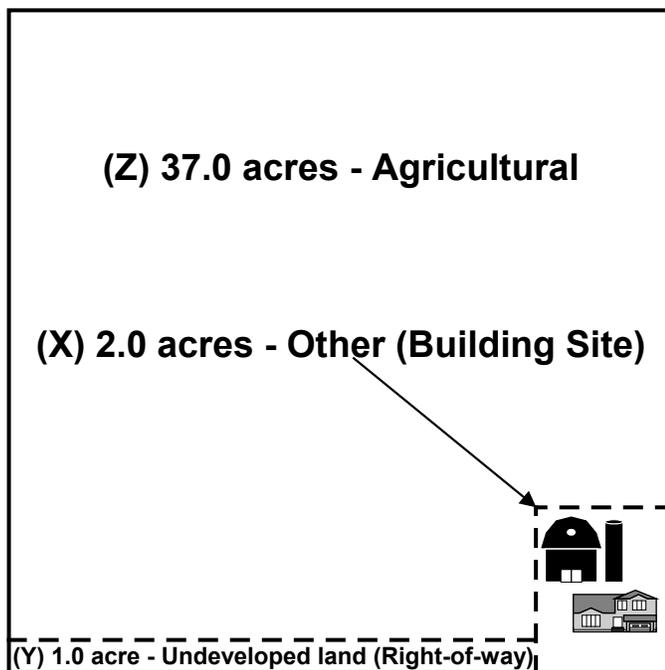
2. Example 2– Agricultural, Other and Undeveloped:

In this example, the area under the right-of-way (Y) fronting the building site should be classified “Other.” This arrangement is depicted in Figure 2.

- Farm consisting of a full quarter-quarter section (40 acres) includes an area in the southeast corner of the parcel where the house, barn, silos and auxiliary agricultural buildings are found (the building site or farm set)
- Parcel has 1,320 feet of road frontage on one side
- Farmer owns the land to the center of the roadway
- Road right-of-way extends 33 feet from the center of the road to each side. No area within the right-of-way is farmed. The building site (X) is 2.0 acres (130' x 650') with shade trees, an evergreen windbreak and a maintained lawn.

An assessor would measure and classify the parcel in Figure 1 as follows:

Figure 2



Undeveloped - Class 5 (Y)

Road Right-of-Way:

1,320' x 33' = 43,560 sq. ft.
 (less Building Site road frontage)
 130' x 33' = (4,290) sq. ft.
 Total Undeveloped: 39,270 sq. ft. (or 0.902 acre
 rounded to 1.0 acre)

Other - Class 7 (X)

Building Site:
 130' x 650 = 84,500 sq. ft.
 Total Other: 84,500 sq. ft. (or 1.940 acres
 rounded to 2.0 acres)

Agricultural - Class 4 (Z)

Total Parcel Acreage: 40.0 acres
 (less Other): (2.0) acres
 (less Undeveloped): (1.0) acre
 Total Agricultural: 3 7.0 acres

Figure 2

When considering the classification of this parcel, the assessor must identify improvements and land that qualify as “Other.” In Figure 2, 2.0 acres around the house and other improvements (X) are “necessary for their location and convenience.” The farmer also maintains a lawn around the house. The lawn is “Other” as it is “in a use that is incompatible with agricultural use.”

Rural parcels frequently include land under a public roadway subject to a right-of-way easement. Only areas subject to a right-of-way easement bordering a “parcel of agricultural land” and not “devoted primarily to agricultural use” should be classified as Undeveloped (Class 5).

Land under right-of-way easements fronting non-agricultural lands should be classified according to the adjacent use (ex: other, forest, commercial, residential). If a farmer tills or uses land subject to a right-of-way as pasture, it should be classified as Agricultural (Class 4).

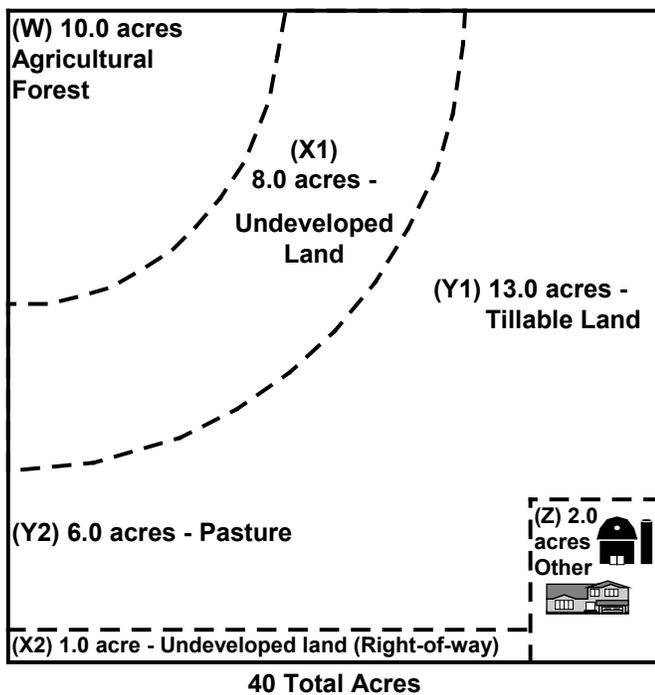
3. Example 3 – Land with several classifications:

The following example illustrates a 40-acre parcel that has land with several different classifications.

- Area within each class is rounded to the nearest acre
 - » Parcel contains 10 acres of forested land (W) next to a low, swampy area (X1 - 8 acres) bordering a small stream
- Remaining acreage includes pasture, tillable cropland and a two acre building site
- Parcel includes a 33' wide road right-of-way of nearly one acre that fronts the building site, pasture, and tillable land. Figure 3 shows this arrangement.

An assessor would classify the parcel in Figure 2 as follows:

Figure 3



Ag Forest (W)	10 acres
Undeveloped (X)	9 acres
Lowland (X1-swamp)	8 acres
Right-of-way (X2)	1 acre
Agricultural (Y)	19 acres
Tillable (Y1)	13 acres
Pasture (Y2)	6 acres
Other - Building Site (Z)	<u>2 acres</u>
Total Acres	40 acres

Only the 13 acres of tillable cropland (Y1) and the six acres of pasture (Y2) are devoted primarily to agricultural use and are classified as agricultural land (Class 4).

Undeveloped (Class 5) is a residual land class that includes bog, marsh, lowland brush, idle cropland and pasture, and other non-productive lands not elsewhere classified. Road right-of-way fronting a parcel of agricultural land is wasteland if it is not used in agriculture. It is unlikely that all undeveloped land has the same market value. Example: the property in Figure 3 has two areas of undeveloped totaling nine acres. The one acre of land found within the road right-of-way and fronting the agricultural land (X2) is not used for agriculture and has limited value to the titleholder. Therefore, the assessor should assign it a nominal or token value. The other area of undeveloped (X1) may have greater market value attributable to its potential recreational use (ex: fishing, hunting).

4. Example 4 – Lot sale and leaseback:

Last spring a farmer sold five acres out of a 40 acre legal description.

- Five acre parcel was recorded with a new legal description
- Farmer leased the 5-acre lot back from the new owner and continued planting corn on the entire 40 acres

This arrangement is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

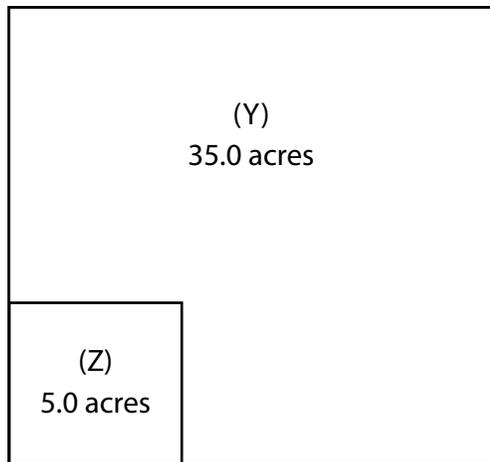


Figure 4

There are a total of 40 acres. The 35 acres owned and five acres leased by the farmer make up the economic unit (or establishment) engaged in the agricultural activity of corn farming (NAICS Industry Number 111150). Parcel (Y) meets the definition of agricultural land and must be classified as agricultural. Parcel (Z) is also a parcel of agricultural land because it is devoted primarily to agricultural use and contains no buildings or improvements.

5. Example 5 – Residence with stable and horse pasture:

Figure 5

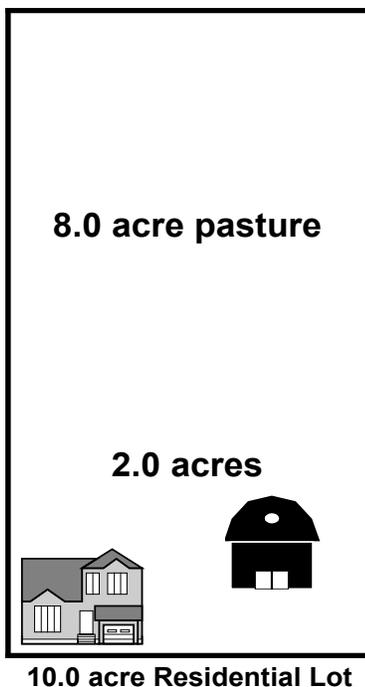


Figure 5

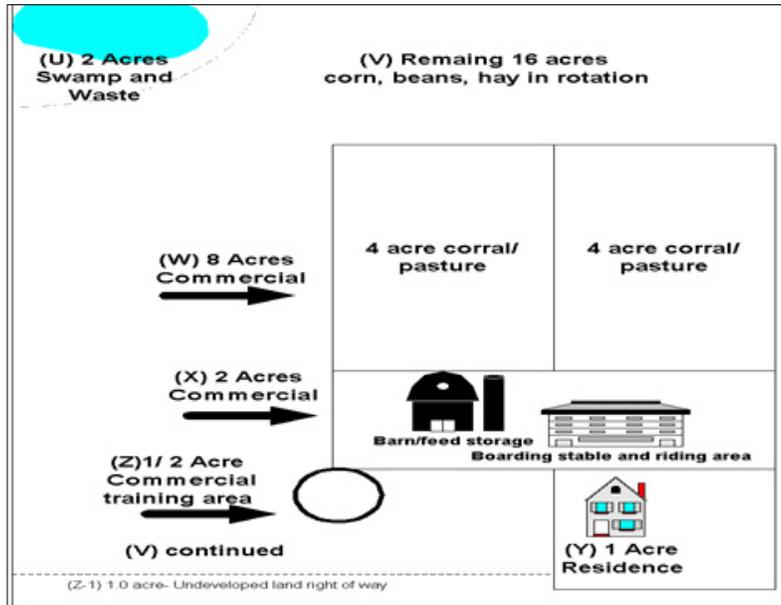
Shows a house on a 10-acre parcel that was previously classified residential. The owners recently built a small outbuilding to use as a stable for two horses and devoted eight acres of their property to pasturing the horses.

Although the owners use eight acres to pasture their horses, this is not an agricultural use since they are not primarily engaged in the production of horses for sale. The eight acre pasture is not devoted primarily to agricultural use and cannot be classified as a parcel of agricultural land. The predominant use of the property is residential and it should continue to be classified in its entirety as residential (Class 1).

6. Example 6 – Horse boarding, stable, horse pasture, riding areas and corral

Figure 6 shows a house on a 28.5 acre parcel that was previously classified residential. The owners recently built a horse boarding stable and corrals for pasturing horses that are boarded at the facility. Eight acres of their property is devoted to pasturing the horses, 2.5 acres are devoted to boarding, training and support of the operations.

Figure 6



Assessor would classify the parcel in Figure 6 as follows:

Agricultural (V) Class 4	16 acres
Commercial (W) Class 2	10.5 acres
Residential (Y) Class 1	1.0 acre
Undeveloped (Z-1) Class 5	1.0 acre
Undeveloped (U) Class 5	2.0 acres

Agricultural use – raising horses is considered an agricultural use under NAICS. Establishments that provide foal rearing, health maintenance, controlled feeding and harvesting, for the eventual sale of the animals are considered an agricultural use.

Arts, entertaining and recreation industries – training race horses, operating riding stables, rental of saddle horses, and operating a horse race track are considered Arts, Entertaining and Recreation Industries under the NAICS.

Commercial – pasturing horses on lands with facilities primarily engaged in boarding horses classifies those lands as commercial.

B. Valuation Examples

1. Example 1 – Municipal use-value

The following example shows the valuation process for a parcel of agricultural land beginning in 2000.

Municipal guideline use-values published for this Town are:

Category	Guideline Value/Acre
• 1st Grade Tillable	\$ 513
• 2nd Grade Tillable	\$ 431
• 3rd Grade Tillable	\$ 315
• Pasture	\$ 126

First, the assessor analyzes DOR's Equalization Bureau's Major Class Comparison Report for the municipality and establishes the general level of assessment declined an average of five percent each year since the last revaluation.

Last year the overall assessment ratio was 85 percent. Given the recent trend and the results from an analysis of recent sales, the assessor estimates that the overall assessment level of the community this year will be 80 percent. Another source of information for estimating the assessment level is Equalization's Sales Analysis Reports.

For more information on estimating the general level of assessment, contact the Equalization Bureau District Office in your area.

Multiplying each guideline use-value by 0.80 gives the assessor equated guideline use-values of:

Category	Equated Value/Acre
• 1st Grade Tillable	\$ 410
• 2nd Grade Tillable	\$ 345
• 3rd Grade Tillable	\$ 252
• Pasture	\$ 101

2. Example 2 – Agricultural land valuation

For every parcel of agricultural land in 2000 and beyond, calculate the parcel's use-value by multiplying the current number of acres by the equated municipal use-value for each category of agricultural land. Consider the example of a 68 acre parcel of agricultural land located in a Town where the equated municipal use-values were previously calculated. For this parcel of agricultural land the use-value is calculated as:

Municipal Category	Acres	Value/Acre	Use-Value
#1	20	\$ 410	\$ 8,200
#2	21	\$ 345	\$ 7,245
#3	12	\$ 252	\$ 3,024
Pasture		\$ 15	\$ 1,515

Total for Parcel of Agricultural Land: \$ 19,984

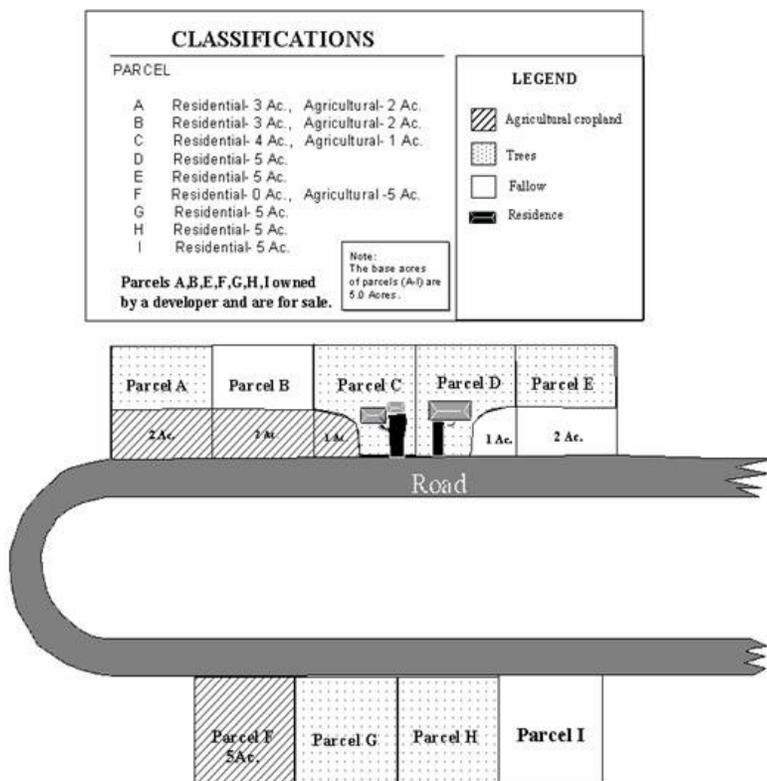
If (in addition to agricultural land) a parcel includes non-agricultural classifications, the market value of the non-agricultural land and improvements are added to the assessed value of agricultural land to arrive at the parcel's total assessed value.

3. Example 3 – Residential Development

Figure 3 indicates that in a developing area residential parcels do not lose their use-value eligibility until the use changes. Parcels A, B and C retain partial use-value while F retains full use-value. In this example a conversion charge is deferred on these parcels until they are no longer have an agricultural use.

A farmer has a 120 acre farm operation with qualifying agricultural uses under Chapter Tax 18. A portion of the operation is changing its use as shown in Figure 3 below. The farmland is being developed into a residential subdivision with several parcels that are approximately five acres. The subdivision is located in an area showing residential growth. Utilities are available at the parcel line. Parcel sizes range from one to ten acres. Some of the parcels have qualifying agricultural uses; others have a mixture of qualifying agricultural uses and woods; others have a mixture of land uses.

Figure 3



Parcel A – is a five-acre parcel, partially wooded, with two acres devoted to crop production. The crop was harvested last fall.

- Parcel is classified as part agricultural (the two acres) and part residential
- Agricultural land is part of the farm operation and was used for a qualifying activity under Chapter Tax 18 in the previous growing year
- Wooded area is part of the small parcel the owner could build on and is located in an area of typical five acre parcel sizes

Parcel B – is located next to parcel A. It has a two-acre field, as an extension of the field in parcel A. The balance of the three acres are fallow tillable.

- Parcel is classified as part agricultural and part residential

2015 Agricultural Assessment Guide for Wisconsin Property Owners

- Agricultural land is part of the farm operation and produces value from the land for the land owner
- Fallow land is part of a residential subdivision where the residential infrastructure is in place and the construction of a residence is imminent
- Advertised for sale as residential and is a typical residential parcel size for the community

Parcel C – is located next to parcel B. It has a residence on part of it with about three acres of trees and an acre of agricultural land (part of the same fields and operation as above).

- Parcel is classified as one acre of agricultural land
- Balance is classified as residential
- Land around the residence is used in support of the residential nature
- Trees are also in support of the residential use of the parcel

Parcel D – is mostly wooded, but has one acre of fallow ground and a residence

- Parcel is classified as residential as there is no agricultural activity
- Fallow land is part of a residential subdivision where the residential infrastructure is in place and the construction of a residence is imminent.
- Advertised for sale as residential and is a typical residential parcel size for the community

Parcel E – is adjacent to parcel D, and has a two-acre fallow field with three acres of wooded land.

- Entire parcel is classified as residential
- No qualifying agricultural activity on the parcel
- Part of a residential subdivision where the residential infrastructure is in place and the construction of a residence is imminent
- Advertised for sale as residential and is a typical residential parcel size for the community

Parcel F – is a five-acre parcel; all agricultural land, farmed last year as part of the farm operation; with no building on the parcel as of the assessment date.

- Classified as agricultural, with use-value assessment
- Primary use is a qualifying crop activity and is not in a use that is incompatible with agricultural use

Parcel G – is a five-acre parcel adjacent to the above entirely agricultural parcel. It is covered with trees.

- Classified as residential
- Part of a residential subdivision where the residential infrastructure is in place and the construction of a residence is imminent
- Advertised for sale as residential and is a typical residential parcel size for the community

Parcel H – is an all wooded parcel next to parcel G, and adjacent to parcel I, which is fallow.

- Classified as residential
- Part of a residential subdivision
- Construction of a residence is imminent
- Advertised for sale as residential and is a typical residential parcel size for the community

Parcel I – is a fallow parcel, adjacent to the wooded parcel above.

- Classified as residential
- Part of a residential subdivision where the residential infrastructure is in place and the construction of a residence is imminent
- Advertised for sale as residential and is a typical residential parcel size for the community

XII. Agricultural Forest

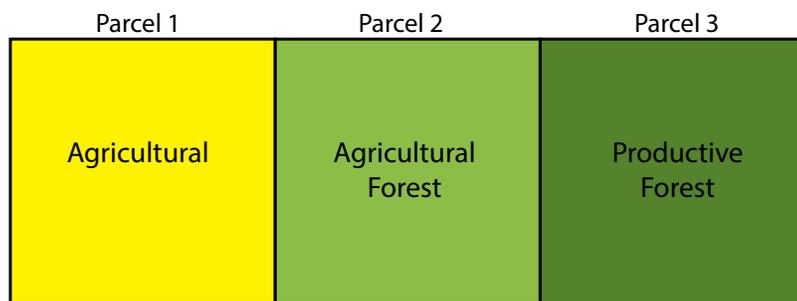
State law ([sec. 70.32\(2\)\(c\)1d, Wis. Stats.](#)), defines agricultural forest as “land that is producing or is capable of producing commercial forest products, if the land satisfies any of the following conditions:

- It is contiguous to a parcel that is classified in whole as agricultural land under this subsection, if the contiguous parcel is owned by the same person that owns the land that is producing or is capable of producing commercial forest products. In this subdivision, ‘contiguous’ includes separated only by a road.
- It is located on a parcel containing land classified as agricultural land in the property tax assessment on January 1, 2004, and on January 1 of the year of assessment
- It is located on a parcel at where least 50 percent (by acreage) was converted to land classified as agricultural land in the property tax assessment on January 1, 2005, or thereafter

Classification Scenarios

The following pages contain classification scenarios. In these scenarios, a solid line designates a parcel’s boundary while a dashed line designates a change in classification within the same parcel.

1. Scenario 1



Scenario 1 contains three parcels with the same owner:

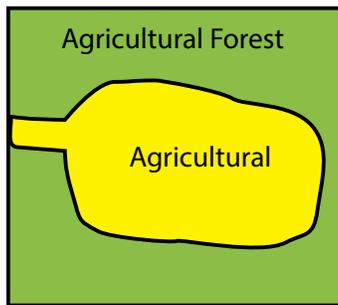
Parcel 1 – categorized as tillable grade 1, tillable grade 2, tillable grade 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

Parcel 2 – classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for all the following reasons.

- Produces or is capable of producing commercial forest products
- Is contiguous to Parcel 1, a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural
- Parcel 1 and Parcel 2 have the same owner

Parcel 3 – classified as Productive Forest and is assessed at its full value since it is not contiguous to Parcel 1.

2. Scenario 2



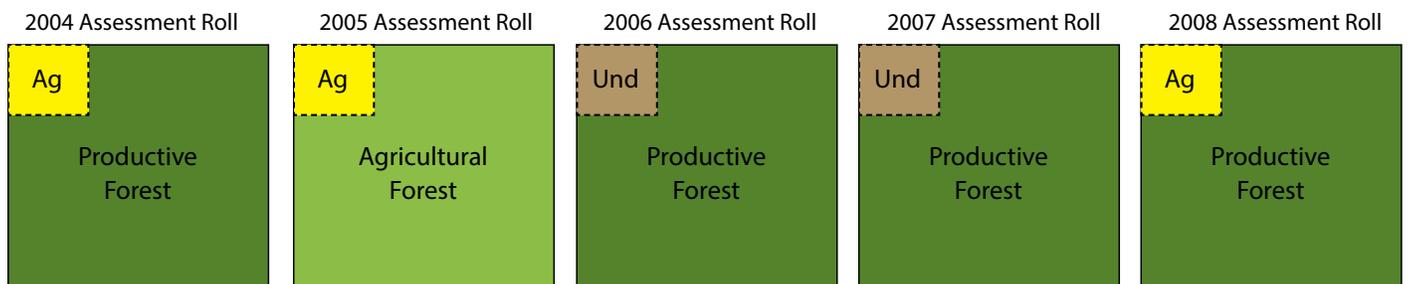
Scenario 2 contains one parcel:

Forest area – is classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for all the following reasons. The parcel:

- Produces or is capable of producing commercial forest products
- Is located on a parcel containing land classified as agricultural land for the 2004 assessment year
- Contains land classified as agricultural for the current assessment year

Agricultural acres – are categorized as tillable grade 1, tillable grade 2, tillable grade 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

3. Scenario 3



Scenario 3 contains one parcel over a five-year period:

Forest in 2005 and 2008 – is classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for all the following reasons. **The areas of forest:**

- Produces or are capable of producing commercial forest products
- Located on a parcel containing land classified as agricultural land for the 2004 assessment year and the current assessment year

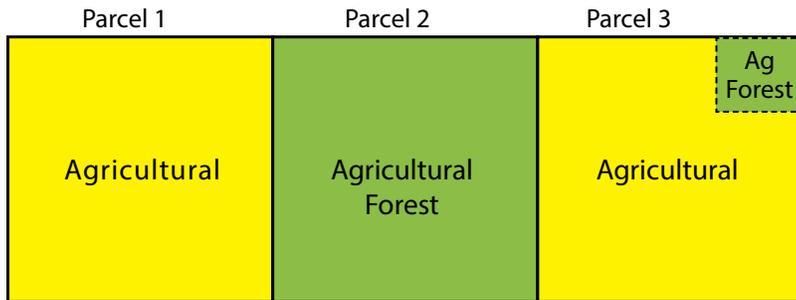
In 2004, the forest – is classified as Productive Forest and is assessed at its full value for the following reasons:

- Area of forest is not contiguous to a parcel classified in its entirety as agricultural
- 2003 Wisconsin Act 230 is effective for the 2005 assessment, not the 2004 assessment

In 2006 and 2007, the forest – is classified as Productive Forest and is assessed at its full value since the forest is not on a parcel with land classified as agricultural for the current assessment year. The land classified as undeveloped is assessed at 50 percent of its full value.

Agricultural acres in 2004, 2005, and 2008 – are categorized as tillable grade 1, tillable grade 2, tillable grade 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

4. Scenario 4



Scenario 4 contains three parcels with the same owner:

Agricultural acres in Parcel 1 and Parcel 2 – are categorized as tillable grade 1, tillable grade 2, tillable grade 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

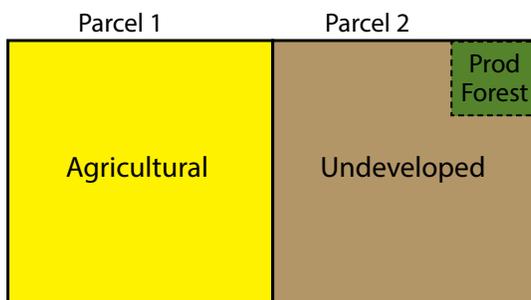
Parcel 2 – is classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for all the following reasons. Parcel 2:

- Produces or is capable of producing commercial forest products
- Is contiguous to Parcel 1, a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural
- Has the same owner as Parcel 1

Forest area of Parcel 3 – is also classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for all the following reasons. The area of forest:

- Produces or is capable of producing commercial forest products
- Is located on a parcel containing land classified as agricultural land for the 2004 assessment year and the current assessment year

5. Scenario 5



Scenario 5 contains two parcels with the same owner:

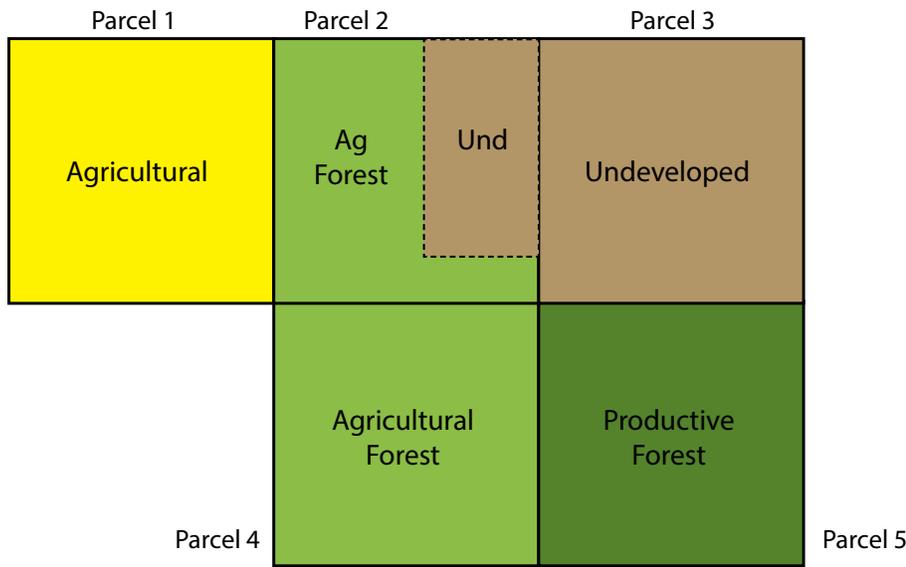
Forest area of Parcel 2 – is classified as Productive Forest and is assessed at its full value for the following reasons. The area of forest is not:

- Contiguous to a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural
- Located on a parcel with land classified as agricultural for the 2004 assessment year and the current assessment year

Agricultural acres in Parcel 1 – are categorized as tillable grade 1, tillable grade 2, tillable grade 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

Land classified as undeveloped in Parcel 2 – is assessed at 50 percent of its full value.

6. Scenario 6



Scenario 6 contains five parcels with the same owner:

Parcel 1 is categorized as tillable grade 1, tillable grade 2, tillable grade 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

Forest area of Parcel 2 – is classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for all the following reasons:

- Area of forest is producing or is capable of producing commercial forest products
- Parcel 2 is contiguous to Parcel 1, a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural
- Parcel 1 and Parcel 2 has the same owner

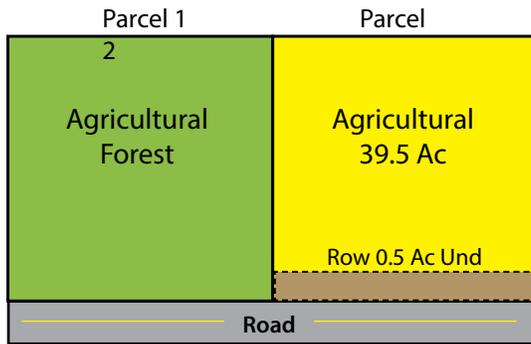
Parcel 3 and undeveloped land in Parcel 2 – are assessed at 50 percent of full value.

Parcel 4 – is classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for all the following reasons. Parcel 4:

- Produces or is capable of producing commercial forest products
- Is contiguous to Parcel 1, a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural
- Has the same owner as Parcel 1

Parcel 5 – is classified as productive forest and is assessed at its full value since it is not contiguous to Parcel 1.

7. Scenario 7



Scenario 7 contains two parcels with the same owner:

Parcel 1 – is classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for all the following reasons:

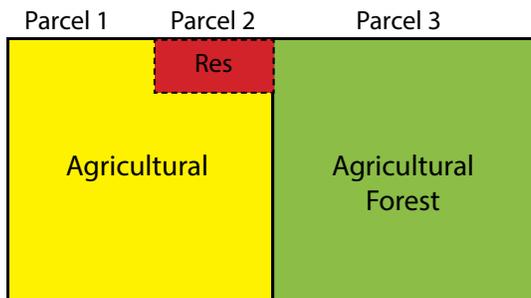
- Produces or is capable of producing commercial forest products
- Contiguous to Parcel 2, a parcel that is classified as agricultural except an area of road right-of-way

Note: While this example does not involve separation by a roadway, the principle is the same. Since contiguity is maintained with the separation by a road, a road that runs adjacent to or bisects a parcel is treated similarly.

- Parcel 1 and Parcel 2 have the same owner

Agricultural area of Parcel 2 – is categorized as tillable grade 1, 2, or 3, or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value. The area of Undeveloped is assessed at 50 percent of its full value.

8. Scenario 8



Scenario 8 has three parcels with the same owner:

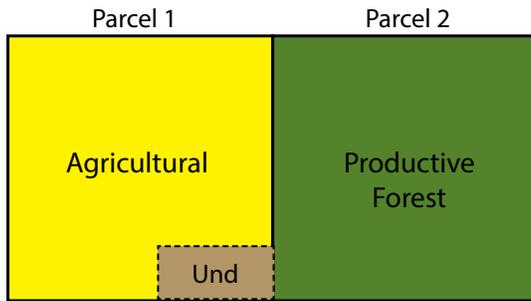
Parcel 1 – is categorized as tillable grade 1, 2 or 3, or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

Parcel 2 – is assessed at its full value.

Parcel 3 – is classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for all the following reasons:

- Produces or is capable of producing commercial forest products
- Contiguous to Parcel 1, a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural
- Parcel 1 and Parcel 3 have the same owner

9. Scenario 9

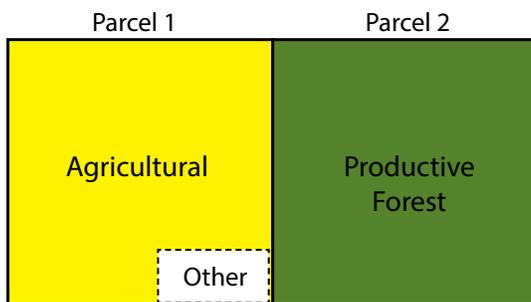


Scenario 9 has two parcels with the same owner:

Parcel 2 – is classified as Productive Forest and is assessed at its full value since Parcel 1 is not classified in its entirety as agricultural. Parcel 1 has multiple classifications, agricultural and undeveloped.

Class 4 acres of Parcel 1– are categorized as tillable grade 1, 2, 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value. The undeveloped area of Parcel 1 is assessed at 50 percent of its full value.

10. Scenario 10



Scenario 10 contains two parcels with the same owner:

Parcel 1 – has multiple classifications: agricultural and “Other.”

Agricultural acres of Parcel 1– are categorized as tillable grade 1, 2, 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value. The area classified as “Other” is assessed at its full value.

Parcel 2 – is classified as Productive Forest and is assessed at its full value since Parcel 1 is not classified in its entirety as agricultural.

11. Scenario 11

	Parcel 1	Parcel 2	Parcel 3	Parcel 4
Ownership Line	Agricultural	Agricultural Forest	Productive Forest	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 2px;">Agricultural Forest</div> Agricultural
	Productive Forest <div style="border: 1px dashed red; padding: 2px; width: fit-content;">Res</div>	Productive Forest	Productive Forest	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 2px;">Agricultural Forest</div> Agricultural
	Parcel 5	Parcel 6	Parcel 7	Parcel 8

Scenario 11 contains eight parcels with a line designating separate ownership:

Parcels 1-4 – have one owner and Parcels 5-8 have a different owner.

Parcel 2 – is classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for the following reasons:

- Produces or is capable of producing commercial forest products
- Is contiguous to Parcel 1, a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural
- Parcel 1 and Parcel 2 have the same owner

Forest areas of Parcel 4 and Parcel 8 – are classified as Agricultural Forest and are assessed at 50 percent of their full value for all the following reasons:

- Produce or are capable of producing commercial forest products
- Located on parcels that contained land classified as agricultural land for the 2004 assessment year
- Contained land that is classified as agricultural land for the current assessment year

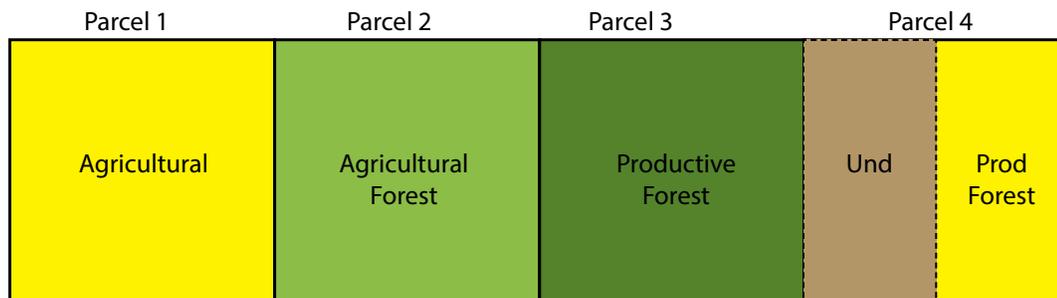
Parcel 3 – is classified as Productive Forest and is assessed at its full value since it is not contiguous to a parcel classified in its entirety as agricultural.

Parcels 6 and 7 and the forest area of Parcel 5 – are also classified as Productive Forest and are assessed at their full value. They are not contiguous to a parcel (with the same owner) that is classified in its entirety as agricultural.

Parcel 1 and the agricultural areas of Parcel 4 and Parcel 8 – are categorized as tillable grade 1, 2, 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

Residential area of Parcel 5 – is assessed at its full value.

12. Scenario 12



Scenario 12 contains four parcels that have the same owner:

Parcel 1 – is categorized as tillable grade 1, 2, 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

Parcel 2 – is classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for the following reasons:

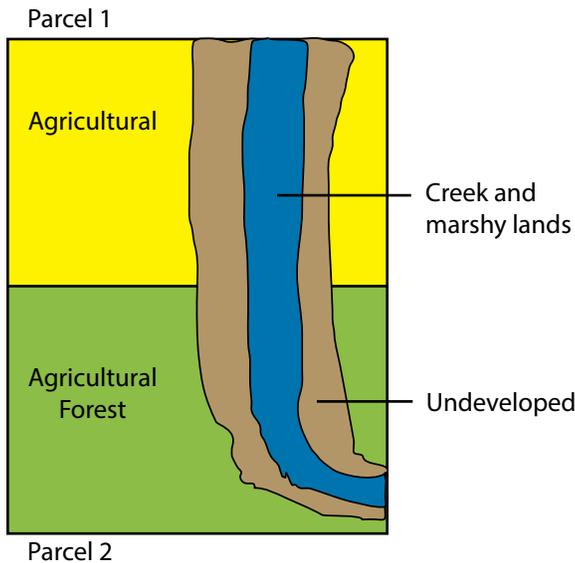
- Produces or is capable of producing commercial forest products
- Contiguous to Parcel 1, a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural
- Parcel 1 and Parcel 2 have the same owner

Parcel 3 and the forest area of Parcel 4 – are classified as Productive Forest and assessed at full value for the following reasons:

- Forest is not contiguous to a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural
- Land was not classified as agricultural for the 2004 assessment year and the current assessment year

Undeveloped land – is assessed at 50 percent of full value.

13. Scenario 13



Scenario 13 contains two parcels that have the same owner:

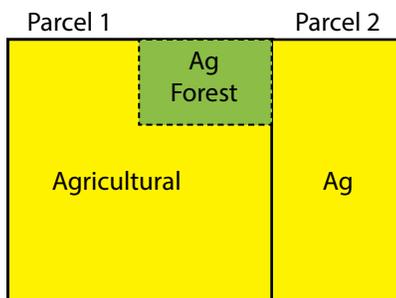
Forest area of Parcel 2 – is classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for all the following reasons:

- Produces or is capable of producing commercial forest products
- Located on a parcel that contained land classified as agricultural land for the 2004 assessment year and the current assessment year

Agricultural areas in Parcel 1 and Parcel 2 – are categorized as tillable grade 1, 2, 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

Creek and marshy land classified as Undeveloped is assessed at 50 percent of its full value.

14. Scenario 14



Scenario 14 contains two parcels with the same owner:

Forest area of Parcel 1 – is classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for all the following reasons:

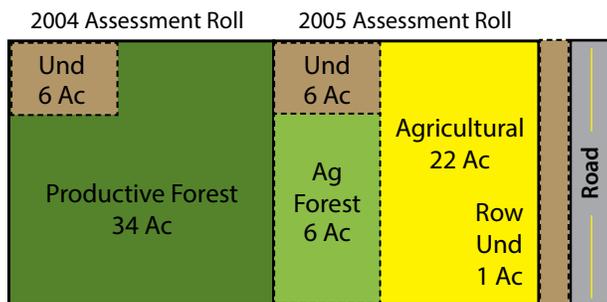
- Produces or is capable of producing commercial forest products

- Located on a parcel that contains land classified as agricultural land for the 2004 assessment year and the current assessment year

Forest area of Parcel 1 – also qualifies as Agricultural Forest since it is contiguous to Parcel 2, a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural and has the same owner.

Parcel 2 and the agricultural areas in Parcel 1 – are categorized as tillable grade 1, 2, 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

15. Scenario 15



Scenario 15 contains one parcel over a two-year period:

2004 assessment – shows 34 acres of forest classified as Productive Forest and is assessed at its full value since it is not contiguous to a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural.

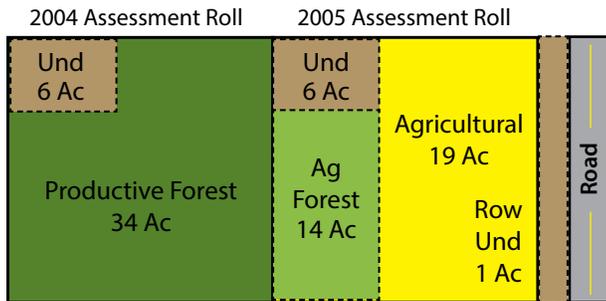
2005 assessment – 11 acres of forest classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for the following reasons:

- Produces or is capable of producing commercial forest products
- Located on a parcel where at least 50 percent of the acreage was converted to land classified as agricultural for the 2005 assessment.
- **Note:** Include any road right-of-way when determining the 50 percent agricultural acreage eligibility

Agricultural area for the 2005 assessment – is categorized as tillable grade 1, 2, 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

Undeveloped areas for the 2004 and 2005 assessment years – are assessed at 50 percent of full value.

16. Scenario 16



Scenario 16 contains one parcel over a two-year period:

The 2004 assessment shows 34 acres of forest classified as Productive Forest. It is assessed at its full value since it is not contiguous to a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural.

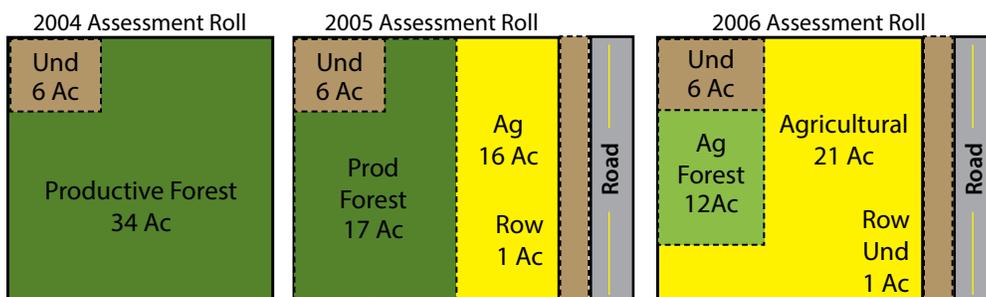
2005 assessment shows – 14 acres of forest classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for the following reasons:

- Produces or capable of producing commercial forest products
- At least 50 percent of the acreage was converted to land classified as agricultural for the 2005 assessment or thereafter
- **Note:** Include any road right-of-way when determining the 50 percent agricultural acreage eligibility

Agricultural area for the 2005 assessment – is categorized as tillable grade 1, 2, 3 or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

Undeveloped areas for the 2004 and 2005 assessment years – are assessed at 50 percent of full value.

17. Scenario 17



Scenario 17 contains one parcel over a three-year period:

2004 assessment – shows 34 acres of forest classified as productive forest and is assessed at its full value since it is not contiguous to a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural.

2005 assessment – shows 17 acres of forest classified as productive forest and is assessed at its full value for the following reasons:

- Not contiguous to a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural

- Not located on a parcel where at least 50 percent of the acreage was converted to land that is classified as agricultural for the 2005 assessment

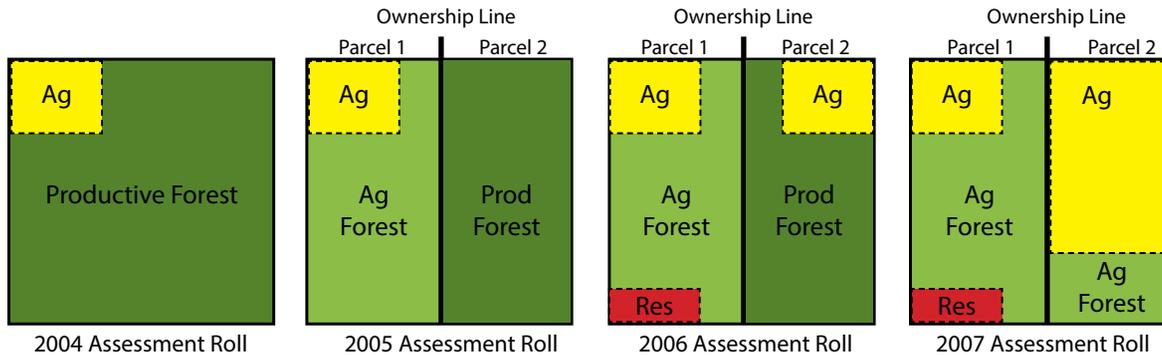
2006 assessment – shows 12 acres of forest classified as agricultural forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for the following reasons:

- Produces or capable of producing commercial forest products
- At least 50 percent of the acreage was converted to land classified as agricultural for the 2006 assessment. It's classified as Agricultural Forest since more than half the acreage of the parcel is now Agricultural.

Agricultural area for the 2005 and 2006 assessments – are categorized as tillable grade 1, 2, 3, or pasture based on soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

Undeveloped areas – are assessed at 50 percent of full value.

18. Scenario 18



Scenario 18 contains:

2004 assessment – shows 35 acres of forest that is classified as productive forest and is assessed at its full value because it is not contiguous to a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural.

2005 assessment – shows that the forty acre parcel has split into two twenty acre parcels with different owners.

Forest in Parcel 1 – is classified as agricultural forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for the following reasons:

- Capable of producing commercial forest products
- Located on a parcel that contains land that was classified as agricultural land for the 2004 assessment year
- Land that classified as agricultural for the current assessment year

Parcel 2 – is classified as productive forest and is assessed at its full value for the following reasons:

- Not contiguous to a parcel that is classified in its entirety as agricultural with the same owner
- Does not contain agricultural land

2006 assessment – shows a portion of Parcel 1 is now classified as residential and a portion of Parcel 2 is now classified as agricultural.

Forest in Parcel 1 – is classified as agricultural forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for the following reasons:

- Capable of producing commercial forest products
- Parcel contains land that was classified as agricultural land for the 2004 assessment year
- Contains land that was classified as agricultural land for the 2004 assessment year, as well as the current year.
The residential site acres do not impact this determination.

Forest area of Parcel 2 – is classified as productive forest and is assessed at its full value because the agricultural acreage does not constitute 50 percent of the total acreage.

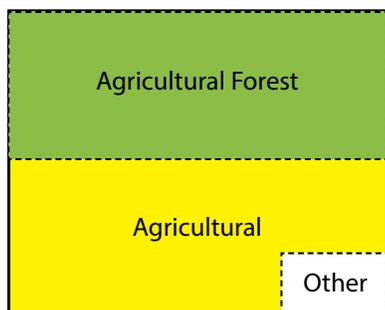
2007 assessment – shows no changes in Parcel 1 and an increase in the amount of agricultural land for Parcel 2.

Forest in Parcel 2 – is classified as agricultural forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for the following reasons. The area of forest is:

- Producing or is capable of producing commercial forest products
- Located on a parcel where at least 50 percent of the acreage was converted to land that is classified as agricultural for the 2007 assessment

Forest land – is classified as Agricultural Forest, because more than half the acreage of the parcel is now Agricultural.

19. Scenario 19



Scenario 19 contains one parcel:

Forest area – is classified as Agricultural Forest and is assessed at 50 percent of its full value for all of the following reasons:

- Capable of producing commercial forest products
- Contains land that was classified as agricultural land for the 2004 assessment year, as well as the current year

Agricultural acres – are categorized as tillable grade 1, 2, 3, or pasture based upon soil productivity and assessed at the corresponding use-value.

Area classified as Other – is assessed at its full value.

XIII. Definitions

Important definitions relating to the assessment of agricultural property in [Chapter Tax 18.05](#):

1. Agricultural use means any of the following:

- a. Activities included in subsector 111 Crop Production, set forth in the [North American Industry Classification System \(NAICS\)](#), United States, 1997, published by the executive office of the president, U.S. office of management and budget.
- b. Activities included in subsector 112 Animal Production, set forth in the NAICS, United States, 1997, published by the executive office of the president, U.S. office of management and budget.

Note: Subsector 111 Crop Production and subsector 112 Animal Production, set forth in the North American Industry Classification System, United States, 1997, published by the executive office of the president, U.S. office of management and budget, are reproduced in full in the Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual under state law ([sec. 73.03\(2a\), Wis. Stats.](#)). In addition, copies are on file with the department, the Secretary of State, and the revisor of statutes.

- c. Growing Christmas trees or ginseng
- d. Land enrolled in any of the following federal agriculture programs: the conservation reserve program under 7 C.F.R. 1410; the conservation reserve program 1986-1990 under 7 C.F.R. 704; the water bank program under 7 C.F.R. 752; the agricultural conservation program under 7 C.F.R. 701 or, provided that the land was in agricultural use under par. (a), (b) or (c) at the time of enrollment, the environmental quality incentive program under 7 C.F.R. 1466 or the conservation contract program under 7 C.F.R. 1951, Subpt. S, Exh. H.
- e. Land that is subject to an easement under any of the following programs provided that the land was in an agricultural use under par. (a), (b) or (c) at the time the easement was acquired: the stream bank protection program under state law ([sec. 23.094, Wis. Stats.](#)); the conservation reserve enhancement program under [sec. 93.70, Wis. Stats.](#); or the nonpoint source water pollution abatement program under [sec. 281.65, Wis. Stats.](#)

Note: The versions of pars. (a), (b), (d) and (e) are effective for the assessments as of January 1, 2001.

2. Arm's-Length Sale – sale between two parties neither of whom is related to or under abnormal pressure from the other. See Market Value (Definition 7)

3. Comparable Property – property that is similar to your property in such things as location, style, age, size and other physical features, depending on specific market preferences

4. Council – Farmland advisory council under state law ([sec. 73.03\(49\), Wis. Stats.](#))

5. Land devoted primarily to agricultural use – land in an agricultural use for the production season of the prior year, and not in a use that is incompatible with agricultural use on January 1 of the assessment year.

6. Market value – most probable price which a property should bring in a competitive and open market under all conditions requisite to a fair sale, the buyer and seller each acting prudently and knowledgeably, and assuming the price is not affected by undue stimulus. Implicit in this definition is the consummation of a sale as of a specified date and the passing of title from seller to buyer under conditions whereby:

- Buyer and seller are typically motivated
- Both parties are well informed or well advised, and acting in what they consider their own best interests
- A reasonable time is allowed for exposure in the open market;
- Payment is made in terms of cash in U.S. dollars or in terms of financial arrangements comparable thereto

- Price represents the normal consideration for the property sold unaffected by special or creative financing or sales concessions granted by anyone associated with the sale

7. Other – agricultural buildings and improvements and the land necessary for their location and convenience

8. Parcel of agricultural land – land, contained within a single legal description, that is devoted primarily to agricultural use

XIV. Trespassing and Revaluation Notice

A. 2009 Wisconsin Act 68

2009 Wisconsin Act 68, signed November 12, 2009 and published November 25, 2009, is an act to amend state law (sec. 70.05(5)(b) Wis. Stats.), and to create sec. 70.05 (4m), 895, 488, 943.13 (4m)(d) and 943.15(1m) of the statutes; relating to: partially exempting an assessor and an assessor's staff from liability for trespassing, creating immunity from civil liability, and changing the notice requirements relating to the revaluation of property by an assessor.

The trespass law entitles the assessor to enter a property once during an assessment cycle unless the property owner authorizes additional visits. If the property owner denies the assessor access to the property, the assessor must maintain a list of denied entries. Sections 943.13 and 943.15 pertain to the entry onto the property. Assessors and their staff should understand the conditions included in these statutes.

The major conditions for entry are listed below:

- Reason for the entry must be to make an assessment on behalf of the state or a political subdivision
- Entry must be on a weekday during daylight hours, or at another time as agreed upon with the property owner
- Assessor's visit must not be more than one hour
- Assessor must not open doors, enter through open doors, or look into windows of structures
- If the property owner or occupant is not present, the assessor must leave a notice on the principal building providing the owner information on how to contact them
- Assessor may not enter the premises if they have received a notice from the property owner or occupant denying them entry
- Assessor must leave if the property owner or occupant asks them to leave

2009 Wisconsin Act 68 addresses notification which must be published or posted prior to commencement of a revaluation by an assessor. The trespass bill states in part "Before a city, village, or town assessor conducts a revaluation of property under state law (sec. 70.05(5)(b) Wis. Stats.), the city, village or town shall publish a notice on its municipal website that a revaluation will occur and the approximate dates of the property revaluation. The notice shall also describe the authority of an assessor, under sec. 943.13, Wis. Stats. and sec. 943.15, Wis. Stats., to enter land. If a municipality does not have a website, it shall post the required information in at least three public places within the city, village or town."

It is recommended that you provide a link to the above noted statutory references so that persons visiting your website could click on those links and review the statutes. Model language regarding this notice is provided on the next page.

B. Sample Revaluation Notice

A revaluation of property assessments in the (municipality) shall occur for the (year) assessment year. The approximate dates of the revaluation notices being sent to property owners is expected to be in (month/year). Please also notice that the Assessor has certain statutory authority to enter land as described in state law (sec. 943.13 and 943.15, Wis. Stats.).

The ability to enter land is subject to several qualifications and limitations, as described within the foregoing statutes. Copies of the applicable statutes can be obtained at public depositories throughout the State of Wisconsin, and from the [State of Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau](#) website or a copy may be obtained from the municipal clerk upon payment of applicable copying charges.

XV. Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual Standards

The Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual specifies technical, procedural and administrative practices. It also defines procedures, policies, legal decisions and assessor performance expectations. The authority for preparing the Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual comes from state law ([sec. 73.03 Wis. Stats.](#)). This statute requires that the Department of Revenue prepare a manual that “shall discuss and illustrate accepted assessment methods, techniques and practices with a view to more nearly uniform and more consistent assessments of property at the local level...The manual shall be amended by the department from time to time to reflect advances in the science of assessment, court decisions concerning assessment practices, costs and statistical and other information deemed valuable to local assessors by the department.”

XVI. Resources/Contact Information

[United States Department of Agriculture - Corn Price, Corn Yield](#)

- **National Agricultural Statistics Service**
Room 5829-South, Washington, DC 20250; (202) 720-3878; NASS Hotline: (800) 727-9540
- **Economic Research Service - Corn Cost of Production**
1800 M St., NW, Washington, DC 20036-5831; (202) 694-5050

[Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection](#)

Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service - Corn Price, Corn Yield; PO Box 8934, Madison, WI 53708-8934

[Wisconsin Department of Revenue - Capitalization Rate Components](#)

Division of State and Local Finance

- [Office of Technical and Assessment Services](#) – Agricultural Loan Rate
- [Local Government Services Bureau – Town, Village and City Taxes](#)
- [Equalization Bureau District Offices](#)

Farmland Advisory Council Members

Richard G. Chandler (Chair), Secretary of Revenue; Herb Tauchen, Farmer; Amber Keller, Agricultural Lender; Bruce Jones, Agricultural Economist - UW System; Tim Hanna, Mayor - City of Appleton; Jordan Lamb, Environmental Expert; Vacant, Non-Agricultural Business Person; Steven Hintz, Professor of Urban Studies; Vacant, Agribusiness Person; Melvin Raatz, Assessor.