

Oconto County Agriculture Survey Results

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this survey was to gather input from agricultural landowners, agricultural operators, agribusiness owners, and interested residents with respect to agricultural issues and farmland preservation in Oconto County.

PROCESS

The Oconto County Planning Department mailed postcards to 1,957 landowners; requesting input on agricultural issues and farmland preservation. Receiving this notification were landowners of parcel(s) with existing active agricultural use as found on the 2007 Existing Land Use Map (*Pg. 11-7, Oconto County 20-Year Comprehensive Plan*); planned for future agricultural, woodland, or open space as found on the Oconto County General Plan Design Map (GPD) (*Pg. 3-13, Oconto County 20-Year Comprehensive Plan*); and zoned Agricultural as found on current Oconto County Zoning Map. The postcard gave the recipient three options for completing the agricultural survey. The three options were to take the survey online; request a link to the online survey be emailed; or request a paper copy be mailed.

Planning staff utilized the survey capabilities of Google Drive to create an online survey. Of the 197 respondents, 138 completed the online survey. The Planning and Zoning Department received 44 requests for a paper copy. All 44 of these surveys were mailed, completed, and returned. In addition to the postcards, the Planning and Zoning office sent a copy of the survey to 37 active farms within areas of the county designated for future residential; commercial; or other non-agricultural, non-woodland, or non-natural resource development as found on the Oconto County General Plan Design Map (GPD) (*Pg. 3-13, Oconto County 20-Year Comprehensive Plan*). While these agricultural operators are located within areas currently not available for farmland preservation consideration, planning staff felt it was necessary to provide them the ability to provide their input. Of these 37 surveys mailed, 15 were returned. Additional attempts to provide access and awareness of the survey included an *email notification sent to town clerks*; *public notice was published in the Oconto County Reporter and the Oconto County Times Herald the week of March 19, 2014*; and *on the County Website*.

In total 1,994 survey notices or copies of the survey were sent, with 197 or 10 percent completing the survey. In this survey process, there was no test for “non-response bias”. In similar surveys conducted in other counties across the state and facilitated by the local UW-Extension and Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, non-response bias was tested through a second mailing. Responses from a second mailing are compared to the responses of the first mailing to determine statically if there would be a concern of non-response bias. Due to mailing costs, it was decided to conduct only one mailing and therefore no comparison was done for non-response bias. The responses received were compared to other county survey results and the results of multiple town land use planning surveys conducted over the past years. The responses from this survey appear to be consistent, and the valuable information and insights provided will be beneficial to this and future projects.



PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

- Of the respondents approximately nine in ten were male and were long-term residents of Oconto County (over 20 years). (88%)
- Majority of the respondents were ages 45 and above. (89%)
- A third of the respondents were retirees. (33%)
- Of the respondents 103 or 52% consider themselves active farmers and 94 or 48% consider themselves non-active farmers. Based on review of responses it is likely that a majority of those respondents that consider themselves non-active are retired farmers or agricultural land owners that rent their lands.

Figure 1: Years Lived In Oconto County

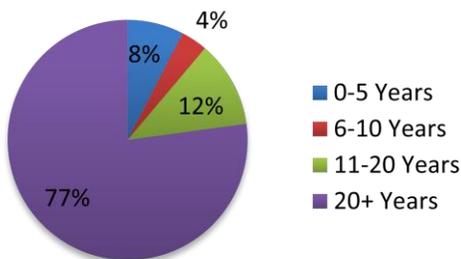


Figure 2: Gender

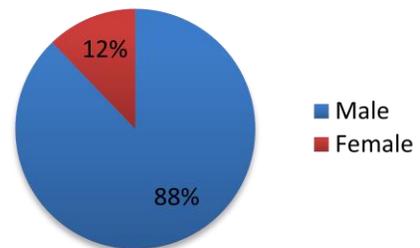


Figure 3: Age

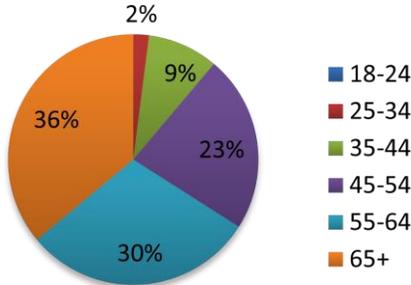
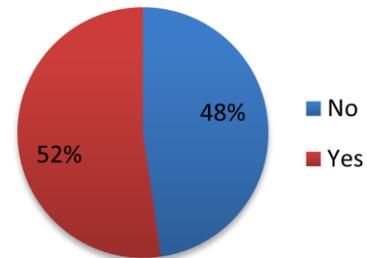
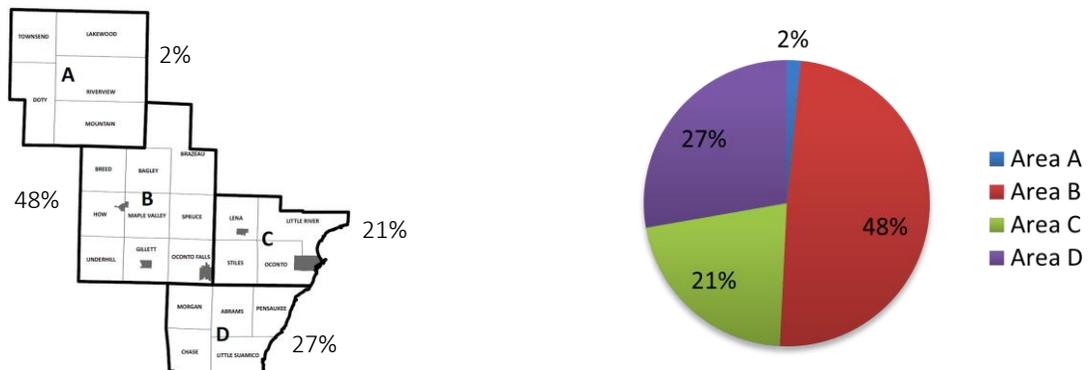


Figure 4: Actively Farming



- A majority (48%) of the respondents were located in area B as identified in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Location in which a majority of the respondents farm acreage and/or business is located.



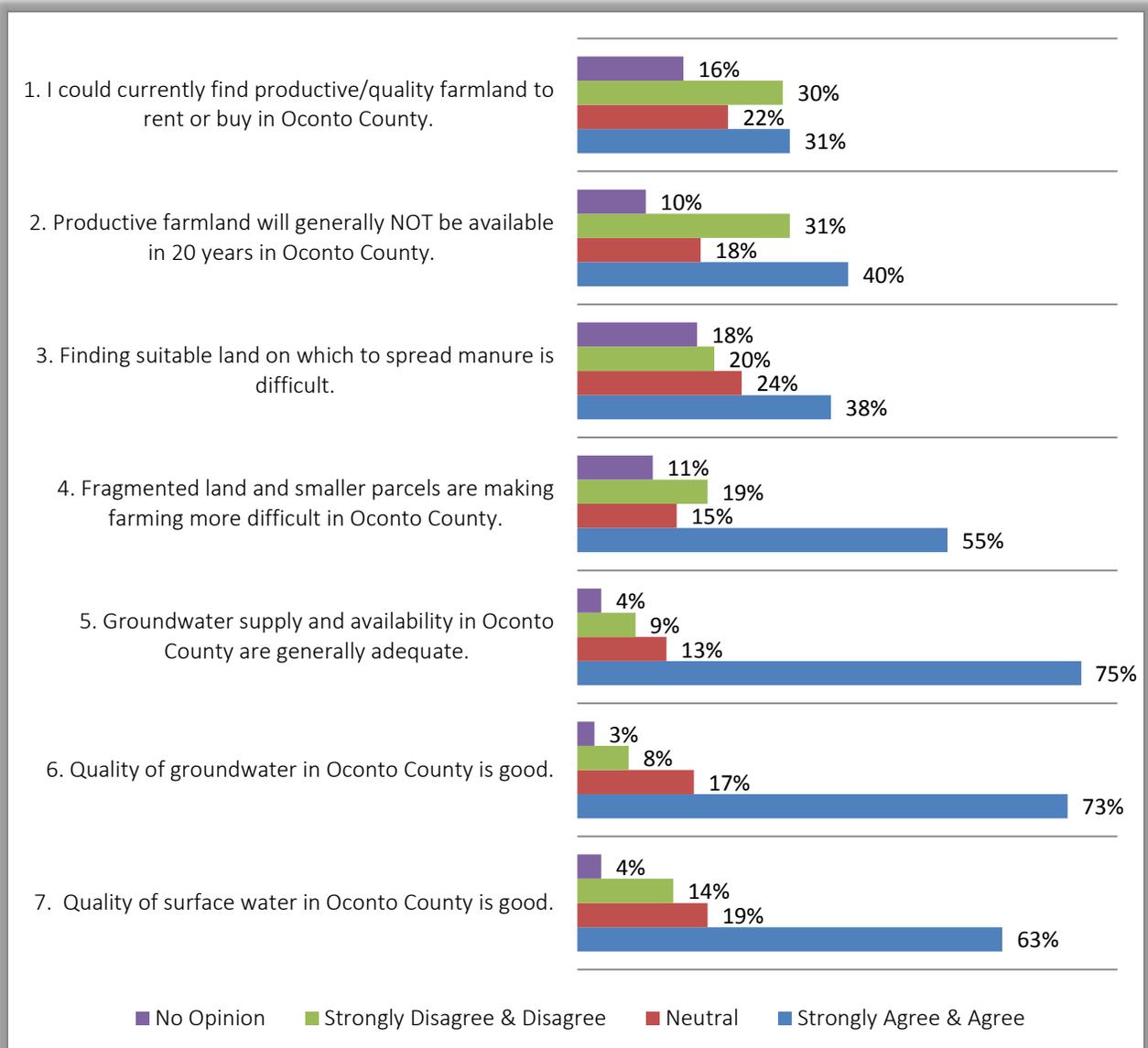
KEY AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with seven statements relating to the impacts of agricultural trends using the following scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, or no opinion. Below **Figure 6** gives a summary of the results. For this summary the strongly agree and agree responses have been combined. This was also done for the strongly disagree and disagree responses.

Responses show that the majority of respondents felt that quality of ground and surface waters is good; groundwater supply is generally adequate; fragmentation of parcels is making farming increasingly difficult; finding land on which to spread manure is difficult; and productive farmland will generally not be available in 20 years.

The respondents were split on whether they could currently find productive quality farmland to rent or buy.

Figure 6: Key Agricultural Resources Survey Responses

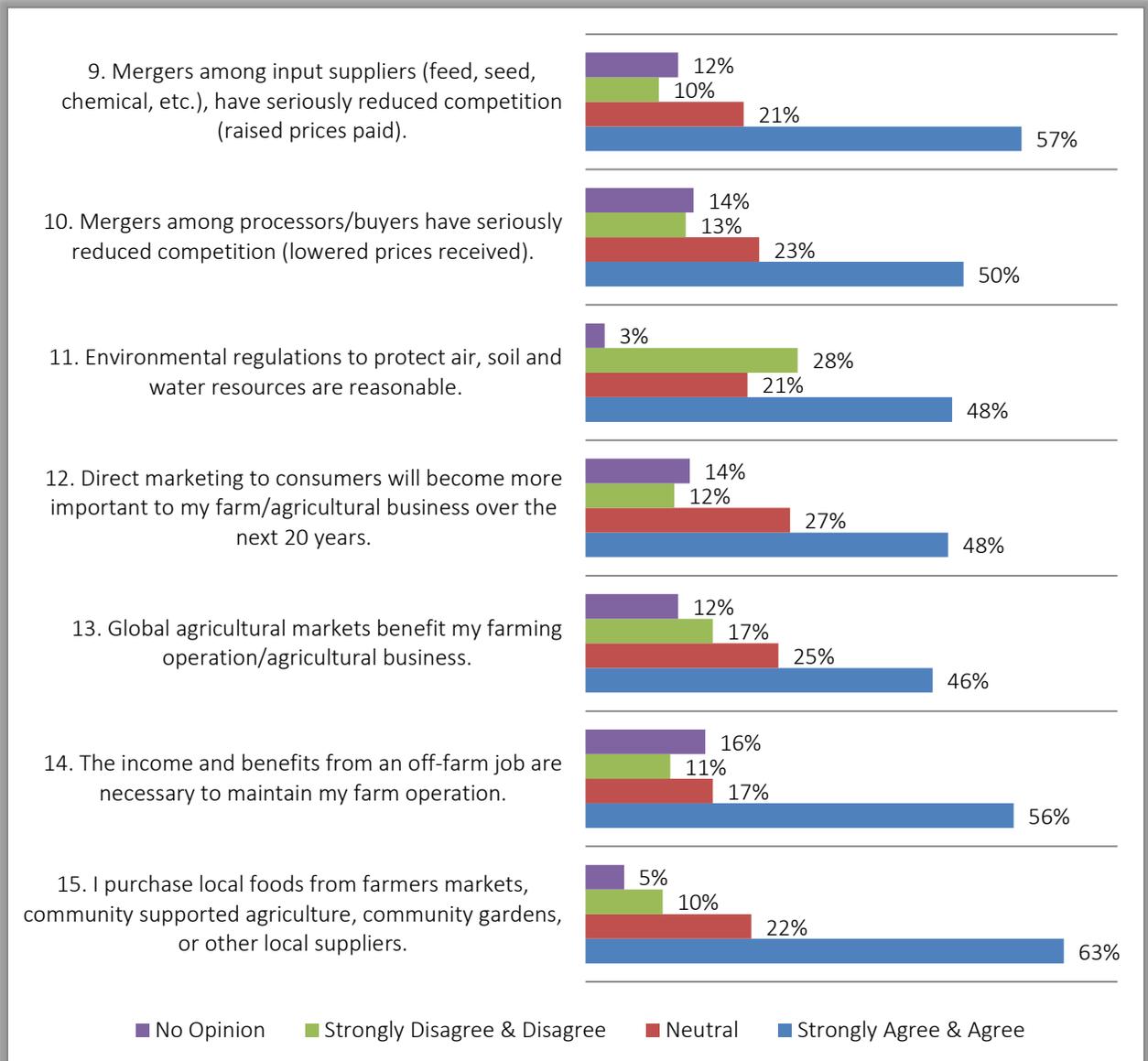


IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL TRENDS

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with seven statements relating to the impacts of agricultural trends using the following scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, or no opinion. Below **Figure 7** gives a summary of the results. For this summary the strongly agree and agree responses have been combined. This was also done for the strongly disagree and disagree responses.

Responses show that a majority of respondents felt that mergers have seriously limited competition among agricultural suppliers, processors, and buyers resulting in higher prices to purchase needed supplies and reduced prices received for product(s) for sale. A majority of respondents also felt that environmental regulations are reasonable; direct marketing to consumers will become more necessary; global markets provide benefit to their farm operation; and off-farm income is necessary. A majority also do purchase food from farmers markets and other local suppliers when available.

Figure 7: Impact of Agricultural Trends

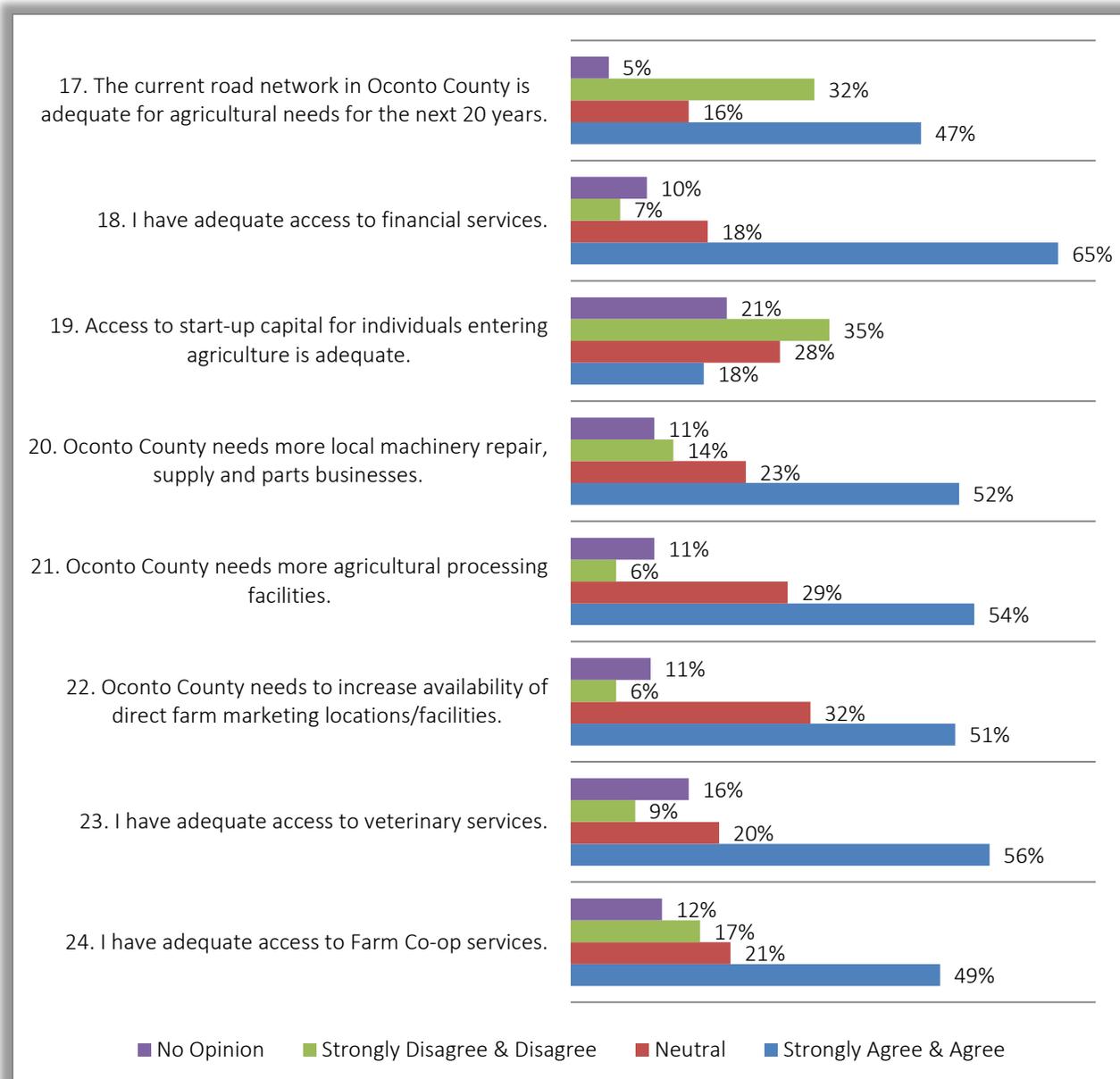


AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with eight statements relating to agricultural infrastructure using the following scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, or no opinion. Below **Figure 8** gives a summary of the results. For this summary the strongly agree and agree responses have been combined. This was also done for the strongly disagree and disagree responses.

A majority of time, respondents felt that start-up capital for individuals entering agriculture is not adequate. A majority of the respondents also felt that access to farm Co-op and veterinary services was adequate; additional machine repair and parts businesses were needed as were more processing facilities; increased availability of direct farm marketing locations and facilities was needed. Respondents also felt that the current road network is adequate, however there were many written concerns identifying an issue with the current road network and the increased size of farm equipment.

Figure 8: Agricultural Infrastructure

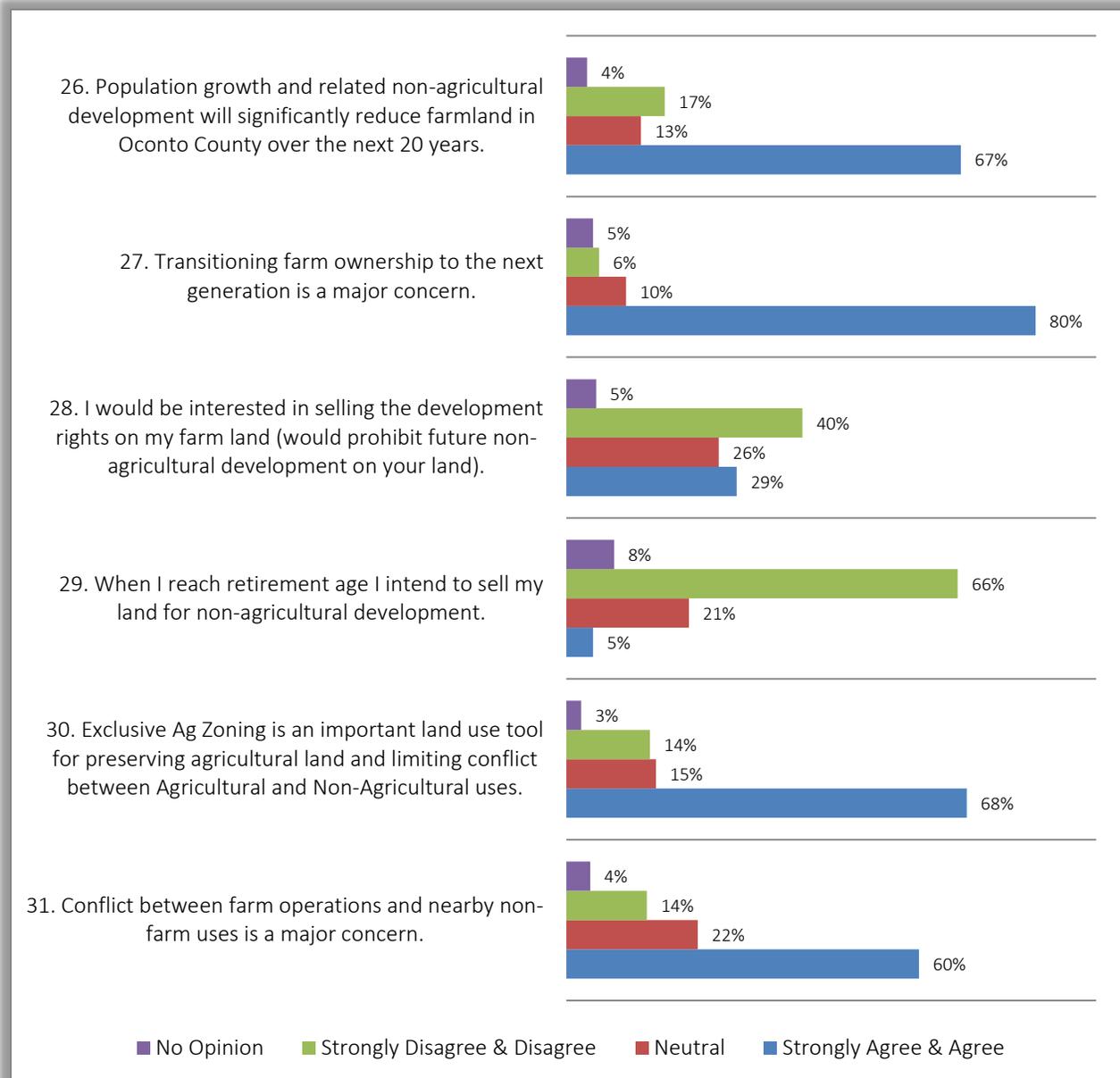


LAND USE ISSUES

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with six statements relating to land use issues using the following scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, or no opinion. Below **Figure 9** gives a summary of the results. For this summary the strongly agree and agree responses have been combined. This was also done for the strongly disagree and disagree responses.

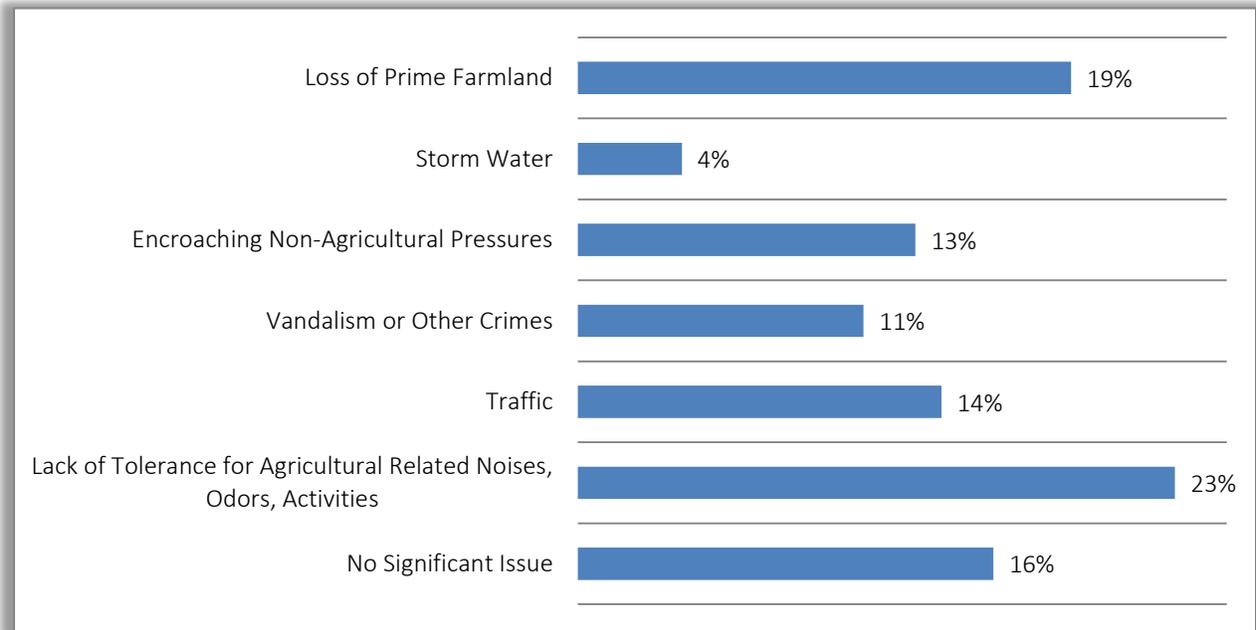
Review of the responses shows a majority of the respondents felt that non-agricultural development will impact agriculture over the next 20 years. A majority of the respondents felt that transitioning farm ownership to the next generation is a concern; do not intend to sell land for non-agricultural development; and exclusive agriculture zoning is an important tool. Respondents were generally not interested in the possibility of selling development rights to preserve farmland. Respondents also felt that conflict between farm and non-farm uses is a major concern.

Figure 9: Land Use Issues



Respondents were asked to identify current issues (if any) with non-farm land owners. Respondents were able to choose any of the following. The top issue identified was the lack of tolerance for agricultural related noises, odors, and activities; and the loss of prime farmland, as shown in **Figure 10**.

Figure 10: Issues with Non-Farm Land Owners.

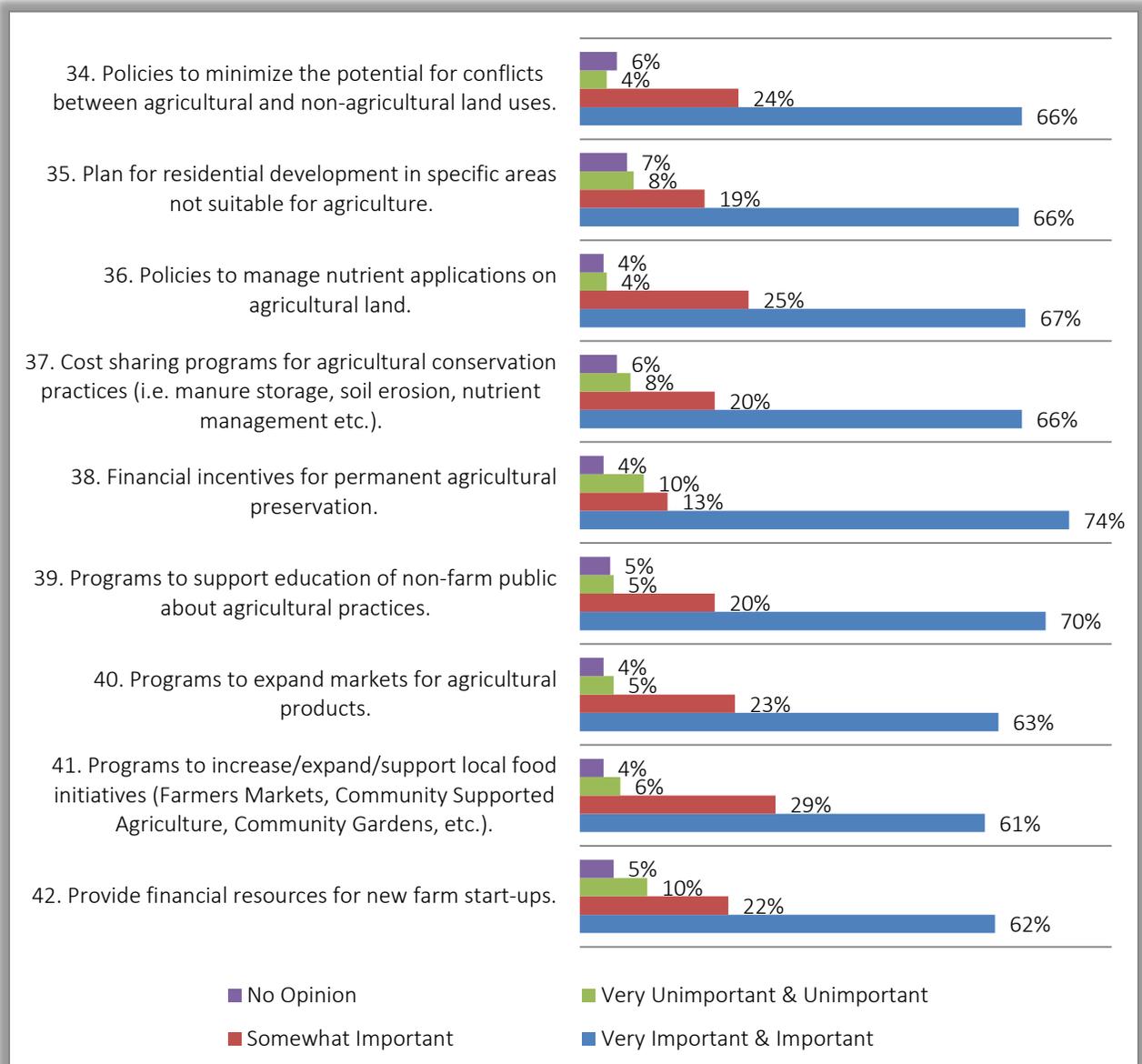


AGRICULTURAL GOALS

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with nine statements relating to agricultural goals, programs, and policies using the following scale: very important, important, somewhat important, unimportant, very unimportant, or no opinion. Below **Figure 11** gives a summary of the results. For this summary the very important and important responses have been combined. This was also done for the unimportant and very unimportant responses.

The majority of the respondents felt that the following were important or very important. Policies to minimize conflicts with non-agricultural uses; planning for residential development in areas not suitable for agriculture; policies to manage nutrient applications; cost sharing programs for conservation practices; financial incentives for agricultural preservation; programs to support education of non-farm public about agricultural practices; programs to expand markets for agricultural products; programs to increase/expand/support local food initiatives; and providing financial resources for new farm start-ups.

Figure 11: Agricultural Goals

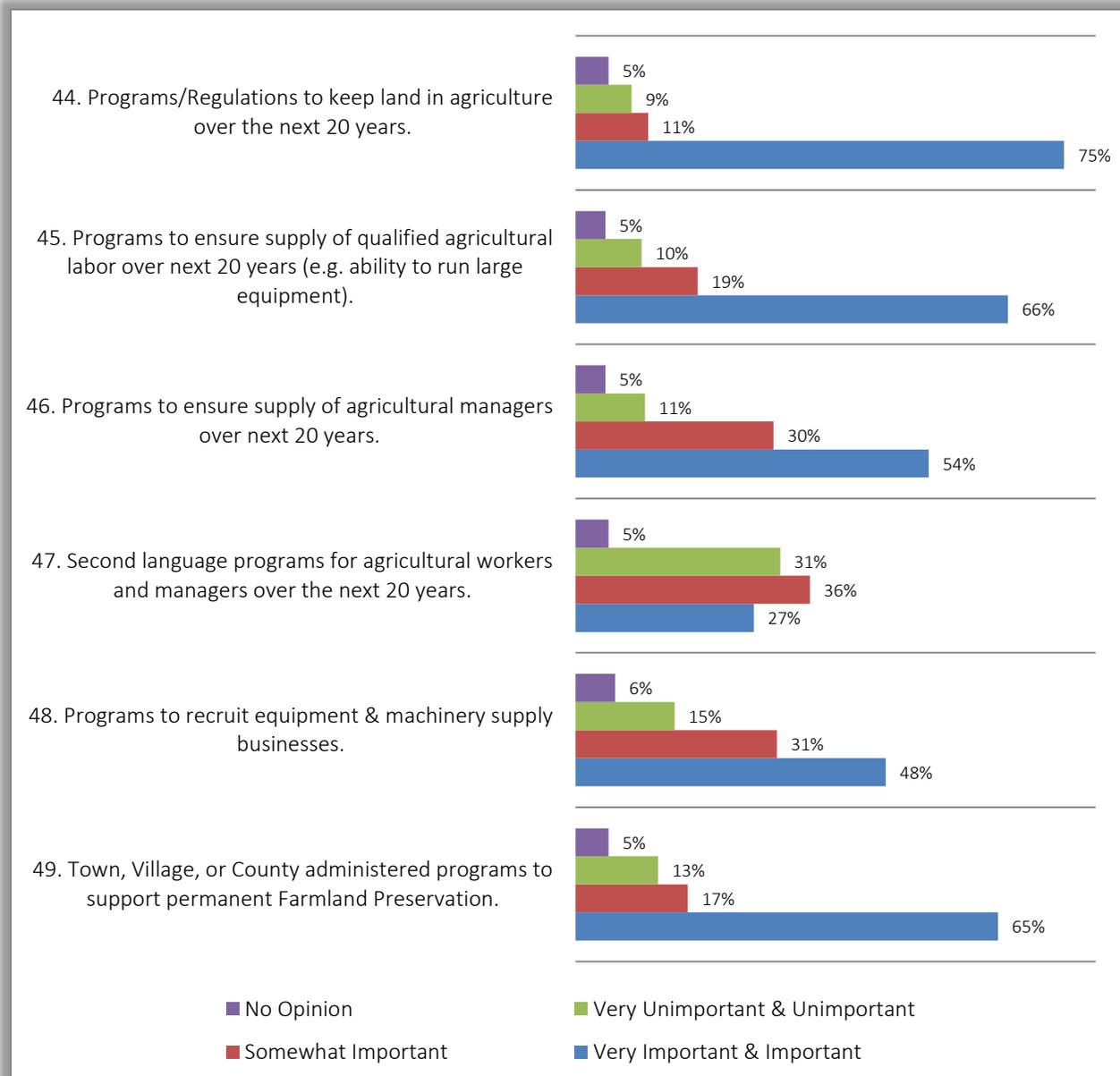


INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with six statements relating to agricultural goals, programs, and policies using the following scale: very important, important, somewhat important, unimportant, very unimportant, or no opinion. Below **Figure 12** gives a summary of the results. For this summary the very important and important responses have been combined. This was also done for the unimportant and very unimportant responses.

The majority of the respondents felt programs to ensure a supply of qualified managers and laborers; programs to recruit equipment and machinery supply businesses; programs and regulation to keep land in agriculture; programs providing permanent farmland preservation were important over the next 20 years. Respondents did not feel that a second language program for agricultural workers was a priority over the same period.

Figure 12: Infrastructure Goals

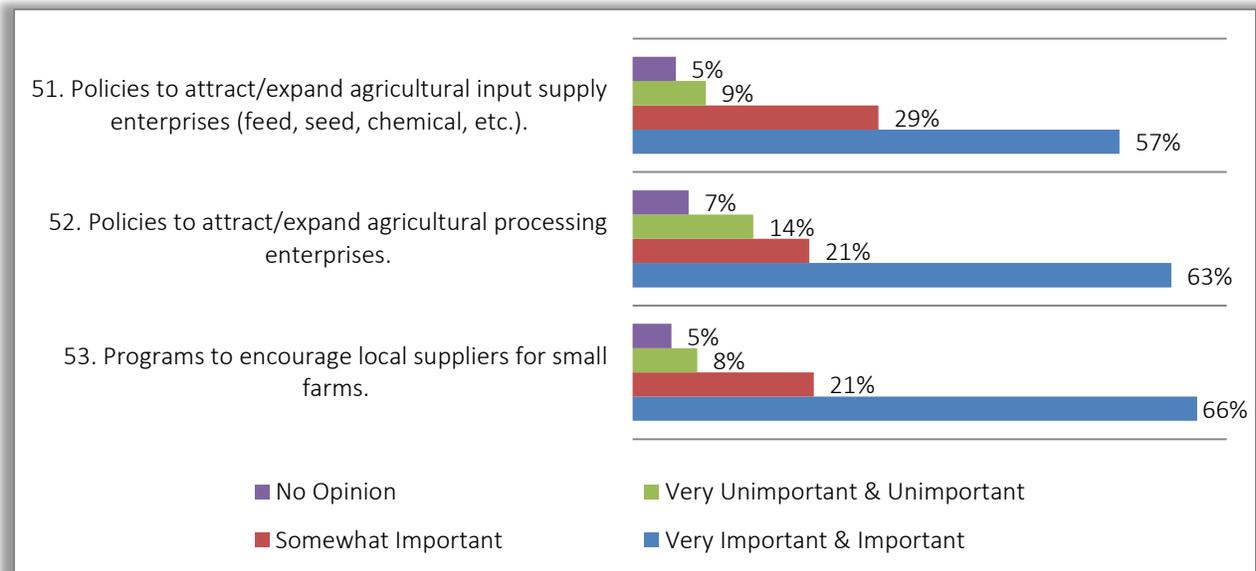


AGRICULTURE RELATED ENTERPRISE GOALS

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with three statements relating to agricultural related enterprises, programs, and policies using the following scale: very important, important, somewhat important, unimportant, very unimportant, or no opinion. Below **Figure 13** gives a summary of the results. For this summary the very important and important responses have been combined. This was also done for the unimportant and very unimportant responses.

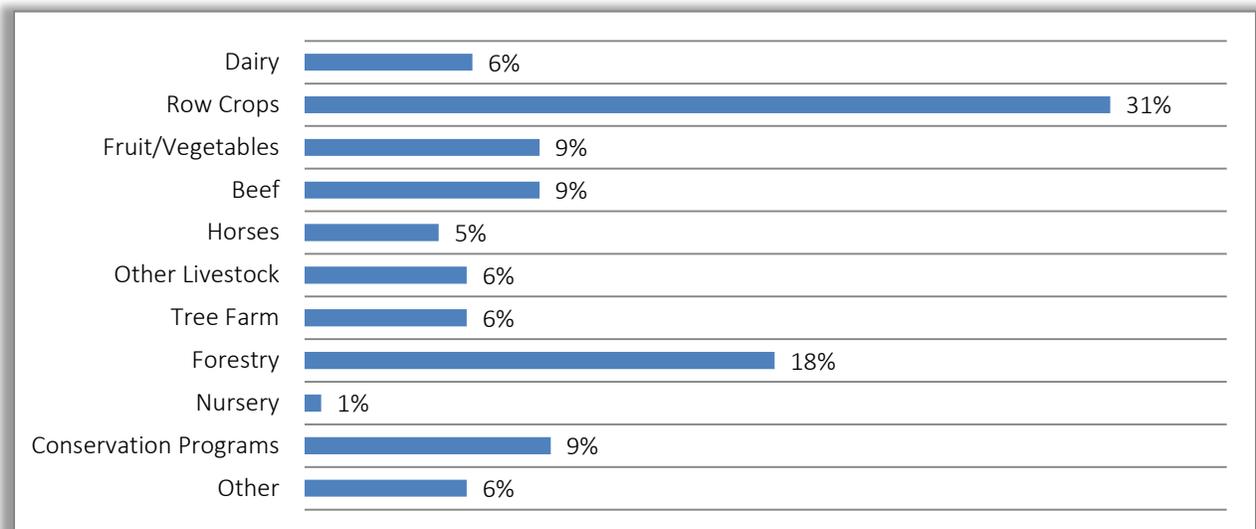
The majority of the respondents felt programs and policies were needed to attract and expand supply and processing enterprises as well as local suppliers.

Figure 13: Agriculture Related Enterprise Goals



Respondents were asked to identify from the list any activities and/or enterprises current on their agriculture lands and/or farm. Respondents were able to make multiple selections. The majority of respondents utilize their agriculture land for row crops, as shown in **Figure 14**.

Figure 14: Current Activities and Enterprises

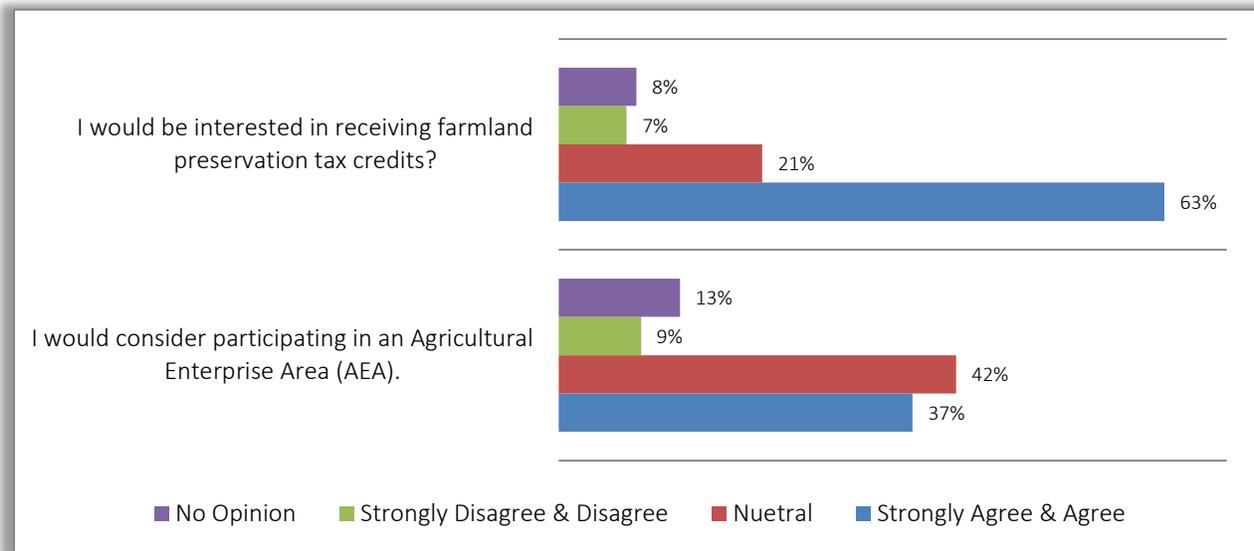


FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with two statements relating to farmland preservation programs using the following scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, or no opinion. Below **Figure 15** gives a summary of the results. For this summary the strongly agree and agree responses have been combined. This was also done for the strongly disagree and disagree responses.

The majority of respondents are interested in receiving the tax credits provided through the farmland preservation. The response to whether or not the respondent would be interested in participating in an Agricultural Enterprise Area shows the need for additional information on the program being shared with area agricultural land owners so they can better understand the program.

Figure 15: Farmland Preservation Program



ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Each section of the survey provided the respondent an opportunity to provide additional written comments. The comments as submitted are as follows.

The following were comments submitted about Key Agricultural Issues.

- Protecting our water resources and quality will hopefully be a continued high priority.
- Balancing equipment size and weights with the ability of our rural roads to handle same.(seemingly already too late)
- Allowable animal units allowed per contiguous acres.
- City type neighbors complain about manure spreading and smells of country living. Should not be an issue as farms were here first.
- There is very little farmland to buy in Oconto and most is being rezoned at an alarming rate. The future doesn't seem like there will be any left for agricultural purposes.
- I am greatly concerned that our ground water is being contaminated by the mega farm(s). We have had to have our water tested multiple over the years at our expense. We are worried not only by manure waste but also by chemicals spread on the ground.
- Monitor the amount of liquid manure being used.
- Ground water supplies are good, however I'm not sure about the quality and if it is safe to ingest.
- Farmers are creating dead zones by 100 acre parcel for wildlife, especially honeybee's. They cut alfalfa pre-bloom and raise soy or corn...worthless to bees. No more fence lines...they been cleared...that means no place for their favorite "wild" nectar sources to grow or brambles for birds to perch. Growing up on a small farm in the county it angers me that farmers have forgotten they are stewards of the land for ALL. Not just their own profit. We need to encourage farmers to leave areas wild to catch run off...provide wildlife habitat and some scenery besides endless...lifeless...boring rows. I pass a field that's been fallow for almost 2 years. I have yet to see a weed...of any kind growing in it. What does that tell you about how much farmers respect the soil...the Mother Earth? Farmers have lost sight of the balance they need to provide as stewards and stop being so greedy.
- Groundwater supply that is adequate, clean and safe WILL be an issue in the not too distant future.
- Wetlands are changing. Time to take another look. I own property that is mapped wetland but is tillable. I would like to increase tillable areas, but unable to because of old mappings. Way too much government control, everything is out of a book. Need to look at on site reviews, and common sense. However I understand this will fall on deaf ears. I'm just a dirt farmer.
- Although there are fragments of land that make farming more of a challenge, we do not welcome the large scale farms of over 700 head moving in and mono cropping large land areas by cutting down the remaining small wooded areas in southern Oconto County.
- Our agricultural land is taxed too high.
- I believe agricultural pumping of deep wells can affect the levels of lakes. As an owner of both ag land and a campground the levels of lake water is very important to me.
- My land is rented to a farmer that increases milk cows from 55 in 1960 to 3000 in 2010 and has bought up or rented 30 small farms. The piecemeal plotting of residential homes has caused him problems with spreading manure. City people do not want the smell even for a few days. I am in favor of preserving large acreage for farms and making people that want to move to the country agree that they will put up with the nuisance of farm smells and night time activities that is a part of modern large farming.
- There is a strong demand for crop land in the Suring area.
- I am not farming the land that I own. I rent it to others and not tried to rent any additional land.
- In our county the drainage is poor.
- Do not have any comment
- While the quantity of the groundwater is adequate. We need to a better job of protecting the quality of the groundwater.
- Ag and Residential both contribute to loss of water and land resources.
- There are small tracts being farmed by renters taking out fence lines with permission of land owner some of these tracks are different land owners are not legally binding.

- Question 1: How much one should go in debt to get it? Question 2: This will depend on policies and economics. CRP and cost of clearing land.
- Too much manure is being applied, poor air quality and surface water at times.
- Cows and horses. If you have a dead animal or animals on your property, calls should be mandatory that you call a mink farm for disposal purposes and not buried on your property.
- In the past few years we've had some very large dairy farms come to being with extremely large herds of cattle creating very large amounts of liquid manure being applied to the land without any monitoring by the state. Leaving those farms and manure custom applications operate unmonitored will result in water contamination in a matter of probably 5 years. On the other hand there have been acres of productive farmland turned into residential housing. One's worse than the other.
- Residue from spraying with pesticides and weed killers are in our ground water and the air.
- There is more and more agriculture pollution creating the dead zone in Green Bay waters.
- Mega farms are taking over all the land \$300 an acre or more for rent.

The following were comments submitted about Agricultural Trends.

- Income from an Off Farm job is a necessity. Medical and Dental Insurance as well as a scheduled regular paycheck seem to be a must.
- As long as the mega farms are kept under strict control as far as environmental air, water, road use, noise levels etc. The trends of mega farms must be met by local government, DNR, and state regulators.
- Need more accountability on the part of the farmer and or cropping business regarding animal waste management and chemical applications.
- Stop buying GMO seed.
- We would love to see more CSA plans for our area in southern Oconto County and family farms joining together to provide produce and animal based products to the local school districts lunch programs. This is being done in the Appleton and New Holstein School districts.
- We rent all of our tillable land.
- We should be able to buy/sell raw milk and other farm commodities directly from the farm.
- As stated before, I could not make it as a farmer, therefore the renting of my land to the big farmer. He makes a living because he hires minimum wage help because of the slow economy and people forced to take any jobs available. Farming has become much more intense. I retired several years ago now rent out my crop land.
- I believe the current environmental regulations are reasonable, but not necessary adequate to protect the air soil and water for generations to come.
- The U.S. had monopoly laws in place. Now large corporations control everything we do!
- Any farmer doing a good job keeping records etc. can generate more income than most off farm jobs.
- Question 9: Really don't know. Question 10: Really don't know. Question 11: They could become unreasonable. There is too much uncertainty here.
- Some large farms are putting more manure on their land than what their 590 manure management plan allows. Friends had to drill new wells.
- Question 14: It depends on the size of farm you have! Question 15: Buy only if it's available and a lot are not available.
- We've lost too many local suppliers. This forces farmers to reach out further from their local area for supplies with better prices and it's hard to find both.
- Residue from spraying with pesticides and weed killers are in our ground water and the air. Help.
- We have lost control of our local supply co-ops.

The following were comments submitted about Agricultural Infrastructure.

- Start Up farming is almost impossible without some sort of family hand me down of land and machinery.
- Roads were never meant to be the conduit for heavy farm machinery. When roads were built "family farms" of 80-120 acres were the norm. Farmers only use of a highway was most likely to cross over the pavement to get to an adjacent field. Now, machines of significant tonnage are using all sorts of roads (state, county, towns) that are too narrow with inadequate bases resulting in road damage, traffic back-ups, etc.
- There are no meat processors that come to the farm to process meat in business anymore.

- Harder to find co-ops due to closings.
- Agricultural processing facilities are fewer because of mergers. This makes them less available, but the bigger ones offer more products and better services. It's a good trade off.
- Rural roads are poorly constructed and poorly maintained. Ag machinery only gets larger and road use goes up.
- Question 17: Monies available for local road improvements is inadequate. Road design and load bearing capabilities have to be greatly updated to meet the needs of present and future. Question 23: Current vet service is adequate. Are worried about future.
- Some of the questions would apply to farms out west where you have thousands of acres of land - you don't have that in Oconto County.
- Town roads need to be improved for heavier and wider equipment. Towns need more state aid for that. Lending institutes in the Oconto Falls area only loan money to young whiskered studs working construction somewhere else making \$25 per hr. or young chicks making big bucks. They don't even want land for collateral at New Credit Union. We've lost all our local machinery dealers and repair shops because we are a depressed area with not enough need for them. Very sad situation.
- Residue from spraying with pesticides and weed killers are in our ground water and the air.
- Question 21: How are they possible? Question 22: Keep government out of it.

The following were comments submitted about Land Use Issues.

- Relative to above items: Frequent large semi traffic on narrow rural roads-and related odors and worries about over saturation of manure on groundwater supplies.
- I would be interested in selling the development rights on my farm land (would prohibit future non-agricultural development on your land). This is an EXCELLENT idea. This would keep agriculture in business for the long run. Legal Contracts. Who would pay?
- Just have to remember; the farms and farming were there well before they were encroached upon. Anyone with half a brain should know what farming is all about BEFORE they purchase land adjacent to a farm and all it brings. If you still wish to live in a country setting, then deal with all aspects of a farm.
- Farmer should be able to sell their property to whoever and whenever they like. There should be minimum restriction from government. The government should not spend money to purchase development rights on farmland.
- I would be extremely opposed to the government restricting the land I purchased and pay taxes on. I believe the county should focus more on restricting and requiring specific permits if they want to protect farmland.
- People that move to an area in the county that is agricultural should have NO basis for any complaint or action (odor, traffic, etc.).
- Constant trespass and theft on Sunday when you go to church, and during hunting seasons.
- I am a USDA Certified Organic Vegetable Farm.
- Encroachment of non ag practices would severely restrict my ag operations as a certified organic farm. Buffer boarders would not be enough and my guarantee of chemical free farm would be jeopardized.
- New comers to the farm areas think the couple acres they own reaches to the horizon in all four directions and that they have the power to change anything that offends them. This is not right as the farms were there before they bought the land from a developer.
- People who own land and pay property tax on land should be to decide what they want to do with property. Farm it, plant trees or develop it should be their choice, if you don't like it buy it and pay the tax and your opinion will soon change.
- I am over retirement age and am trying to keep our land in my family to keep it as farm land and as an investment for my children.
- We have deer damage problems.
- Our future depends entirely on food production.
- Question 26: This will depend on policies. Question 27: There are ways in place to get this done. Question 28/29: This will be issue for the generation after me.
- We need to preserve wildlife habitat as well as farm land.
- Liquid Manure.

- Break-ins, stealing, sheriff department lacks authority! Rather not be called! We have lack of law enforcement in Oconto County! There is very little help mostly - no help. Something is lacking in dept! Some small farms raise (buy/sell) beef cattle and do not conform to manure regulations and there is run off right by barn which is close to (a few hundred feet) housing and neighbors.
- Too much traffic in Oconto County. There's too many flatlanders moved into Oconto County. There are hardly any natives left, I guess because small farms are done for and there's not enough industry left for employment for young folks. There are people moving around all over I don't know what they do for a living?
- Residue from spraying with pesticides and weed killers are in our ground water and the air.
- There are already too many regulations, keep government out of it.

The following were comments submitted about Agricultural Goals.

- Conflict is not a one size fit all solution.
- All are extremely important issues.
- Cost sharing for run off projects without inspection in spring when most large farmers just shut off pumps and left everything run off anyhow is a waste.
- The farmers have to be protected from the residential property owner's attempt to restrict farming operations that bother or offend them. I realize that as soon as an area has more non farming families the power of the vote will be in their favor. We cannot let this power make the rules and laws that will attempt to eliminate the activities required in order to farm. I am in favor of pollution controls that protect the basic environment, but still allow farming to continue.
- I believe that the agricultural communities must keep educating the general non-farm population to understand that farming is going to be more important as the population increases and the land and water resources become scarcer. This will be necessary to keep the supply of good food at a reasonable cost.
- Farm markets are not the answer for our problems.
- I strongly disagree with the cost sharing for conservation practices. Doing the right thing should be done because it is the right thing to do. Not because there's money to be made. Conservation practices protect the producer just as much as it protects the neighbor.
- Non-farm people in Oconto County, and even the whole state of Wisconsin, definitely need more education on where their food comes from! We've even met people from the Eastern US that find it hard to believe that we plant crops solely to feed our animals!
- Weekend visitors show up to cut loose and do not respect the people who live and work here year round.
- Question 41: Unfortunately with our growing season these types of enterprises are extremely hard to make a living at. Question 42: We are the land of opportunity. "When there is a will there is a way". Let's not destroy individual ambition with handouts. Education is key.
- Enforce the laws on these big farms when it comes to dumping liquid manure on their fields. Amounts over the 590 plan should not be tolerated.
- I find big farmers comply with regulations where milk is produced, but the small part-time farmer is less likely to comply as he buys and sells beef cattle. We do not need to subsidize the startup of any more big farm startups in Oconto County. We got too many here now spreading liquid manure all over unmonitored. Eliminate all residue from spraying for pesticides and weed killers, that are on non- G.M.O crops.
- These questions are two-faced.
- Provide money to the small farmers not mega farms.

The following were comments submitted about Infrastructure Goals.

- The county should not fund or subsidize farm initiatives that reward inefficient use of the land or create regulations that forces land preservation. Let the free enterprise markets work for themselves.
- I do not like any program that takes control of land owner rights. The land owner should have the final say over disposition of his land! Steer clear of becoming a dictatorship!
- It would be nice for the county to have a directory of Organic seed/fertilizer sellers. I only hear of them by word of mouth now. I deal with Midwest BioAg It would be nice to have some classes from them.
- Town and County should not be involved in permanent farmland preservation.
- It will not serve the people to spend money on all the aforementioned programs. It will be expensive and benefit only a few. Zoning of farm non-farm land is socialism and will take away a farmers opportunity to

cash out on their land when retiring. If the market moves land out of farming then so be it. You will get more tax revenue and jobs if more good and services are needed for residential people.

- Supply and demand will dictate.
- Workers must be able to speak English to reside and work in Oconto County.
- I would like to see the wages of farm workers increased to where they are not still in the poverty class. Farming and farm workers should be returned to a respected profession again.
- We don't require a lot of labor.
- English is the only language for the US to worry about.
- Many of these programs would be good, but it always seems that over time, they (programs) erode the rights of individual land owners, who have purchased the property and paid the tax every year. Without programs Pro-Ag everybody will lose.
- We need to encourage all people living in America (Oconto County) to speak English as their primary language.
- If you want to work here, you should learn our language, not make us all pay to teach you.
- I think it's important to help preserve the land we have but I don't see any new farms springing up with this economy the way it is - people moving to larger cities - leaving houses empty and banks closing. It's going to take time before economy comes back - if it ever will?
- Hopefully there will be a balance between cash croppers and big dairy, but it will be hard for cash croppers to compete as BIG DAIRY will try to grab more land to spread manure in the future I heard a machinery rep telling a TV interviewer at the WPS farm show tractors will be run by GPS. No need for human hands. As far as language this is America learn English or go back home.
- No airplane spraying of chemicals.
- These programs are geared to the tourist or someone who moved here from city.

The following were comments submitted about Enterprise Goals.

- Free Market for USA. Those business enterprises are privately held and will come if needed. Free. Government should not spend tax payers' dollars and attempt to interrupt the natural flow of business.
- Southern Oconto County seems to be more agriculturally oriented than more northern areas so our perspective is based from our experience here for the past 25 years. We would be excited to see a rise in smaller specialty farms that create a local supply of products for cities in the area, with some becoming the local suppliers of feeds, non GMO seeds for other farmers etc...
- Nursing small farms will not help. Will waste money.
- Accomplish all policy items without raising taxes.
- Large and small farming is not a localized business. Individual Counties are no longer relevant as to making rules for farming as every farmer, big or small, are using suppliers and buyers across county lines. Oconto County is not an island, but is just a small division of all of Wisconsin, the U.S., and the world markets. I am in favor of federal rules that apply to all versus the localized laws that encourage or more so discourage business from locating in "MY" town, county or state.
- Leave the free market alone.
- No new regulations and policies are needed.
- Ag related programs should be top priority at our schools. Wise. Lost out on education 3 years ago. I pay my taxes and don't complain - my land is my love.
- We'll need change in Washington if you're going to accomplish the above!
- We don't have enough Ag supply competition. Most of them got to greedy and went out of business.
- No airplane spraying of chemicals.
- County policies cost tax dollars. Let need happen on its own.
- Don't just cater to the big farms they come first for everything.

The following were comments submitted about the Farmland Preservation Program.

- Not sure what AEA would all entail.
- I'd love to qualify for any kind of tax credit but we are probably too small.
- What type of credits and what does an AEA involve?

- In order to retain farm/forest production land: one forty is taxed outrageously - may have to sell farmland to afford taxes on "Recreational" SWAMP acreage. We should not be taxed out of ownership of "green space".
- Have no idea what the AEA is!
- Keep the rights of individual land owners.
- Once small farms are gone no one will safe!!
- I was on farmland preservation for 25 years ended 2013 I thought it was a good plan frees your mind of selling a tract here and there, if there is a new plan on the books will there be a maximum no of years to comply.
- But: To improve our infrastructure we need revenue. Farming would be more enjoyable if did not have so many agencies bearing down on them. OSHA, EPA, DNR, ICE, ARMY CORP etc.
- I would consider participating in an AEA as long as it didn't involve big dairy with liquid manure. I would not want to be surrounded by that.
- After reading all the answers to the questions, on this report, I would know 85% of the people that completed this form.
- Leave it alone.

The following were any additional comments submitted about Agriculture and/or Agriculture Preservation.

- One of the biggest roadblocks to agriculture, as well as landowner rights in general, is the burdensome and job killing regulations inflicted by local, state and federal departments. Common sense regulations are very different from agenda driven, political regulations often found in Zoning Departments, WDNR and EPA. More regulations are not always the answer. Oconto County should start with its zoning and land planning department to ensure that they are pro-business and pro agriculture before it does anything. If they are not, this survey is a waste of time and money.
- I would be interested in a farmland preservation contract so that my land could never be used for any building of homes, stores, roads, parking lots etc... Only saved for agricultural uses for all time. This would be a great program.
- I have a concern regarding the thousands of acres of good agricultural lands that have been rezoned for non-farm use just in the past 20 years or so.
- Bigger print please.
- I don't like to see loss of farmland but people have the right to do what they think is best for their land and themselves. It is a fundamental right of a free society. Also, we have more than enough taxpayer funded programs now. Research is the best role for government. Let people farm and the markets, supply and demand work.
- I found the wording of the questions in this survey difficult to follow.
- Manure run off from one farm polluted many acres of private woodland in 2013 (spring). It will happen again.
- Also area C.
- I don't think the opinion from an old farmer like me makes any difference. It will be the opinion of some college educated person studying something like this survey whose opinion that will be counted. And those types of persons won't even be living in Oconto County. I think filling out this survey was just a waste of my time.