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A banner with a green hill and a blue sky. A red barn with a black roof is positioned behind the word "FARMABILITY".

FARMABILITY



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



Thomas Nelson, Director of Farm Programs - tnelson@theconservancy.com



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Program Overview

- “ Friendlier version of P.A. 116; Voluntary
- “ Non-governmental, privately-funded program
- “ No tie to property taxes or household income
- “ No penalties for not re-enrolling at end of 10-year term
- “ Accepted applications on first-come/first-served until 5,000 acres were enrolled
- “ Waiting list for future application rounds



Key Elements of the Program

- “ 10-year Farm Conservation Agreements--similar to P.A. 116 but more farmer-friendly
- “ Cost-sharing for GAP audits.
- “ Cost-sharing for estate or tax planning, with the professional of your own choosing, to help position the farm for the next generation of farmers when the time comes
- “ Cost-sharing for workshops and seminars by sponsoring organizations designed to advance farming practices and enhance profitability



Farm Conservation Agreements

- “ Annual cash payments of \$10 per acre of active ag land; \$5 per acre for woodlots, wetlands, other acreage with conservation value; first annual payment April 2010
- “ Splitting small lot to family members is OK
- “ Runs with the land; Conservancy Right of First Refusal (ROFR)
- “ Transfers to family or farmer during the term who will continue to farm it in substantially the same manner are exempt from ROFR



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Cost-Sharing for GAP Audits

- “ FarmAbility will match up to \$500 total for preparation for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) audit/certification
- “ Professional of the farmer's choosing (submit billing)



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Benefit for Estate/Tax Planning:

- “ Match funding up to \$1,000 total over the 10-year term for planning designed to position the transfer of the farm to the next generation
- “ Professional of the farmer's choosing (submit billing)



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Cost-Sharing for Workshops

- “ Farmers pay first \$10, we pay up to \$75 for workshops and seminars costing up to \$125
- “ For workshops over \$125, we pay \$100
- “ Annual cap of \$250 per family of enrolled grower
- “ For workshops & seminars by the NW Michigan Horticultural Research Station, MSU Extension & the Leelanau Conservation District
- “ Workshops by other ag organizations may be added later



Who is Eligible?

- “ A farm of 40 or more acres in one ownership, with 51% or more of the land area devoted to an agricultural use
- “ For purposes of the 51% calculation, woodlot acreage in a verifiable sustainable management plan will be counted toward 51% ag use as long as no less than 35% of the total acreage is in active ag use with annually harvested crop

Or



Who is Eligible?

- “ A farm of 5 acres or more in one ownership, but less than 40 acres, with 51% or more of the land area in agricultural use, and which produces a gross annual income from agriculture of \$200.00 per year or more per acre of active farm land
- “ Farm acreage enrolled in a federal conservation reserve program is considered to have met this income requirement

Or



Who is Eligible?

- “ A specialty farm under one ownership that has produced a gross annual income from agricultural use of \$2,000.00 or more
- “ Specialty farms may include community-supported agriculture; greenhouses; the breeding and grazing of livestock, pheasants and other game birds; bees and bee products; mushrooms; and other similar uses and activities



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Limits on Eligibility:

- “ \$5,000/year cap per farm family on per-acre benefits
- “ Farms already permanently protected are not eligible
- “ Horse Farms are not eligible
- “ No Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)



Farmer FAQs:

- “ Early termination allowed of the Agreement under conditions similar to P.A. 116
 - . E.g., death or disability, court order restricting farming, etc.
- “ Exploration of Oil & Gas permitted similar to P.A. 116
 - . Directional drilling from another parcel (no surface disturbance on enrolled acreage) not required but strongly recommended
 - . Prior Consent from Conservancy not to be unreasonably withheld
- “ Permissible placements of wind generation and communication towers similar to P.A. 116