

CHAPTER 8: AGRICULTURE

SUMMARY

A farm consists of land and buildings used in the production of crops and livestock. The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines a farm as generating at least \$1,000 a year in the sale of crops or livestock. According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, the average farm in Antrim County generated \$41,501 in total sales in 2002. The average farm in Michigan generated \$70,757. These figures represent the market value of agricultural products sold, which represents the gross market value before taxes and production expenses of all agricultural products sold or removed from the place. It does not include payment received for participation in federal farm programs or income for farm related sources such as woodworking.

Farms typically consist of a farmstead, which includes a farmhouse and buildings used to shelter livestock and store crops, livestock feed, and farming equipment, and land used to grow crops or pasture graze livestock. The 2002 Census of Agriculture reported that there were 382 farms in Antrim County and 53,315 in Michigan. According to the 2002 Census the average size of a farm in Antrim County was 166 acres and there were 63,428 acres dedicated to farming.

NUMBER OF FARMS

According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, there were 382 farms in Antrim County, which was an increase from 1997, when there were 301 farms. The trend of having more farms occurred throughout northern Michigan during this time period, but not for the State of Michigan (see Figure 8-1).

During this time in Michigan, many farmlands were converted to other uses, such as residential developments. The increase in the number of farms may be due to smaller farm lots and the increased interest in farming activity (as a secondary activity not as a primary activity, such as hobby farms). The average farm size in Antrim County was 166 acres, while the median size was 90 acres. This acreage is similar to other counties in northern Michigan. For the State of Michigan, the average size was 190 acres and the median size was 80 acres.

Figure 8-1 Number of Farms in Northern Michigan		
	Number of Farms in 1997	Number of Farms in 2002
Antrim County	301	382
Benzie	165	181
Charlevoix	230	299
Emmet	248	274
Grand Traverse	485	489
Kalkaska	162	175
Leelanau	420	429
Manistee	330	315
Missaukee	377	412
Wexford	298	395
Northern Michigan	3,016	3,351
State of Michigan	53,519	53,315

TOTAL SALES FROM FARM OPERATIONS

During this time, the average total number of sales declined for northern Michigan farmers, but not for the State. The market value is the gross market value before taxes and production expenses of all agricultural products sold or removed from the place in 2002, regardless of who received the payment. It includes sales by the operator(s) as well as the value of any shares received by partners, landlords, contractors, or others associated with the operation. It does not include payment received for participation in other federal farm programs, nor does it include income farm-related sources such as custom work. The 1997 information has been adjusted for the 2002 inflation.

Figure 8-2 Market Value of Farms in Northern Michigan		
	Market Value of Farms in 1997 (average per farm)	Market Value of Farms in 2002 (average per farm)
Antrim County	\$58,131	\$41,501
Benzie	\$40,873	\$23,324
Charlevoix	\$18,818	\$13,349
Emmet	\$22,848	\$21,412
Grand Traverse	\$38,744	\$23,243
Kalkaska	\$33,906	\$32,203
Leelanau	\$72,863	\$37,268
Manistee	\$29,072	\$25,494
Missaukee	\$94,589	\$95,983
Wexford	\$30,167	\$24,101
Northern Michigan	\$47,535	\$35,816
State of Michigan	\$69,035	\$70,035

FARM SIZE

The 2002 Census of Agriculture recorded that there were 63,428 acres in Antrim County that were considered farm land. There are 335,961 acres in Antrim County; therefore 19% of the County is considered active farming.

Grand Traverse County and Leelanau County has similar farm acreage (62,268 and 62,409, respectively). Kalkaska and Benzie had the smallest farm acreage at 24,104 and 23,055, respectively.

The majority of farms in Antrim County range from 50 to 179 acres, as shown in Figure 8-3.

Figure 8-3 Size of Farms in Northern Michigan										
Farms by Size (acres)	Antrim	Benzie	Char	Emmet	Grand Traverse	Kal	Leelan	Manist	Missauk	Wexf
1-9	18	12	15	16	55	5	26	7	8	18
10-49	111	52	111	77	189	62	125	92	79	147
50-179	170	78	115	111	166	70	179	130	155	168
180-499	60	33	45	53	54	31	78	70	109	55
500-999	16	4	8	12	17	2	15	15	37	9
1,000 or more	7	2	5	5	8	5	6	1	14	3

FARMLAND PROTECTION

Farming can be considered part of the region's rural character. A dilemma for many communities is how to promote the preservation of farmland while addressing the demand for development. If a community wishes to protect their agricultural lands, their focus should be twofold: limiting development in predominantly agricultural areas and providing for development away from prime agricultural lands. A successful program is dependent on having the appropriate planning option that will result in a balanced development pattern.

Recent studies have shown that providing for farmland preservation in an orderly matter may provide economic benefit to the community. A study by the American Farmland Trust showed that for every \$1 in tax revenue generated by farms and open land in Marshall Township, Calhoun County, only 27 cents was required for associated services. For every \$1 in tax revenue generated from residential development in that township, \$1.47 was required in public services.

Map 8-1 shows where the prime farmland areas are located. This map was based on designating the most productive areas for farming. In addition, the farming areas are shown close together and not fragmented over a large area. To assist in Farmland Preservation, the State of Michigan has an active Purchase of Development Rights Program that will pay a farmer for the development rights on a site and allow them to continue farming.

Antrim County joined with Grand Traverse County to have a Bi-County Farmland and Open Space Development Rights Ordinance in 2003 to promote a similar program. The Antrim County Farmland and Open Space Preservation Board consists of six (6) members, appointed by the Board of Commissioners. The Farmland and Open Space Preservation Board administers the County's farmland preservation program and is responsible for:

- Establishing selection criteria for ranking and prioritizing of applications to the program.
- Establishing a points-based appraisal formula for determining the value of the agricultural conservation easements.
- Reviewing and providing oversight in scoring all applications according to the adopted selection criteria.
- Ranking and prioritizing the top scoring applications for acquisition and determining whether the development rights should be purchased.
- Approving the restrictions and permitted uses under the agricultural conservation easement.
- Establishing the price to be offered to the property owner and authorize negotiations for the purchase of development rights and agricultural conservation easement.
- Establishing monitoring procedures and overseeing subsequent monitoring to insure compliance with the agricultural conservation easement. Enforcement of the agricultural conservation easement in the case of non-compliance shall be the responsibility of the respective County Board of Commissioners.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS (What should be done next?)

1. Work with farm groups and the Michigan State Extension and Northern Lakes Economic Alliance offices to promote agricultural related businesses.