

Farming supports our economy, quality of life and regional heritage. It also sustains families with close ties to the land.

FarmAbility is a program designed to temporarily protect farmland, while benefiting farm families economically and by helping them plan for the future of their farm.

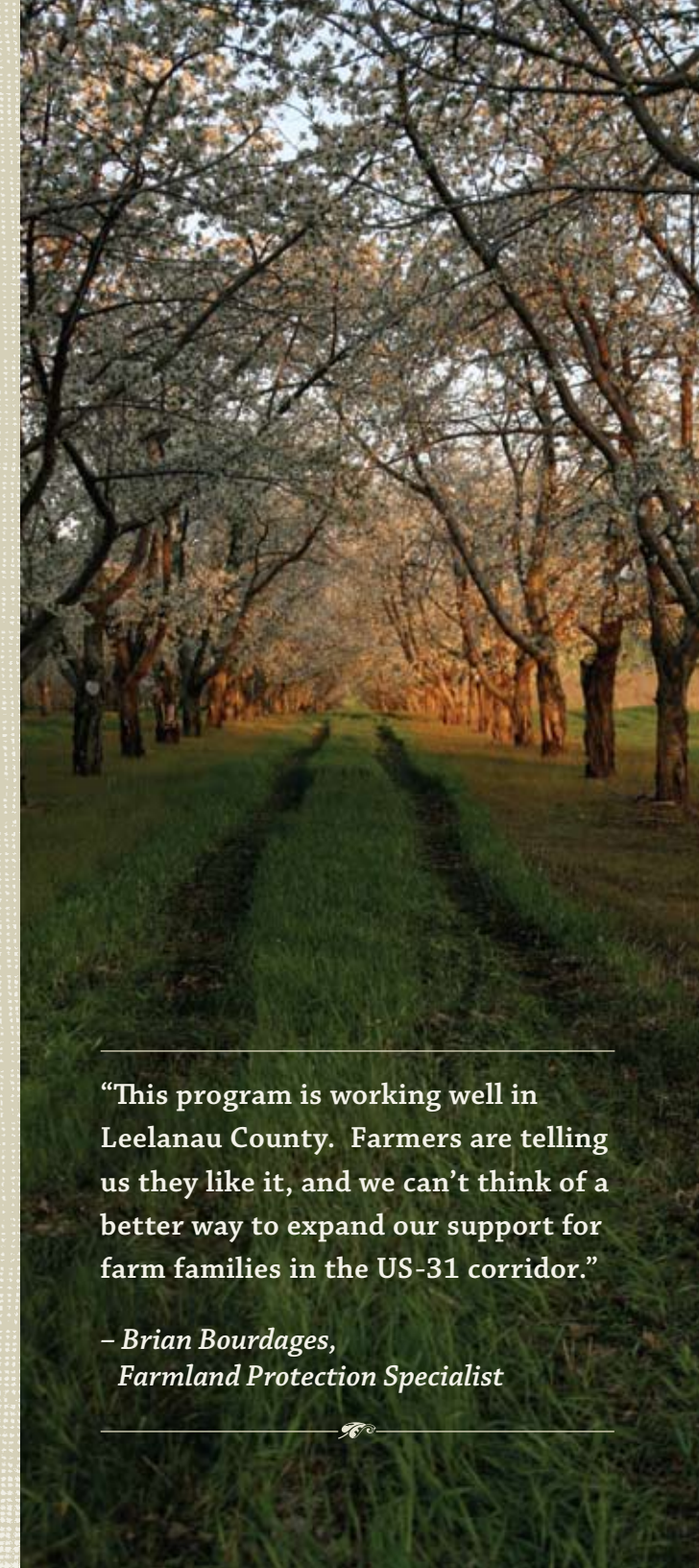
The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy is implementing this voluntary program in Whitewater, Torch Lake, Elk Rapids and Milton Townships to support farming in this critical part of our service area.

Our goals:

- Make it easy and affordable for families to position their farm and land for the next generation
- Advance farming practices
- Enhance profitability

FARMABILITY

GRAND TRAVERSE REGIONAL
LAND CONSERVANCY



“This program is working well in Leelanau County. Farmers are telling us they like it, and we can’t think of a better way to expand our support for farm families in the US-31 corridor.”

– Brian Bourdages,
Farmland Protection Specialist



**THE GRAND TRAVERSE REGIONAL LAND
CONSERVANCY IS COMMITTED TO
WORKING WITH FARMERS TO EXPLORE
WAYS THAT THEY CAN PROTECT
THEIR LAND AND ADVANCE THEIR
BUSINESS GOALS.**

FarmAbility Goals and Outcomes:

- Farmland will be protected and actively farmed.
- People who wish to farm will have access to land that is affordable and appropriate for farming.
- People within our region, our state, and around the world will have access to fresh and processed foods that are produced within our region's globally unique micro-climate.
- Our local agricultural economy will remain strong and competitive.
- People will be employed in farm-related jobs, including value-added manufacturing jobs that are directly tied to local farm field, orchard, and vineyard products.
- The protection of farmland will support our tourism economy and make our region an attractive place to own or start a business, retire, recreate and relax, or raise a family.



KEY ELEMENTS OF FARMABILITY

- Voluntary, ten-year term conservation agreements modeled after Michigan's PA 116 Farmland Program, but more "farmer friendly"
- Annual payments of \$5-\$10 per acre of enrolled land
- "Right of first refusal" that would allow the Conservancy to match an offer to purchase the property in fee were it to be placed for sale.
- Each participating family has access to a one-time fund of \$1,000 at a 1:1 match to support the future of the farm operation, such as professional succession and estate planning services.
- Participating families have access to workshops and consulting services from partner organizations for succession planning, GAP or other food safety certification, and MAEAP or other environmental verification programs.

**AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY
AND LAND USE**

- As of 2012, the annual economic impact of Michigan's Food and Agriculture System is \$91.4 billion and accounts for 22% of all jobs in the state.
- Agriculture is four times more important to our region's economy than it is to the state economy as a whole.¹
- A recent study from MSU's Center for Economic Analysis in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, together with the Center for Regional Food Systems, shows that 472,000 acres of farmland in Michigan are at risk of conversion to non-farm uses in the next 5-10 years due to inadequate plans for the future of these properties.

¹Northwest Michigan's Farm Factor, Dr. Doug Krieger, February 2009

For more information contact:

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*Protecting Significant Natural, Scenic and Farm
Lands, and Advancing Stewardship, Now and
For All Future Generations*

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