

Oral Presentation Problem Statement
Agricultural Soil and Water Conservation Stewardship

Claire County has been presented with an ownership option to the McGregor Farm, an 810 acre working farm located in the center of the County, a farm that supports more than 20 jobs in rural Claire County. The County will receive the rights to the land if a Stewardship Plan can be developed, presented and accepted by the McGregor Family Trust within the next 5 months. Knowing this was a rare opportunity to keep a valuable asset in the County producing profitable food, fiber, and energy, while also maintaining and enhancing critical environmental services, the County Executive formed a committee of county planners, agricultural resource professionals, agricultural business owners and local officials to begin the development of the Stewardship Plan.

To assist the committee in the development of the plan, the Family Trust has provided basic information concerning the current farm operation: (below and in the attached maps and custom soil survey)

- The farm is a 350 cow full confinement, free-stall dairy operation. Manure is collected and spread daily on the active crop fields. All of the crops grown on the farm are used by the dairy herd.
- The farm acreage consists of approximately 220 acres of shrubland, woodland and wetlands; 10 acres of farmstead and included properties; and 580 acres of active cropland.
- Currently the farm plants winter wheat in rotation with 1 year of grain corn and 1 year of soybeans on 200 acres of the farm. The remaining 380 acres are in a 5 year rotation of silage corn for 2 years and 3 years of alfalfa/grass mixed hay. All tillage operations are limited to chisel plowing and disking to prepare the soil surface for planting. They do not use cover crops and have had limited experience with no-till planting.

The McGregor Family Trust has set the following requirements for the Stewardship Plan:

- At least 85% of the acres that are currently used for agriculture will be maintained as active agricultural land. The plan should include an evaluation of the farm's current soil health and outline those steps necessary to improve soil quality. The data used for the evaluation needs to be provided as part of the plan.
- Provide a recommendation for implementing agricultural Best Management Practices which should include an analysis of the cost and benefit for each practice identified in the plan.
- Runoff water from the town roads and a neighbors' drainage project have diverted water onto the property. There are two fields in the southwest corner of the property (identified by black stars) that have seen increased erosion issues as a result of the runoff. The plan needs to address remedies to the erosion problem.
- An area on the west side of the property (outlined by a dashed line) had been left to grow into a mix of grasses, forbs, and small shrubs. Northern harrier are frequently seen around the fields. The farm plan needs to address the potential use of this area, yet not cause loss of northern harrier habitat.
- Outline how the County will maintain or improve the economic condition of the farm under their ownership.

Your task is to develop and present an Agricultural Soil and Water Conservation Stewardship Plan for the McGregor Farm Trust that incorporates the Family Trust's five main concerns. The plan should reflect the interest of the different committee members. Federal, State and local law must be taken into consideration.

McGregor Family Farm



