

# Growth Management

## Introduction

Historically, Minnehaha County has held a long tradition of being an agriculturally-dominant economy. It should be expected that this trend will continue over the next twenty years and beyond. There may be an increased focus on supporting the family farm identity in order to maintain a rich rural quality of life and agricultural land preservation.

Commercial and industrial development will continue to play a role in shaping key areas of the county. The locations most suitable for this type of economic growth are identified on the Future Land Use Map, pg. 82, around the eleven interstate exits, intersections of two major arterials, and within the unincorporated areas of Lyons, Ellis, Renner, Corson, and Rowena.

The interstate exits for Dell Rapids, Baltic, Crooks/Renner, Corson, and Hartford are prime locations for business development due to the ease of access and close proximity to the municipalities experiencing a majority of the population growth in the county. While these locations will continue to attract development, there should be a focus on identifying necessary improvements in order to maintain competitiveness in the regional market. There must be strong economic development policies that encourage retention of existing business and promoting job growth in the commercial, industrial, and agricultural industries as the regional center for much of the business and economic activity in southeast South Dakota.



## Agriculture

Agriculture is an integral part of Minnehaha County’s economy and land base. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), agriculture is the dominate land use in the County with approximately 1,157 farms encompassing 407,896 acres and an average farm size of 353 acres (Census of Ag., 2012). Agricultural crops and livestock contribute to the stable and diversified economy in the County. Agribusiness services and facilities supplement and support the farm economy by creating jobs in cultivation and harvesting, equipment sales and services, fertilizer and seed sales, finance and insurance industries, and in food processing related activities. A continued threat to agriculture is the encroachment of development which leads to conflicts between agriculture and non-agricultural uses.

The chart, at right, indicates that there was an increase of about 50 farms ranging in size from 10 to 49 acres over the most recent five-year period according to the 2007 and 2012 Census of Agriculture published by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Comparatively, there were decreases in farm sizes ranging from 180 to 999 acres. This trend may be an indication that small hobby farms are becoming more common and directly correlated hobby farms, local food systems, and the process of estate divisions of land owned by farm families. Despite being the most populated County in South Dakota, Minnehaha County continues to be one of the most agriculturally productive counties in the State. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture the market value of agricultural products sold was

\$270,247,000, which contributes to just over ten billion dollars throughout the state. This value is similar among the top ten counties in South Dakota (Census of Ag., 2012). As the total population increases, there will be a greater need to support the local agricultural industry as a viable economic activity and discourage conversion to other incompatible uses through policies designed to promote the agricultural economy at all scales for the direct benefit of Minnehaha County and the State of South Dakota. Other county governments have adopted ordinance requirements that are aimed at easing land use restrictions that pose regulatory barriers to a healthy, sustainable agricultural economy while promoting entrepreneurship.

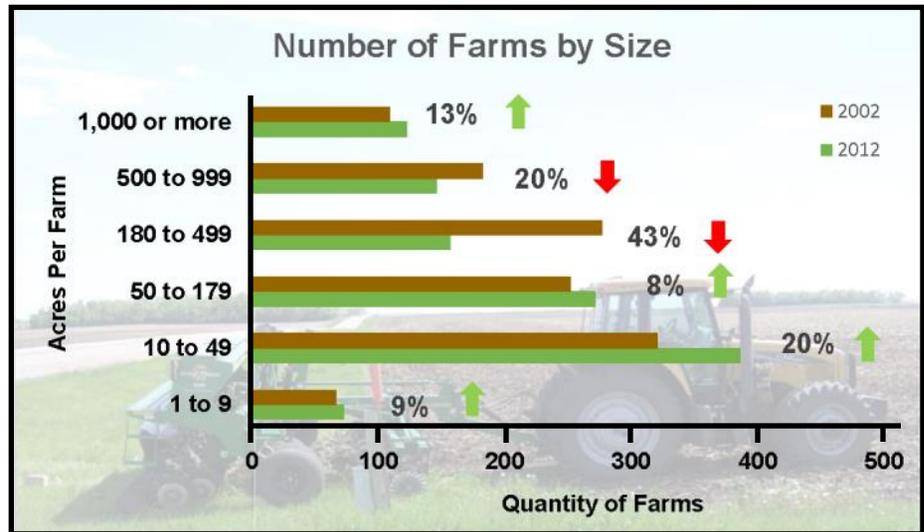


Figure 3.1 - Total number of farms chart

Source: USDA

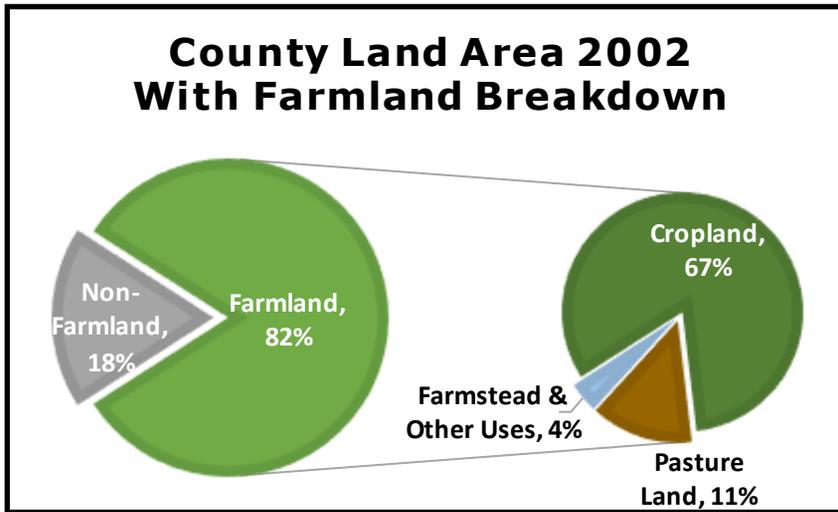


Figure 3.2 - 2002 Ag Census Land Area Breakdown Source: USDA

The charts, above and above at right, shows the overall breakdown between farmland and non-farmland from 2002-2012 as reported by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Census of Agriculture. This data indicates a four percent farmland loss over the ten-year period. During the last twenty five years, the amount of land lost to non-farmland purposes is equivalent to roughly 39 square miles, or five percent of total land area in Minnehaha County (USDA). This analysis presents a challenge over the course of the planning period to

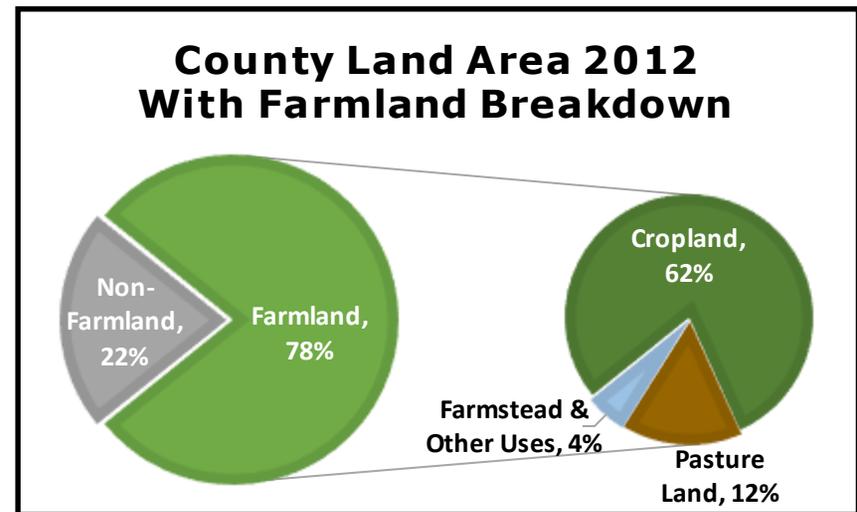


Figure 3.3 - 2012 Ag Census Land Area Breakdown Source: USDA

manage resources more effectively and promote sustainable agricultural operations further highlighting the importance of local agriculture to both urban and rural residents. In an effort to balance the competing interests of municipal growth and agricultural land preservation, there should be a strong emphasis on identifying alternatives to the conversion of farmland by implementing sustainable rural economic development policies that empower farmers to attempt new, innovative endeavors in support and promotion of local agricultural production.

Corn and soybeans are the primary row crops produced in the county. Since 1924 there have been a consistent number of acres of corn harvested, averaging approximately 159,000 acres (USDA). Less detailed information is available about soybeans prior to 1949, but the average number of soybeans harvested has been in decline since 1997. The chart, below, indicates that soybean acres harvested has rebounded by a small margin since 2007. Livestock production is dominated by cattle/calves operations as well as milk and other dairy products from cows. Hogs are also well represented in Minnehaha County from nursery stock to finisher swine.

While not as prominent, an increasingly significant number of sheep, horses, and bees are raised within the county. According to the USDA Census of Agriculture, the number of farms raising poultry increased by more than twice the amount in 2002 to a total of 75 farms in 2012. About one-third of this total is made up of poultry farms ranging in size from 1 to 49 acres. It is important to note that this number does not include the increasing demand for county residents to raise domesticated chickens in rural residential subdivisions for the convenience of enjoying fresh, local produce while maintaining a commitment to healthy lifestyles.

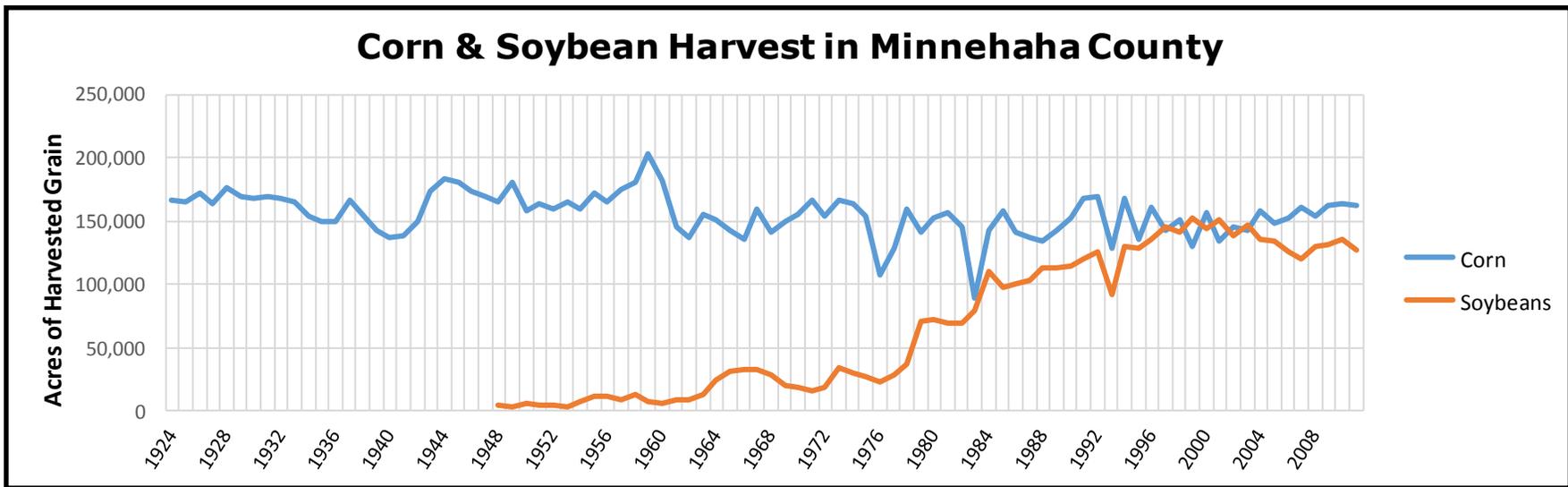


Figure 3.4 - Total Corn and Soybean Harvest in Acres

Source: USDA

## Agricultural Tourism

Minnehaha County supports agricultural tourism by providing for uses which help to promote and maintain local farming operations, are complementary to agriculture, help maintain an agricultural heritage and rural character, and help to sustain the local farming community. The interest in tourism was initiated by the agricultural community who recognized that there were secondary opportunities for economic development involving agricultural and assorted related activities as well as opportunities for extra income from agribusiness activities. To assist and guide agricultural tourism the zoning ordinance was amended, adding a section based on three principals.

- Selection of the types of activities and experiences that are farm based or support farming that should be permitted uses in an agriculturally zoned district.
- Ensure that the public health, safety, and welfare concerns would be met by County regulations.
- Creation of an administrative review process which would still allow an opportunity for public input.

Allowing agricultural tourism development enhances the viability of farms and provides additional opportunities to create an income source on site. It also is a means of educating urban and visiting populations on the importance of agriculture to the local and state economy. As there becomes a further disconnect between the rural and urban populations of Minnehaha County, these interactions and educational opportunities become increasingly important.

## Agricultural Tourism

Agriculturally related accessory uses, that are subordinate to the growing of crops or the raising of livestock, designed to bring the public to the farm on a temporary or continuous basis, such as U-pick farm sales, farm stands, farm mazes, pumpkin patches, farm animal viewing and petting, wagon rides, thrashing bees, farmland and activities tours, horticulture nurseries, and associated display gardens, cider pressing, classes or workshops, wine or cheese tasting, and similar uses.



To ensure that agricultural tourism is a benefit and not a detriment to the farming community, proposed uses must have their operating procedures reviewed. Issues that are taken into consideration during the application process include visitor management, use of agricultural products, hours of operation, impact on transportation system, availability of parking, safety and health issues, impact on neighboring properties, land use compatibility, and management of special or large events.

The adopted definition for agricultural tourism encourages farming related activities such as wineries, on-site farm experiences, farmer's markets or u-pick operations, corn mazes, or events anchored in traditional farming practices such as thrashing bees. These land uses help maintain a rich agricultural heritage and rural character while promoting sustainable development of the local, regional, and state economy.



## Commercial/Industrial

The rural service areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan, pg. 84, are among the locations that have received modest growth pressure. While a majority of the economic development will be focused towards municipalities and transition areas, most rural commercial and industrial development will be encouraged to cluster around interstate interchanges as well as major highway crossings identified on pg. 82. The availability of public services and attractive industrial park-like areas will contribute to a majority of the commercial and industrial land uses locating within municipalities.

Rural service areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan with substandard infrastructure presents several issues that must be addressed in order to encourage better management of growth in the county's economic base, and promote cohesive and attractive development in the rural area while providing its' citizenry with a better quality of life as well as enhanced economic value of their property.



## Agriculture - Goals & Actions

**Goal 1. Conserve agricultural land for long-term agricultural use in order to protect the productive natural resources of the County and maintain the farm and farm-related economy of the County.**

Action 1.1 Create more restrictive standards for residential building eligibility transfers outside of municipal growth boundaries.

Action 1.2 Reinforce that residential eligibility transfers are not a permissive use.

Action 1.3 Continue requiring the right-to-farm notice covenant on all residential building sites.

**Goal 2. Discourage rural residential development in agricultural production areas.**

Action 2.1 Allow the clustering of residential structures on non-productive agricultural land through the use of density zoning in the A-1 Agricultural and R/C Recreation/Conservation zoning districts.

Action 2.2 Adopt setback standards which would limit new dwellings from locating in close proximity to concentrated animal feeding operations.

**Goal 3. Develop a community food system study in support of the agricultural industry and maintaining healthy lifestyles.**

Action 3.1 Initiate public outreach through education and awareness to assess priorities.

Action 3.2 Identify policies directly affecting the promotion and implementation of community food systems.

**Goal 4. Stem the premature and unnecessary conversion of agricultural land to urban uses.**

Action 3.1 Ensure that municipal utilities are available or planned for the area prior to conversion.

Action 3.2 Initiate a Farm Advisory Board to support the future of farm operations in Minnehaha County.

**Goal 5. Recognize that agricultural lands have a definite public value as open space, and the preservation in agricultural production of such lands constitutes an important physical, social, aesthetic, and economic asset.**

Action 4.1 Promote sustainable use and management of productive landscapes.

Action 4.2 Maintain economic links to the value of rural land other than development uses.

**Goal 6. Develop historical and educational information to publicize the importance of agriculture to Minnehaha County.**

Action 3.1 Instigate an “adopt a farmer” education program with local schools.

Action 3.2 Work with the Siouxland Heritage Museums to research and publish the history of agriculture in Minnehaha County.

## **Agricultural Tourism - Goals & Actions**

**Goal 1. Promote the development of agricultural tourism.**

Action 1.1 Create a webpage, brochures, and other means to advance agricultural tourism businesses in Minnehaha County.

Action 1.2 Develop a marketing plan to promote agricultural tourism.

Action 1.3 Design directional signage unique to agricultural tourism operations.

**Goal 2. Collaborate with other agencies to advertise County agricultural tourism.**

Action 2.1 Establish connections between County and State tourism websites.

Action 2.2 Produce an assistance guide for new agricultural tourism operators.

## Commercial/Industrial - Goals & Actions

**Goal 1. Support and encourage growth of the county's economic base and promote the retention/expansion of job creation.**

- Action 1.1 Coordinate the siting of industrial uses with the Minnehaha County Economic Development Association.
- Action 1.2 Enhance industrial development by restricting incompatible land uses where rail access is available.
- Action 1.3 Discourage strip commercial development along transportation arteries, particularly those which serve as gateways to municipalities and attractions.
- Action 1.4 Locate commercial uses at interstate highway interchanges and high traffic intersections to support highway users.

**Goal 2. Enhance communication and cooperation among the several governmental and quasi-governmental entities who have the potential to impact and influence development patterns.**

- Action 2.1 Encourage a pattern of development in transition areas that can be integrated into municipal planning areas without the need for costly and inefficient public infrastructure expenditures.
- Action 2.2 Promote cooperative efforts with municipalities in dealing with growth and development issues.
- Action 2.3 Encourage annexation of potential development sites within municipal fringe areas before development plans are approved.

**Goal 3. Ensure maximum efficiency in the provision of public services and facilities to promote cohesive and attractive development in the rural area.**

Action 3.1 Work with Minnehaha Community Water Corporation to ensure that future water system improvements do not conflict with county development policies and the long term viability of agricultural operations.

Action 3.2 Limit rural densities so that current service levels are not exceeded to avoid the creation of additional special purpose districts (i.e. sanitary, water, and road districts).

Action 3.3 Utilize the planned development zoning district to accommodate a mix of land uses, promote the arrangement of uses on a comprehensive rather than piecemeal basis, and address problems related to existing land use patterns.