

# Farmland SEASONS

SPRING 2026

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## WHO OWNS GREENLAND? 8 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT AMERICA'S TIES TO THIS STRATEGIC ISLAND

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# WHO OWNS GREENLAND? 8 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT AMERICA'S TIES TO THIS STRATEGIC ISLAND

If you're like us, you probably never thought much about Greenland—until recently. When you see news headlines like “Why Does the U.S. Want Greenland?,” do you wonder why Greenland has become such a strategic prize?

The region's story is more complicated than you might think. Since we keep an eye on developments that could affect American agriculture and farmland, come along on a virtual tour to see why Greenland matters:

## 1 Greenland is strategic.

On most maps, Greenland appears remote and enormous. In reality, Greenland is geographically part of North America. It's also in the middle of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) territory. A recent Wall Street Journal article noted that Greenland sits midway along the shortest flight path between Moscow and Washington, D.C.

## 2 Welcome to the world's largest island.

Greenland is over three times as large as Texas. Greenland contains 836,330 square miles—more than Mexico (758,449 square miles). This is no tropical paradise, though. Situated in the cold waters of the North Atlantic, Greenland is smothered by sheets of ice and rugged tundra. Two-thirds of Greenland lies within the Arctic Circle. Its northern tip is less than 500 miles from the North Pole. Temperatures in Greenland can reach below -30 degrees Fahrenheit.

## 3 Few people call Greenland home.

Greenland has been populated for 4,500 years, even though 80% of Greenland is covered by ice. Only 20% of the landscape is ice-free, so Greenland has one of the lowest population densities on Earth, with less than 57,000 people. That's smaller than the population of Dubuque, Iowa.



Source: NASA

## 4 Greenland's history is intertwined with Scandinavia.

Geopolitically, Greenland is aligned with Europe, with close ties to Denmark and Norway. The first European presence in Greenland dates back to Erik the Red, a Norse Viking banished from Iceland for manslaughter around the end of the 10th century.

While Norse settlers remained in Greenland for centuries, they inexplicably disappeared with hardly a trace by the start of the 15th century. In 1721, Hans Egede, a Norwegian priest and missionary with support from the united Danish-Norwegian crown, reestablished contact with Greenland. After World War II, Greenland was incorporated into the Kingdom of Denmark.

## 5 Greenland is a self-governing territory.

Greenlanders elect their own parliament and government, which manage domestic

affairs. Denmark retains control over foreign policy, security, and currency.

Greenland passed the Self Government Act of 2009, which included a blueprint for independence. There's no doubt the majority of Greenlanders want to use this self-rule option eventually, according to the Danish Institute for International Studies.

Polls consistently show, however, that Greenlanders don't want independence if this collapses Greenland's welfare state. Denmark provides Greenland with an annual block grant of roughly \$511 million, according to the U.S. International Trade Administration (ITA). This funding accounts for approximately 20% of Greenland's gross domestic product and more than half of the public budget, funding essential services like healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

## 6 Greenland impacts America's national security.

Cover Photo: Simon Skafar/istock Photo

Greenland sits in a prime location between the North American and European parts of NATO, and between NATO and Russia. Greenland first became an area of strategic importance for the United States during World War II. In 1946 during the Truman administration, America made a formal offer of \$100 million to buy Greenland, but this didn't pan out.

In 1951, America and Denmark signed the Defense of Greenland Agreement. The U.S. has maintained air bases, weather stations, radar/radio stations, and marine stations on Greenland since the Cold War. Today, the U.S. has a Space Force base (Pituffik Space Base) on the island—the northernmost Space Force installation.

Greenland remains pivotal to NATO's air defenses, as well. If Russia or China fired intercontinental ballistic missiles at the U.S., many of these missiles would likely cross over Greenland.

**7 Greenland is rich in valuable minerals.** America also understands that resource security is national security. The subsoil of Greenland contains a variety of valuable minerals, including rare earth metals, precious metals, precious stones, coal, graphite, and uranium. The rare earth element resources would rank in the top five worldwide if developed, according to the ITA.

**8 China has Greenland in its sights.** The United States isn't the only global power interested in Greenland and the Arctic region. In 2018, China launched its Arctic policy, also known as the Polar Silk Road. During the past seven years, China has attempted to grow its footprint in the region through scientific research expeditions, infrastructure investments, and natural resource acquisitions. By most metrics, the strategy has failed to take off, but China's continued interest in Greenland reflects the island's geo-strategic importance.

China's global lead in rare earth mineral mining and processing expertise keeps them on the table as a potential future mining partner in Greenland. While Greenland prefers western partnerships, Greenland's minister of business and mineral resources



Greenland sits in a prime location between the North American and European parts of NATO, and between NATO and Russia.

has stated that Greenland will have to turn to other partners, including China, without an influx of investment.

As you know, China's actions worldwide

have far-ranging implications, from national security to international trade of commodities, including U.S. ag exports.

All this also helps explain why America has spotted an opening to acquire Greenland. Plus it fits with U.S. history. The Stanford University Department of History notes that sovereignty purchases have been responsible for more than 40% of U.S. land. "Further, this practice has had international approval," Stanford reports. "When Spain, France, Mexico and Russia sold to America the lands that now make up a large portion of our country, they recognized the legitimacy of such transactions."

Time will tell what happens next with Greenland and we'll keep you informed about how geopolitical events like this might impact U.S. farmland.

### WHAT IF GREENLAND BECOMES PART OF AMERICA?

The idea of America acquiring Greenland may sound a little far-fetched, until you look at history.

Let's go back to the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. When France sold 530 million acres of territory in North America for \$15 million, this doubled the size of the U.S. and helped America become a continental power. (Pop quiz—how many states were fully or partially carved out of the Louisiana Purchase? Answer: 15)

In 1867, Secretary of State William Seward negotiated with Russian officials to purchase the Alaskan territory for \$7.2 million. Alaska remained a territory until it became the 49th state in 1959.

Speaking of territories, America has five major U.S. territories today, including Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam. Territories have their own local governments. They also must follow the laws of the U.S. federal government. U.S. citizens in states and territories are afforded protections from the federal government, but states offer greater degrees of rights and representation.

While the U.S. could attempt to purchase Greenland, a new alliance could be another possibility. Forming what is known as a compact of free association would include U.S. financial assistance in exchange for allowing America to have a security presence in Greenland.

Compacts of free association already exist between the United States, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The compacts allow citizens of Micronesia to live and legally work in the U.S. without a visa, as well as have access to social and health services, according to the University of Hawaii. In return, the U.S. has sole access and a substantial amount of military and veto power over these islands, which are considered to have strategic value.

These compacts, along with purchasing sovereignty, have been an accepted custom of international law for many years. If the U.S. would purchase Greenland or work out some other deal, this would be consistent with American tradition.

## “CLIENTS TRUST US WITH THEIR LEGACY:” MINDY MASON CELEBRATES 15 YEARS WITH MGW

What do you do when your dream job comes along—but the timing isn’t right? You chart a new course, like Mindy Mason, a farm management coordinator with MGW.

“I love the southern lifestyle, and my previous job transferred to Atlanta, Georgia,” says Mindy, who has been part of the MGW team for 15 years. “But I decided I needed to be here in Illinois, close to family.”

Mindy worked in accounts payable (A/P) and accounts receivable (A/R) at previous jobs in the insurance/banking sector, but she was ready to try something new. This northern Illinois native has family members and friends who farm, so a job at MGW intrigued her. She grew up in Genoa, which is just north of MGW’s office in Sycamore.

Mindy wears a lot of hats today at MGW. She still handles A/R and A/P, and she also



collects farm rents, sets up farm insurance policies for MGW’s management clients, and works with Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices regarding MGW clients’ farms. She also creates aerial, soil, and plat maps for MGW’s farm managers and assists them

with leases and more. “I make sure our offices have everything they need to operate.”

“I work with a great team,” Mindy says. “I also enjoy building relationships with our farm management clients and farm tenants. The clients trust us with their legacy, the tenants rely on our fairness and expertise, and in return, I get authentic connections that make this job personal and enjoyable.”

Outside of work, you might find Mindy and her fiancé, Brian, at the golf course. They are members of the Kishwaukee Country Club in DeKalb, plus they enjoy hitting the links at courses around the country.

“I’m thankful for 15 incredible years at MGW,” Mindy says. “I’m grateful for every challenge, win, laugh, and friendship along the way, and I’m looking forward to the future.”

## MGW SETTLES INTO NEW LOCATION IN DEWITT



DeWitt, Iowa, is one of those small towns where you want to put down roots that can grow deep in the community. That’s why we’re excited to be here at 712 11th Street, along historic Highway 30.

In addition to our office in Sycamore, Illinois, we opened an office in DeWitt in 2023 to better support our western Illinois/eastern Iowa landowners and clients. We enjoyed leasing that office from, and making friends with, local Chiropractor Dr. Bonnie Bauer. As we outgrew that space, we looked for different options and moved to our new

location in DeWitt in July 2025.

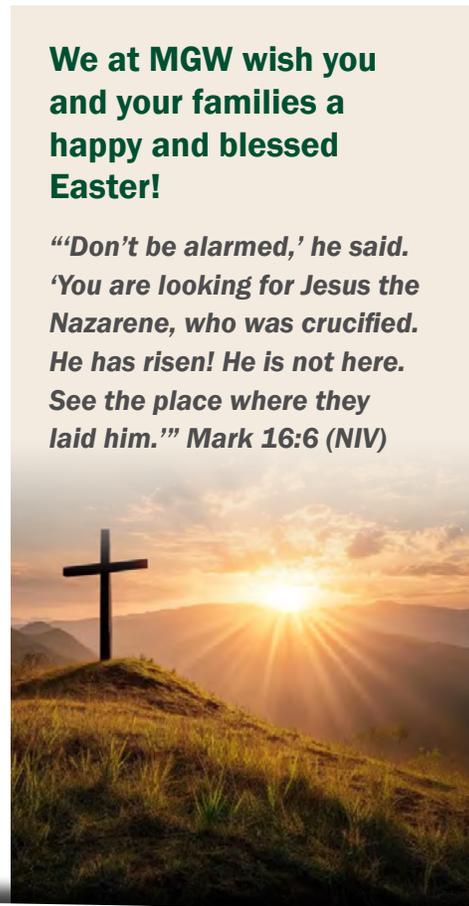
This office, which was built in 1976, previously served as a bank—most recently U.S. Bank. We’ve heard from many locals that recall attending 4-H club meetings and other activities in the community room in this former bank’s basement. Our new location in DeWitt gives us ample room to meet with clients and accommodate our team.

If you’ve been through DeWitt, you may have noticed we’ve been making some upgrades to our new location. We’ve installed new landscaping and we’ll invest in some intensive remodeling projects on the building later this year.

“We’re excited to expand in DeWitt,” says Mark Mommsen, president of MGW, who grew up 9 miles from this area. “It’s a central location for our business. Like Sycamore, DeWitt is a classic, Midwestern small town with a great school system, tremendous people, and a thriving downtown business district. We’re excited to be here, and we invite you to stop by for a visit!”

**We at MGW wish you  
and your families a  
happy and blessed  
Easter!**

*“Don’t be alarmed,” he said.  
‘You are looking for Jesus the  
Nazarene, who was crucified.  
He has risen! He is not here.  
See the place where they  
laid him.’” Mark 16:6 (NIV)*



# Farm Estate and Tax Planning Tips, from an Attorney's View

You've heard the old proverb, "Nothing is certain but death and taxes." In the world of farmland ownership, you need to take this beyond annual financial planning into estate planning.

We recently caught up with Michael English, an attorney with Russell, English, Scoma & Beneke, P.C. in Princeton, Illinois, to get his perspective on tax considerations and estate planning strategies for 2026.

**Seasons readers may remember we've talked about the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) in previous issues. The passage of the OBBBA in 2025 has permanently increased the federal estate tax exemption to \$15 million per individual, indexed for inflation, effective January 1, 2026.**

**What does this mean for landowners? What does it mean for estate planning?** The passage of the OBBBA provides landowners with some certainty as to the per-person exemption for federal estate taxes. It's still incumbent on landowners, however, to do their estate planning to take advantage of the opportunity this presents.

Although a couple now has total exemptions of \$30 million, it's still possible to have that amount cut in half if they fail to properly plan their estate by leaving all assets outright to the surviving spouse on the death of the first spouse.

If they live in a state with a state estate tax, the exemption for state estate tax (if the state has one) may be much less than the federal exemption. The exemption in Illinois is currently \$4 million per person. This means that for Illinois residents, it's very possible to have a sizeable Illinois estate tax liability, but no federal estate tax.

**In light of the changes in tax law from the passage of the OBBBA, what advice do you have for high net-worth individuals looking to reduce future estate tax liability?** High net-worth landowners should remember that all federal and state tax laws are subject to change at any time. You need to meet with your professional advisors to discuss your options under the current rules. Then decide what works best in your individual situation and decide how you want to treat your beneficiaries. There's often a big difference in how parents view equality among their descendants and how the descendants view equality.



**For those seeking to keep farmland in the same family for generations, what steps do they need to take to make this a reality?** If a family wants to see farmland remain in the family for multiple generations, I think the family as a whole—not just the current owners—has to have that as an objective. This must be a family goal that's shared by everyone, not just the parents and the children who are farming.

Whether it's accomplished through a family business entity, or through individual ownership, all members have to be committed to it. If not, then the older generation needs to decide how to deal with those who aren't willing to maintain ownership on a long-term basis.

That could be through an entity that leaves out those who are committed to the idea, or by gifts of cash, insurance proceeds, or some other non-real estate asset. It might require the older generation to invest in assets other than farmland to provide something to leave to those not committed to farmland ownership.

**Based on your experience, what are some of the biggest mistakes people make with estate planning?** The biggest mistake people make with estate planning is failing to do anything until something forces the issue. That can leave you without good options, or the ability to set up any plan at all.

The second mistake is to fail to review the plan periodically to make sure that it still accomplishes your objectives. The third issue is failing to update the plan when something occurs that changes any of the basic objectives of the plan.

**Any other advice you have for landowners when it comes to estate planning?** We all know we're granted limited time on this earth. Estate planning can require hard choices. This makes it easy to put off until tomorrow, next week, or next month, but sometimes those days never come. Then your family is left to deal with issues that could have been avoided.

I had a case a number of years ago where a farmer died unexpectedly. He had an old will that he signed prior to his marriage. It left his estate to his sisters. The sisters were willing to walk away from their inheritance, so his family could receive it. That will not always be the result, in my experience.

# STRAWBERRY FIELDS FOREVER: NICHE AG, SMART BUSINESS THRIVE AT ANNIE'S ACRES

There's nothing like a sweet, juicy strawberry fresh from the patch. For thousands of people, summer isn't complete without a trip or two to the strawberry fields at Annie's Acres near Bellevue, Iowa.

"Strawberries are fun," says David Kendall, 68, whose family has provided the tri-state area with fresh, delicious, home-grown strawberries since 1988.

Some guests check in at the welcome stand, pick up a box and head out to a row to start picking their own berries. Other guests are happy to pay for pre-picked berries.

"About half of our customers want u-pick, and half want pre-picked," David says. "We're also seeing a trend of more people picking smaller amounts of berries, instead of 60 pounds at a time for canning and making jam."

## STARTING A FARM IN THE 1980S FARM CRISIS

The Kendell's 15-acre berry farm, which is framed by the picturesque bluffs along the Mississippi River, is rooted in family heritage and strong ties to the local area. David's great-great-great-grandfather Elbridge Gerry Potter (1791-1875) was a prominent 19th-century Iowa settler, farmer, and businessman who established his Paradise Farm in Jackson County near Bellevue in the 1840s.

The land that supports Annie's Acres has been in the family since 1952. While David didn't grow up in eastern Iowa (he was raised in the Chicago area), he was intrigued with agriculture from a young age. He wanted to start farming in 1976 after graduating from high school, but his father encouraged him to go to college.

After completing his ag business degree from Iowa State University in 1980, David worked in agribusiness until the mid-1980s. "By then, Dad was thinking about selling the farm," said David, referencing the property that now includes Annie's Acres. "But he said he'd keep the land if I wanted to farm."

David did want to farm. While others were getting out of agriculture during the Farm Crisis, he and his new bride, Ann, jumped

## ANNIE'S ACRES TOP TIPS FOR BERRY PICKING

- **1. Come early in the day.** Temperatures are cooler, and insects are less active.
- **2. Look low.** Squat down and gently push the leaves aside. Most of the good berries are down in the shade.
- **3. Avoid the white tips.** Look for berries whose red color extends all the way to the tip.
- **4. Use the berries as soon as possible.** If you need to store them, leave the leaf caps on the berries. Wrap the container tight in plastic wrap. Berries will last three or four days in the refrigerator if they are stored this way.
- **5. Enjoy!** While there are lots of ways to serve strawberries, David prefers homemade strawberry shortcake.



Rows of strawberries in bloom at Annie's Acres.

in. They bought tractors and cattle cheap, but it wasn't enough. "In 1986, shortly after we got married, we had a cattle business but realized we needed another enterprise to pay our health insurance," David says.

They did their homework. They attended conferences about diversified agriculture. They asked a wide variety of people to determine what they could grow in Iowa and turn a good profit. The answer? Strawberries.

## LEARNING THE BUSINESS

The Kendells took three acres of some of

their best row-crop land to carve out a strawberry patch, which takes its name from Ann Kendell. U-pick strawberry patches were a lot more common then, especially around bigger communities and Chicago, David says. Few farmers were growing u-pick strawberry patches in Iowa, however. The nearest farms were around Cedar Rapids and the Quad Cities.

While this meant less competition, it didn't mean creating a berry farm was easy. "The first five years were tough," says David, who planted his first strawberries in 1987. "When we started, my father asked who was going to pick those 3 acres. We didn't know!"

To cut the learning curve, David hired Max Hagen, a berry producer from the Cedar Rapids area, to serve as his consultant. "In the first year after I did that, our yields quadrupled," David says.

Nearly 40 years later, the Kendells have expanded their berry acres five times and still don't have enough berries to meet the demand. They plant about seven different strawberry varieties, including Jewel, Honeoye, and AC Valley Sunset. "We plant 8,000 to 10,000 plants per acre, so it's a big deal to plant an acre a day," David says.

The Kendells keep 12 of their 15 strawberry acres in berry production each year. "You want some of your land out of strawberry production for three to five years for best results," says David, who rotates these acres with corn, oats and other crops.

The farm was a wonderful place to raise the three Kendell kids (James, Andrew and Sarah). "We had a playpen at the strawberry stand when the kids were little, and they helped out when they got older," David says.

Today, Annie's Acres includes one full-time farm employee, along with 15 to 20 part-time employees during the berry season, which typically runs from early June to early July.

While the Kendells never planned to run Annie's Acres for nearly 40 years, they still enjoy it, David says. "Producing strawberries takes a lot of work, but it's worth it."

**BOONE COUNTY, IL**

20 ac. Stilke Farm, NE of Capron. \$315,000. SOLD  
 51 ac. Carlson Road Farm, SE of Belvidere. \$15,275/ac. SOLD

**BUREAU COUNTY, IL**

80 ac. Croisant Farm, NE of Princeton. \$16,950/ac. SOLD

**CLINTON COUNTY, IA**

156 ac. Petersville Farm, SW of Charlotte. \$14,500/ac. PENDING  
 60 ac. Petersen Trust Farm, E of Wheatland. \$3,975/ac. SOLD  
 10.5 ac. Calamus Farm, NW of Calamus. \$9,000/ac. SOLD

**DEKALB COUNTY, IL**

155 ac. Malta Road Farm, S of Kirkland. \$14,350/ac.  
 320 ac. Bork Trust Farm, N of Shabbona. \$18,400/ac.  
 54 ac. Brickville Farm, contiguous to Sycamore. \$16,900/ac.  
 200 ac. MC Evers Farm, E of Sycamore. \$17,350/ac.  
 873 ac. Sycamore Farm, city of Sycamore. \$21,500/ac.  
 77 ac. Bloomfield Farm, NW of Malta. \$16,800/ac. PENDING  
 155 ac. Shabbona Farm, S of Shabbona. \$13,400/ac. PENDING  
 153 ac. Kehm DeKalb County Farm, N of Shabbona. \$16,350/ac. SOLD  
 40 ac. Milan Farm, N of Shabbona. \$16,350/ac. SOLD  
 39 ac. Winter Farm, contiguous to DeKalb. \$17,900/ac. SOLD  
 139 ac. Mary Walter Trust Farm, contiguous to Cortland. \$16,850/ac. SOLD  
 204 ac. Shirley M. Snyder Farm, contiguous to Maple Park. \$12,450/ac. SOLD  
 533 ac. Henke Farm, N of DeKalb. \$16,950/ac. SOLD

**HUMBOLDT COUNTY, IA**

100 ac. Cougar Farm, SE of Gilmore City. \$14,950/ac. SOLD

**JO DAVIESS COUNTY, IL**

708 ac. Shellady Farm, NE of Galena. \$7,900/ac. SOLD

**JONES COUNTY, IA**

207 ac. Borhart Farm, N of Mechanicsville. \$15,900/ac. SOLD

**KANE COUNTY, IL**

50 ac. Big Rock Farm, S of Big Rock. \$16,950/ac. SOLD  
 40 ac. Middleton Road Farm, S of Burlington. \$1,195,000. SOLD  
 1035 ac. Burlington Farm, village of Burlington. \$13,600/ac. SOLD  
 73 ac. Benchley Farm, contiguous to Hampshire. \$13,900/ac. SOLD

**KANKAKEE COUNTY, IL**

118 ac. Rockville West Farm, W of Manteno. \$13,500/ac. SOLD



**Our Feature Farm: The Bingham Road Farm, Lee County, IL**

The Bingham Road Farm is a large, contiguous acreage in close proximity to I-39 & Paw Paw, Illinois. The 253<sup>+/-</sup> acre farm includes two income-producing wind turbines, and the cropland has yielded an average of 249 bushels of corn per acre over the last four growing seasons. The soil Productivity Index (PI) is 125.2, and the asking price is \$14,350 per acre.

91 ac. Rockville Farm, NW of Manteno. \$12,750/ac. SOLD

**LASALLE COUNTY, IL**

126 ac. South Somonauk Farm, contiguous to Somonauk. \$15,850/ac.  
 154 ac. Mohan Wilsman Farm, NW of Streator. \$11,850 ac. SOLD  
 226 ac. Whipple North Farm, N of North Utica. AUCTION. SOLD  
 36 ac. Mosbach 36 Farm, contiguous to Oglesby. \$16,450/ac. SOLD

**LEE COUNTY, IL**

253 ac. Bingham Road Farm, NW of Paw Paw. \$14,350/ac.  
 21 ac. Flewellyn Farm, village of Lee. \$10,900/ac.  
 80 ac. Ranken Farm, SW of Rochelle. \$12,950/ac.  
 150 ac. Paul V. Herrmann Estate Farm, W of Shabbona. AUCTION. PENDING  
 84 ac. Route 251 Farm, SW of Compton. \$12,950/ac. SOLD  
 75 ac. Kehm Lee County Farm, W of Paw Paw. \$16,350/ac. SOLD  
 109 ac. Steward Road Farm, S of Steward. \$12,800/ac. SOLD  
 424 ac. Harmon Farm, village of Harmon. \$12,900/ac. SOLD

**MCHENRY COUNTY, IL**

496 ac. Richmond Farm, W of Richmond. \$12,950/ac. SOLD  
 396 ac. Woodstock Farm, NW of Woodstock. \$12,500/ac. SOLD

**OGLE COUNTY, IL**

58 ac. Tower Road Farm, N of Byron. \$13,700/ac.

65 ac. Deckard Farm, contiguous to Davis Junction. \$9,650/ac.

53 ac. Rochelle Farm, city of Rochelle. \$19,450/ac.  
 41 ac. Ivy Road Farm, S of Monroe Center. \$11,900/ac. SOLD  
 189 ac. Pine Rock Farm, W of Rochelle. \$12,950/ac. SOLD

**ROCK COUNTY, WI**

77 ac. Rykowski Farm, W of Beloit. \$8,850/ac. & 259,500. SOLD

**SCOTT COUNTY, IA**

298 ac. 4RC Farm, E of Bettendorf. \$39,500/ac.  
 41 ac. Dewall Family Farm, N of LeClaire. \$29,500/ac.  
 399 ac. Anderson 400, city of Princeton. \$36,215/ac.

**WHITESIDE COUNTY, IL**

13 ac. Shaver Property, city of Sterling. \$18,500/ac.  
 19 ac. Como Interstate Farm, SW of Sterling. \$7,000/ac. SOLD

**WILL COUNTY, IL**

146 ac. Peotone West 45/52 Farm, W of Peotone. \$15,300/ac.  
 240 ac. Green Garden Farm, contiguous to Frankfort. \$14,900/ac.  
 94 ac. Monee Farm, contiguous to Monee. \$39,500/ac.  
 36 ac. Frankfort Property, village of Frankfort. \$42,500/ac.  
 78 ac. Brandt Property, contiguous to New Lenox & Joliet. \$31,500/ac. SOLD

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY, IL**

39 ac. Rockford Farm, W of Rockford. \$12,700/ac.  
 76 ac. Fidanza Farm, N of Durand. \$6,950/ac. PENDING  
 290 ac. Route 75 Farm, E of Durand. \$10,750/ac. PENDING  
 76 ac. Savala-Anders 76 Farm, NE of Pecatonica. \$6,950/ac. SOLD  
 60 ac. Cook Farm, village of Cherry Valley. \$29,900/ac. SOLD

For additional details on these properties, scan the QR code to the right, call us at (815) 756-3606 or (563) 659-6565, or visit our website at [www.mgw.us.com](http://www.mgw.us.com).



# TWO BIG REASONS WHY 2026 IS A YEAR TO CELEBRATE

Think of the joy of celebrating birthdays and anniversaries with family and friends. If you're like me, those are some of the days you remember throughout your life. We're celebrating two big milestones in 2026, including America250 and MGW's 50th anniversary!

We're grateful for the many loyal relationships and friendships that have developed since the company was founded in 1976. Since the beginning, MGW has cared about rural America, and we're proud to carry on this legacy.

Looking back, 1976 was a big year, not just for MGW, but for America, which celebrated its 200th birthday. Items to celebrate the Bicentennial were everywhere back then, from commemorative U.S. quarters to postage stamps. If you look at local newspapers from 1976, it seems like nearly every business tied their promotions to the Bicentennial, with grocery store specials, commemorative candles and more.

## THE SPIRIT OF '76 INSPIRED PATRIOTISM, HOPE

At the national level, the Bicentennial generated excitement across the land. In April 1975, President Gerald Ford delivered a major address in Massachusetts at Lexington and Concord, commemorating the 200th anniversary of the battles that spurred the Revolutionary War.

A red, white and blue American Freedom Train toured all 48 contiguous states. Display cars on the train were filled with more than 500 precious treasures of Americana, including George Washington's copy of the Constitution, Martin Luther King's pulpit and robes, and a rock from the moon. More than 7 million Americans visited this magnificent train, which brought America's Bicentennial to the people.

These celebrations inspired feelings of nostalgia, patriotism, and hope. There was a general sense that the country was beginning to recover, following the unstable years defined by the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the Watergate crisis.

The 1970s were also a time of optimism in agriculture. By 1976, demand for U.S. agricultural products was exploding. The Soviet Union had negotiated a multi-year contract for wheat and feed grains a few years earlier, and the race to feed the world was on.

Farming was incredibly profitable, and land values increased.

While a lot has changed since 1976, two things endure—the American spirit of freedom and opportunity, and agriculture's key role in America's strength.

On July 4, 2026, America will honor one of the most important milestones in our country's history—250 years of American independence. Big celebrations are planned across the country, including the 2026 Iowa State Fair. With a "Fair Spirit" theme, the 2026 festivities will focus on agriculture, industry and the American dream.



*Martin, Goodrich & Waddell, Inc. (MGW), with offices in Sycamore, Illinois and DeWitt, Iowa, is a*

*leading agricultural real estate services company. Since 1976, MGW has sold, appraised, and managed farms for thousands of clients across the U.S., with a special focus on Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin.*

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## CREATING A CULTURE OF PROGRESS

All this fits so well with the spirit that drives MGW and our clients. Our roots continue to grow deep in the Midwest, and this business remains family-owned. Thanks to your support and trust, we continue to provide an array of agricultural real estate services to clients near and far.

You know that accomplishing any major milestone is a demanding process that requires many small steps along the way. Sometimes it can be difficult to see the bigger picture when you're working toward a long-term goal. With all the hustle of daily work, it's easy to become so focused on what's next that we overlook the progress that's already been achieved.

That's why celebrating milestones is essential. Honoring these achievements creates a culture of purpose and teamwork. When you own Midwestern farmland, you're part of this powerful spirit of optimism and progress that helped build our country. Like so many others throughout our nation's history, you're taking the long view and investing in America.

All of us at MGW remain long-term optimistic on land ownership and America's future, too. Let's take the time to celebrate!



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