



**TWELVE PETITIONS FORWARDED FOR OFFICIAL
AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISE AREA DESIGNATION**

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Contact: Jane Larson
(608) 224-5005

MADISON--Twelve areas in Wisconsin covering nearly 200,000 acres are recommended for official designation as agricultural enterprise areas. These contiguous blocks of mainly agricultural land are targeted for agricultural preservation and agricultural development by the local communities.

“Agricultural Enterprise Areas are part of Wisconsin’s Working Lands Initiative,” explained Secretary Rod Nilsestuen, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. “Groups of farmers and local government worked together to develop a petition to identify a unique area important for preserving and growing agricultural businesses.”

The petitions submitted to the state agriculture department for consideration were signed by more than 150 landowners, 27 city and town governments and 11 county governments in Bayfield, Chippewa, Dane, Dodge, Jefferson, Langlade, Polk, Rock, St. Croix, Shawano and Waukesha counties.

An evaluation team reviewed all the proposed AEA petitions and has recommended that all 12 be considered for an official designation through the state’s rule making process. DATCP is authorized to use an expedited process that will include a public hearing, so the areas will receive their official designations on or before January 1, 2011.

Designation of an agricultural enterprise area does not control land use within the area and landowners will not be subject to new land use or conservation regulations. Instead, this designation is a tool that the local community can use to help promote the future viability of existing agricultural and agriculture-related land use. Once an area is officially designated as an AEA, eligible farmers owning land within the AEA may enter into a voluntary farmland preservation agreement with the state. This enables the landowners to receive tax credits in exchange for agreeing to keep their farm in agricultural use for at least 15 years.

“Each proposed AEA is unique and reflects the diversity of Wisconsin’s agriculture. This includes vegetable farms and processors, traditional dairies, poultry operations or organic farms that sell their products locally,” Nilsestuen said. “Their commonality is the desire to preserve their agricultural lands and to offer an area where agricultural businesses can feel confident in locating or expanding.”

Some examples of the proposed AEAs that will be submitted for official designation include:

- The Antigo Flats AEA in Langlade County is significant for production of certified seed potatoes. Agricultural investments in related businesses in the area include a state-of-the-art potato packing facility and warehouse complex that provide support for the agricultural industry.
- The Ashippun and Oconomowoc AEA in Dodge and Waukesha Counties has a diverse cross-section of agricultural businesses that has adapted to farming in an area under strong development pressure and now successfully markets products to local businesses and non-agricultural residents.
- The Cadott Area AEA in Chippewa County will look at the feasibility of producing and marketing biomass for energy production and the potential of compiling and marketing carbon credits among the dairy, beef and cash grain farms within the area.

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- The La Prairie AEA in Rock County intends to maintain their vegetable production to support their local processor that employs nearly 400 full time staff. This area also supports plant breeding research and nearly 3,000 acres of mint are raised and distilled into mint oil within the AEA.
- The Scuppernong AEA in Jefferson County includes dairy, beef, broiler, egg and vegetable production along with diverse agricultural businesses including a fertilizer manufacturer that uses poultry manure and a vitamin and nutritional supplement company that produces and manufactures products in the AEA.
- The Windsor AEA in Dane County has a strong history of agricultural preservation and has developed a local purchase of development rights program to help protect important agricultural land. The area is also working with neighboring communities to develop cooperative boundary agreements to provide additional protection to agricultural businesses within the area.

The table below provides contacts for each AEA. More details about each area are available at <http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/workinglands/aea.jsp>.

Following this pilot phase of the AEA program, the department is authorized to designate up to one million acres as agricultural enterprise areas after January 1, 2012. The next round for petitions will be announced sometime this fall.

For questions on AEAs, contact Coreen Fallat, (608) 224-4625 or email coreen.fallat@wisconsin.gov.

AEA Summary

AEA name	County	Contact
Antigo Flats	Langlade	Alex Crockford, 715-627-6313
Ashippun/Oconomowoc	Dodge and Waukesha	Jeff Herrmann, 920-474-4449 Bob Guenther, 920-474-7369
Bayfield	Bayfield	Ellen Kwiatkowski, 715-779-5263
Bloomer Area	Chippewa	Dan Stiehl, 715-828-9014
Cadott Area	Chippewa	Les Danielson, 715-313-0309
La Prairie	Rock	Mike Saunders 608-756-2652
Maple Grove	Shawano	Melinda Barlow 715-526-4970
Rush River Legacy	St. Croix	Greg Zwald, 715-796-2140
Scuppernong	Jefferson	Weenonah Brattsett, 262-593-8051
Squaw Lake	Polk and St. Croix	Timm Johnson, 715-248-3277
Town of Dunn	Dane	Erica Schmitz, 608-838-1081, ext 205
Windsor	Dane	Alan Harvey, 608-846-5897

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