



Two New Ag Enterprise Areas to Be Added; One Expanded

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Editors note: Local contacts for AEAs are listed at the end of this release.

MADISON – Wisconsin's total acreage in designated agricultural enterprise areas comes to 1.1 million acres with the addition of two new AEAs, and one modified one, Sec. Ben Brancel announced today at a meeting of the Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

The new acreage will become official Jan. 1, after Sec. Brancel signs orders creating new AEAs in Pierce and Langlade counties, and expanding an existing one in Chippewa County. Wisconsin will then have 33 AEAs in 24 counties, 98 towns and the Bad River Reservation.

AEAs may be created or expanded when at least five landowners, in partnership with local governments, petition the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection for the designation. They are part of Wisconsin's farmland preservation program, intended to encourage preservation of agricultural land use and to promote agricultural economic development appropriate to each area. Designation provides some certainty for farmers and agribusinesses that an agricultural infrastructure will remain into the future, so they can invest with confidence. Landowners in AEAs are not subject to any new land use regulations. Farmers owning land within an AEA can receive farmland preservation tax credits in exchange for signing an agreement to keep their land in agricultural use for at least 15 years.

To date, landowners in ag enterprise areas have signed more than 560 farmland preservation agreements, covering 123,300 acres. Landowners outside designated AEAs who want to participate should work with their neighbors and local governments to petition for AEA status. Petition materials will be available later this year at datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/AEAPetitionInfo.aspx.

This is the seventh round of AEA designations. The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection has authority to designate up to 2 million acres as AEAs.

The new AEAs are:

Evergreen-Wolf River AEA, Langlade County This AEA covers nearly 19,900 acres in the towns of Evergreen and Wolf River, and was sought by eight petitioners. It is a diverse agricultural region, with potato, cash grain and livestock production, as well as forestry. Many of the farms are in the process of passing to the next generation, and many are in the farmland preservation program already and wish to continue participating. Petitioners' goals include preserving productive farmland, supporting farms into the future, and maintaining the agricultural infrastructure.

North-West Pierce County AEA, Pierce County

This AEA covers more than 51,400 acres in the town of Clifton, River Falls and Martell and was sought by 51 petitioners. This is largely a dairy and cash grain area, with a strong infrastructure of agricultural businesses. It faces development pressure extending from Minneapolis-St. Paul. The petitioners want to identify and preserve areas suitable for farming, maintain productivity into the future, and assure that farmers have continued access to nearby suppliers and consumers.

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AEA – ADD ONE

Cadott Area AEA, Chippewa County

This expansion of an existing AEA from about to about 38,550 acres was supported by nine new petitioners in the towns of Arthur and Goetz. Eight of the nine original petitioners signed farmland preservation agreements. Petitioners want to refine cash grain practices and establish new business relationships to supply specialty food grade soybeans to the non-GMO market and meet the production demands of a nearby soybean processing facility. They also are evaluating interest for locally produced foods to area institutions and farmers markets.

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Local contacts

Evergreen-Wolf AEA: Marie Graupner, 715-627-6292, mgraupner@co.langlade.wi.us

North-West Pierce AEA: Rod Webb, 715-273-6763, rodney.webb@co.pierce.wi.us

Cadott Area AEA: Dan Masterpole, 715-723-4530, dmasterpole@co.chippewa.wi.us

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