



DATCP Designates New Agricultural Enterprise Areas in Monroe, Shawano, and Sheboygan Counties

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) designated more than 96,000 acres in Monroe, Shawano, and Sheboygan counties as new agricultural enterprise areas (AEAs) effective January 1, 2026. With these additions, there are 54 AEAs statewide totaling 1,737,876 acres covering portions of 33 counties, 147 towns, and the Bad River Reservation.

AEA designations are important to Wisconsin's agricultural future and support local farmland protection goals, the agricultural economy, environmental efforts, and rural prosperity. Landowners within designated AEAs are eligible to enter into voluntary farmland preservation agreements, committing all or a portion of their farm to agricultural use and maintaining state soil and water conservation standards. In return, they may be eligible to claim the annual farmland preservation tax credit.

The new AEAs include:

- **Lemonweir River Cranberry Region AEA**, located in Monroe County, includes more than 64,000 acres in the towns of Byron, Greenfield, La Grange, Lincoln, and Scott. Local governments and partners joined 60 landowners to petition for designation of this AEA. Petitioners want to protect shared natural resources that support the viability of the region's cranberry and dairy production, as well as local wildlife habitat.
Local contact: Bradley Robson, conservation agronomist, (608) 269-8976.
- **Town of Lessor Ag First AEA**, located in Shawano County, includes more than 22,000 acres in the Town of Lessor. Local government and partners joined 10 landowners to petition for designation in this AEA. Petitioners want to preserve agricultural lands in an environmentally friendly way through farmer-led education, adoption of nutrient management plans, and enrollment in farmland preservation agreements.
Local contact: Blake Schuebel, land conservation technician, (715) 526-4820.
- **Town of Plymouth AEA**, located in Sheboygan County, includes more than 9,000 acres in the Town of Plymouth. Local governments and partners joined seven landowners to petition for designation of this AEA. Petitioners want to provide tools for local agricultural landowners facing increased development pressure to keep their lands in production agriculture while remaining economically and environmentally sustainable.
Local contact: Laura Grunwalf-Rentmeester, conservation specialist, (920) 459-1370.

DATCP is accepting petitions to designate new or modify existing AEAs through July 31, 2026. An AEA designation provides tools to support farmland protection, conservation, and the local farm economy. A minimum of five landowners and their local governments must file a petition jointly. Petitioners who notify DATCP of their intent to apply will receive information about workshops, webinars, and other resources to help prepare the petition.

DATCP has the authority to designate up to two million acres of AEAs. Interested landowners should contact their local government or county conservation department to begin the petition process, or contact Wednesday Coye at (608) 224-4611 or datcpworkinglands@wisconsin.gov. Petition materials are available at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/AEAPetitionInfo.aspx.

About Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEAs)

AEAs are community-led efforts to establish designated areas important to Wisconsin's agricultural future. As part of the state's Farmland Preservation Program, AEAs strive to support local farmland protection goals. Through this designation, communities can encourage continued agricultural production and investment in the local agricultural economy. The designation of an AEA establishes an option for landowners to sign a farmland preservation agreement. These are voluntary 10-year agreements provide protections for certain uses of local lands while allowing the landowners the opportunity to claim the farmland preservation tax credit. Landowners with a farmland preservation agreement are now eligible to claim a tax credit of \$10 per acre, or \$12.50 per acre if their lands are also located in a certified farmland preservation zoning district.

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