



Waupaca County Is Site of Newest Ag Enterprise Area

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Editors note: Local contact for the new AEA is listed at the end of this release.

MADISON – Wisconsin's total acreage in designated agricultural enterprise areas comes to 1.13 million acres with the addition of a new one in Waupaca County's Town of Lind, after Interim Sec. Jeff Lyon signed an order creating it.

The new acreage will become official Jan. 1. Wisconsin will then have 34 agricultural enterprise areas, or AEAs, in 25 counties, 98 towns and the Bad River Reservation.

AEAs are part of the farmland preservation program administered by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). They are intended to keep land in agricultural use and promote agricultural economic development appropriate to each area, by preserving established agricultural infrastructure – land, public services and businesses that serve farms, as well as farms themselves. Landowners in AEAs are not subject to any new land use regulations.

Designation can provide some certainty for farmers and agribusinesses that agricultural infrastructure will remain into the future, so they can invest with confidence. It also makes landowners eligible to claim the farmland preservation tax credit if they agree to keep their land in agricultural use for at least 15 years and meet conservation standards.

For an AEA to be designated, at least five landowners, in partnership with their local government, petition DATCP for the designation.

The new AEA is called the Farming Forward AEA. It encompasses more than 19,000 acres in the Town of Lind in Waupaca County. The nine petitioners operate dairy, grain and specialty crop farms. Their goals include encouraging major dairy operations to plan for long-term resources and succession to future generations, as well as to allow for new, unique agricultural operations. They want to increase local awareness of the importance of protecting the area's agricultural economy, and find opportunities for farmers to benefit financially from preserving farmland.

To date, landowners in ag enterprise areas have signed more than 650 farmland preservation agreements, covering 142,200 acres.

Landowners outside designated AEAs who want to participate should work with their neighbors and local governments to petition for AEA status. For more information, go to datcp.wi.gov and type AEA in the search box.

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

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Local contact

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