



Petition Period Opens for 2017 Ag Enterprise Areas

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Please note: Although the petition deadline is not until June 10, 2017, the petitions typically require months to prepare.

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is now accepting petitions for Agricultural Enterprise Areas to be designated in 2017.

Agricultural enterprise areas, or AEAs, are blocks of land that are primarily in agricultural use for farming and for businesses that serve the farming sector. They are created when at least five landowners and their local governments petition for an AEA designation and the department approves the petition.

AEA designation does not limit land use within the area or protect it from development. It does allow farmers within the AEA to receive tax credits of \$5-\$10 per acre if they enter into farmland preservation agreements with the department. The designation can also be used with local planning and zoning, conservation easements, agriculture economic development incentives, and other tools to support farming and the local farm economy.

“AEAs can provide farmers and agribusinesses with certainty that there will be an agriculture infrastructure into the future, so they can invest with more confidence,” said John Petty, Administrator of DATCP’s Agricultural Resource Management Division, which houses the AEA program. “AEAs can help rural communities use a range of tools to help maintain a farming base for their economies.”

Petty noted that the external evaluation team that reviews the petitions considers the level of local support in deciding whether to recommend areas for AEA status, so petitioners should involve their communities from the beginning.

Petition materials are available online at <http://datcp.wi.gov> by searching for “petition materials.” Completed petitions are due to DATCP on June 10, 2017. Petitions must be completed jointly by local landowners and local government officials. Prospective petitioners should notify the department of their intent to apply, so they can receive announcements of workshops or webinars to help them prepare their petitions.

When AEAs designated this year take effect on Jan. 1, Wisconsin will have 31 AEAs totaling 1.1 million acres in 24 counties, 98 towns, and the Bad River Reservation. DATCP has the authority to designate up to 2 million acres for AEAs.

For more information, farmers and local government officials should call Alison Volk at 608-224-4634 or email DATCPWorkingLands@wisconsin.gov.

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