

May 26, 2011

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Agricultural Resources Management Division
WORKING LANDS
P.O. Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708-8911

Dear DATCP staff:

Enclosed please find the updated Jefferson County Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan for DATCP certification under Chapter 91 Wisconsin Statutes. You are also receiving for simultaneous consideration the zoning ordinance amendments necessary to implement the Plan.

Summary of Farmland Preservation Plan:

Our updated Plan builds from years of progressive farmland preservation planning in Jefferson County, borne in the 1970s and refined through the 1999 plan of the same name. The updated Plan focuses on Jefferson County's land use planning and zoning approach to farmland preservation. The Plan functions as the primary policy document setting forth directions for how Jefferson County intends to preserve agricultural production, farmland, environmental corridors, and rural character. The overarching objective is to contribute to the high quality of life and prosperity of the County as whole and the many local communities within it.

At the same time, the Plan serves as the land use element of the County's comprehensive plan, and is designed to accommodate compatible growth in planned locations, forms, and densities—particularly focused in places with sufficient infrastructure and physical characteristics to sustain development.

Compared to the 1999 certified Plan, there is slightly less land identified for long term farmland preservation, because lands that are planned for development within the next 15 years via other county and local plans are no longer shown within farmland preservation areas. These "15 Year Growth" areas are generally located adjacent to cities and villages and in and adjacent to other developed areas.

Key Changes from the 1999 Plan:

- **Amendments to farmland preservation maps to respond to post-1999 local comprehensive plans:** The County reviewed each city, village, and town comprehensive plan prepared since 1999, and attempted to reflect the future land use visions and growth projections reflected in such plans, particularly acknowledging what lands cities, villages, and towns identify as future growth areas.

- **Identification of 15 Year Growth Areas:** The County used land use demand projections included in local comprehensive plans coupled with future land use maps within those plans and extensive local knowledge to guide to what might develop in the next 15 years, per Chapter 91.
- **Inclusion of policies for Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEAs) and PACE:** The County has had a PACE program for a few years, which has recently been enhanced by the matching grant program under the State's Working Lands Initiative. Further, taking advantage of another opportunity under Working Lands, there has been an AEA created in the Palmyra area and we assume others are possible in the future.
- **Expanded policies/advice for Limited Service Areas and City or Village Areas shown on farmland preservation maps:** Both mapped areas were covered very briefly in the 1999 Plan. In general, Limited Service Areas areas in towns that are intended to accommodate existing and infill development on public sewer, but are usually not intended to expand significantly over time. The City or Village Areas section of the updated Plan includes policies for County implementation as well as recommendations for city or village consideration.
- **Treatment of older houses divided for farm consolidations:** The Plan lays out an approach for dividing farmstead buildings from the larger parcel of record. Existing farm consolidation lots will be considered "prior nonconforming uses" and remain in the A-1 zoning district, while future lots created as a result of farm consolidations will require rezoning to the A-3 zoning district.

Relationship between the Plan and County and Local Comprehensive Plans

The Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan is a component of the County's Comprehensive Plan, addressing the land use and agricultural resources elements (i.e., the remainder of the County's Comprehensive Plan does not include a separate set of "land use" maps). The "County Comprehensive Plan" is actually a collection of documents, rather than the typical 9-element plan under one cover. Other components of the County's Comprehensive Plan that include information and policies related to agricultural preservation include:

- Comprehensive Plan update with Economic Development Emphasis (2010)
- Jefferson County Wisconsin Economic Vision & Positioning Framework Initiative (2009)
- Jefferson County Farmland Preservation Report (2007)
- Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan Background Report (1999)

These plans are available for review at:

www.jeffersoncountywi.gov/jc/public/jchome.php?page_id=1719.

The updated County Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan also reflects local town, city, and village comprehensive plans. As part of this farmland preservation planning process, the County reviewed all adopted town, city, and village comprehensive plans within and affecting Jefferson County. The analysis focused in particular on future land use maps, land use demand projections, and land use policies affecting city and village growth areas outside of current city and village limits (i.e., long range urban service areas). The County analyzed this information as part of the effort to identify future development areas (15 Year Growth Areas) on the farmland preservation maps in the updated Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan.

Plan Development Process and Participation

The Plan development process is documented in an appendix of the updated Plan. The process to create the updated Plan was divided into two parts. Part A focused on refining the County's approach for farmland preservation, and included a public process to consider four different scenarios to refine the County's farmland preservation program. Part B resulted in the preparation, adoption, and certification of the Plan document, based on the preferred scenario and policy direction established in Part A. A general timeline is outlined below.

- Adopted public participation plan: April 20, 2010
- Development of 4 scenarios: May—June 2010
- Public input on policy scenarios: July 2010
- Preferred policy option selected: September 2, 2010
- Plan development: Fall 2010—Winter 2011
- Distributed draft Plan to towns: February 7, 2011
- Held draft Plan Open House and Towns Association Meeting: February 21, 2011
- County staff presentation of draft Plan and associated ordinance amendments at Jefferson County Towns Association Meeting: April 26, 2011
- Steering Committee recommendation on draft Plan: April 7, 2011
- Zoning and Planning Committee recommendation on draft Plan: April 18, 2011
- County Board action to submit Plan to DATCP for certification: May 10, 2011
- County Board adoption of Plan (including plan distribution, 30 day notice period, and public hearing): To be completed following DATCP certification

Unresolved Issues

The County is not aware of any unresolved issues between itself and other government units. The County took special effort to acknowledge and incorporate local plans, and involve local officials in the planning process.

Certified Farmland Preservation Zoning Ordinances in Jefferson County

- Jefferson County Zoning Ordinance: The County is submitting amendments to its zoning ordinance to DATCP for certification simultaneous with the updated Plan. The County intends to formally adopt both the Plan and zoning ordinance following certification.
- City of Lake Mills Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Zoning Ordinance: The City recently amended its zoning code. This process did not include any changes to the certified A-1 ETZ zoning district and there are no plans to amend it at this time.

Primary contact person

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Please contact me with any questions you have about the Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Klotz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rob" and last name "Klotz" clearly distinguishable.

Rob Klotz
Jefferson County Director of Planning and Zoning