

## Town of Nepeuskun—Winnebago County, Wisconsin

### FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWS

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As an owner of 10 or more acres in the Town of Nepeuskun, you are being contacted regarding the following Farmland Preservation meetings. The previous Farmland Preservation program is being replaced with a new program that has many new features.

### **What Landowners need to know...**

#### **What is the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative?**

The Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative was passed as part of the state's 2009-2011 biennial budget. The goal of this program is to protect Wisconsin's agriculture economy by providing tools to preserve land for current and future agriculture use. It does this by expanding and updating the state's existing farmland preservation program, establishing agriculture enterprise areas, and developing a purchase of agriculture conservation easement program.

#### ***What does this new program mean for landowners....***

The new law requires Winnebago County to update its county Farmland Preservation Plan by December 31, 2011. To do so, the county is cooperating with interested towns to identify *Farmland Preservation Areas (FPAs)* within towns that will be included in the new County Farmland Preservation Plan.

Most towns in Winnebago County have identified farmland as important to its rural character and economy, and have identified tools to aid in preserving this land for farming. *Farmland Preservation Areas* are a tool to support agribusiness and achieve land use vision and goals for the town and county. Towns that have *Farmland Preservation Areas* designated in their town, and a certified *Farmland Preservation Zoning Ordinance*, are enabling interested landowners to participate in the Farmland Preservation Program. Without *Farmland Preservation Areas*, landowners, even if they have participated in the past, will no longer be eligible to participate and receive tax credits. **If you want to benefit from the program in the future (i.e. be eligible for tax credits), regardless of whether you currently participate in the program or not, your parcels will need to be included in these *Farmland Preservation Areas* and be in a certified *Farmland Preservation Zoning District*.**

#### **How could I benefit from this program?**

What's in it for me? By having your land in a *Farmland Preservation Area*, you benefit by having some protection from encroachment by residential development and other development that is incompatible with farming. If you are also in a certified farmland preservation zoning district, you may be eligible to receive farmland preservation tax credits, and you are allowed to do limited residential development (dependent on local zoning codes).

#### **How do we find "new money" for increased incentives?**

Conversion fees are a mechanism that provides funds to local and state farmland preservation programs and provides an incentive to maintain land in farmland preservation. Between now and the adoption of the new certified plan and ordinance in 2011, if your land is zoned A-1 (which is currently the certified farmland preservation zone in Winnebago County), and you wish to rezone, then you will be required to pay a conversion fee. After the adoption of the new plan and ordinance, if your land is in a certified farmland preservation zoning district, then you will be required to pay conversion fees on any acres that you petition to be rezoned, regardless of whether you have ever collected farmland preservation tax credits. If you are not in a certified farmland preservation zoning district (e.g. A-2) there is no conversion fee to rezone, nor will you be eligible for the tax credit.

