

3                   **ESTABLISHING AN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AGENDA**  
4                   **FOR DANE COUNTY**

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6       Dane County is an agricultural leader in the State of Wisconsin, and derives a substantial  
7       economic, social and cultural benefit from its agricultural sector and related activities.  
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9       In April 2009, the Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources (EANR) Committee  
10      of the Dane County Board created a Sustainable Agriculture Subcommittee to develop  
11      recommendations designed to improve the county's economy, provide more and better  
12      resources for farmers, and address concerns identified from citizen input provided in  
13      Committee-sponsored public listening sessions in December 2008 and March 2009.  
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15      In addition to the Subcommittee, in order to carry out preliminary research and  
16      deliberation, the Committee also created four work groups: Beginning Farmers, Farmland  
17      Preservation/Conservation, Food Security/Urban Agriculture, and Profitability/Value-  
18      Added/Marketing, which received the following definition and charge:  
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20      Definition: *Sustainable agriculture integrates three main goals--environmental health,*  
21      *economic profitability, and social and economic equity.*  
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23      Charge: *To research, develop and submit a four-pronged action agenda on the*  
24      *promotion of sustainable agriculture in Dane County. The agenda will be put in*  
25      *resolution form and reviewed by the Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources*  
26      *Committee in late summer 2009, before submission to the Dane County Board for*  
27      *approval.*  
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29      *Recommendations will be developed by four work groups to be convened by four*  
30      *members of the subcommittee, and with an emphasis on the following criteria:*  
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- 32      ■ *Must demonstrate need, or ability to improve current conditions/situations*
- 33      ■ *Must be prioritized by level of practicality, and ease of implementation*
- 34      ■ *Must be suitable for development/implementation at the county level*
- 35      ■ *No more than four action items for possible inclusion in the 2010 Dane County*  
36      *budget and/or current County programs*

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38      While the process surpassed the timeline, the Sustainable Agriculture Subcommittee  
39      completed its work on January 25 and submitted its recommendations to the EANR  
40      Committee, which accepted them on February 16, 2010. The recommendations are:  
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42      **Education and Technical Assistance**  
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- 44      • Create a "one-stop shop" dedicated to improving capacity for education and  
45      assistance in many aspects of sustainable agriculture. This initiative would  
46      expand on existing county capacity in institutional marketing, farmland

- 47 protection, and other areas and build sufficient capacity to assist farmers and  
48 others undertake initiatives to meet the goals of  
49     ○ supporting beginning farmers;  
50     ○ protecting farmland and natural resources;  
51     ○ supporting initiatives that help farmers expand marketing and value-added  
52         opportunities; and  
53     ○ helping all consumers, regardless of income, gain access to high quality  
54         food, building on community gardens and other local food production  
55         strategies in the area
- 56     ● Increase staff to expand Dane County Extension's agricultural support  
57     ● Increase community access to broadband Internet services to help offer technical  
58         assistance to stakeholders  
59     ● Create a Web-based "portal" for education about all aspects of sustainable  
60         agriculture

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62 Cultivation of a New Agricultural Workforce

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- 64     ● Establish an agricultural incubation and demonstration farm in Dane County  
65     ● Target a portion of the County's existing Revolving Loan Fund for beginning  
66         farmers  
67     ● Encourage private landowners to lease property to beginning farmers  
68     ● Help beginning farmers gain better access to needed equipment  
69     ● Establish an urban agriculture/horticulture program for the Dane County Jail and  
70         Huber Center  
71     ● Clearly define "urban agriculture" and "community food security"

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73 Utilization of County-owned Lands

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- 75     ● Ensure that all County-owned lands have a conservation plan created and  
76         implemented for all uses of that land  
77     ● Develop a complete inventory of County-owned land that would be strong  
78         candidates for longer-term uses that support community agriculture and food  
79         security  
80     ● Set aside County-owned land for longer-term uses that support community  
81         agriculture and food security, and integrate this concept into the County Parks &  
82         Open Space Plan, as well as current planning for existing properties  
83     ● Give lease preferences to 1) beginning farmers and 2) community gardens and  
84         other community-based agriculture ventures on County land parcels of 10 or less  
85         tillable acres

87   **NOW BE IT RESOLVED** that the Dane County Board hereby endorses the work of the  
88   Sustainable Agriculture Subcommittee and adopts its recommendations as a partial but  
89   important guide to improving agriculture in Dane County, and

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91   **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that, once adopted, the Board directs the EANR  
92   Committee, Economic Development Committee, UW-Extension Committee, Agricultural  
93   Advisory Council, the Food Council and other relevant County units to proceed with  
94   actions to implement the recommendations, and

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96   **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Board hereby expresses its sincere appreciation  
97   to all the participants in the 18-month-long sustainable agriculture agenda-setting process  
98   – citizen members and County staff – for their contributions.

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100   Submitted by:

101	_____	_____
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103	(Primary sponsor)	
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