



# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS County of Dane

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## Sustainable Agriculture Resolution Comes to Dane County Board

MADISON – The Dane County Board will take final action on a resolution to support new initiatives for encouraging sustainable agriculture in the county on Thursday evening, April 1.

“This makes a clear statement that the County will prioritize agriculture and create new opportunities,” said Supervisor Pat Downing, who represents southwestern Dane County. “As times change, our efforts to support farming have to change, too.”

The Sustainable Agriculture Agenda for Dane County is the result of an 18-month process initiated by the County’s Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources (EANR) Committee in autumn of 2008. A Sustainable Agriculture subcommittee was appointed in the spring of 2009 to set priorities generated from months of meetings and deliberations by four work groups.

“Agriculture, especially with an increasing number of organic farms, is a vital part of our local economy,” said Supervisor Patrick Miles, who chairs the County’s Economic Development Committee. “This resolution underscores Dane County’s commitment to ensuring area farmers are among the most successful in the state.”

The subcommittee reviewed recommendations from public work groups on Beginning Farmers, Profitability, Farmland Preservation, and Urban Agriculture & Food Security in formulating its proposal for the Board. Those recommendations include establishment of an incubator farm for new entrepreneurs, and an inventory of county lands available for agricultural lease.

“Our community is full of good ideas, and people more and more interested in local food production,” Supervisor Denise Duranczyk of Stoughton. “The County can and should play a positive role in educating and equipping producers to compete in local and regional markets.”

After passage of the Sustainable Agriculture Agenda, the Board will look at implementation of specific recommendations during 2010 and beyond.

“These priorities are a first step,” said EANR Committee Chair and Supervisor Kyle Richmond, primary sponsor of the resolution. “Now we have to turn the suggestions into real actions that improve Dane County’s agricultural future.”

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