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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.
14

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.*
22

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.*
28

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
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