

Alachua County Agricultural Guidelines

The following are the guidelines for receiving the agricultural classification in Alachua County. It is important to note that these are guidelines; they are neither rules nor guarantees. Every application and use will be evaluated on its own merits and the following four requirements.

- ✓ Florida law requires that the operation be a good faith commercial agricultural operation.
- ✓ Your application must be accompanied by a written farm plan or lease.
- ✓ Your plan and a physical inspection of your property will be the basis for our decision to grant this classification.
- ✓ Tangible Personal Property return must be filed.

Agricultural Classification and Homestead Exemption:

The homestead exemption law restricts homestead eligibility to properties that are not commercial. The agricultural classification is restricted to properties that are commercial. Therefore, if you are granted an agricultural classification on property that you are homesteading, a portion of the property will not receive the agricultural classification as it will be set aside for the homestead exemption. The portion that is agricultural will not be protected by the "Save Our Homes" provisions of the law, since this is restricted to the homesteaded portion.

How Does Agricultural Classification Work?

Florida Statute 193.461 creates the agricultural classification, which provides for a "value in use" appraisal rather than a "market value" appraisal. Basically, this means the property will be valued based upon what the current use will generate as income, rather than what it could be sold for. A list of current values for the different uses of agricultural property in Alachua County is available.

What Can I Expect In The Future?

If the agricultural classification is approved, your property will be periodically inspected to assure that you are continuing the qualifying use of your property and that you are continuing to work the plan you originally submitted. If the use appears to have changed or ceased, we will send you a letter asking what you are doing to continue to qualify the property.

What Happens After My Initial Application Year?

Your application is automatically renewed each year by this office. You will receive either a renewal card or a form asking for additional information on your operation in early January.

Application must be made between January 1 and March 1.

2009

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While an agricultural operation must operate with the expectation of a profit, it does not have to be operated at a profit every year to be bona fide, but evidence of income which the property is producing and of the care given and procedure used in caring for the land is relevant. In other words, what management practices have been carried out on this land?

Factual Determinations to Consider

1. Has the operation been continuous?
2. Is there evidence that establishes a bona fide effort by the property owner to sufficiently and adequately care for the land in a commercial agricultural manner?
3. Has there been a true effort to have the property contribute to the agricultural economy of the county on either a short or long term basis, proportionate to the size of the property.
4. What portion of the property is being used for agriculture?
5. Has a "Tangible Personal Property" return been filed on all equipment that is involved in the farming operation by April 1 of each year?
6. Is the application(s) accompanied by a farm or forestry plan or written lease?
7. How do your practices and plan compare to reasonable, typical management practices for similar operations?

ALACHUA COUNTY GUIDELINES FOR AGRICULTURAL CLASSIFICATION

Pasture-Livestock (approximate) stocking rates

10 Cows	Breeding age females or equivalent animal units
30 Goats or Sheep	Breeding, females or equivalent animal units
3 Horses	Breeding, boarding and training
10 Hogs	Breeding age sows or equivalent animal units
Feed Lot	Individual basis

Field Crops

Row Crops	Peanuts, corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, cotton, etc.
Vegetable Crops	Squash, okra, tomatoes, peas, etc.
Hay	Commercial varieties, minimum of two cuttings, fertilized,

Timber

Planted Pines	Planting rate – 600 per acre
Natural Pine	Individual basis
Christmas Trees	Planting rate – 1100 per acre

Orchards and Groves

Example of spacing on all grove and specialty crops:

Grapes = 15' between plants and 10' between rows.

Pecans	60 x 60 spacing, approx. 12 trees per acre
Chestnuts	20 x 20 spacing, approx. 105 trees per acre
Persimmons	10 x 15 spacing, approx. 170 trees per acre
Apples, Peaches, 5Pears	15 x 20 spacing, approx. 140 trees per acre

Specialty Crops

Blueberries	6 x 12 spacing, approx. 600 bushes per acre
Blackberries	5 x 12 spacing, approx. 720 bushes per acre
Grapes	15 x 10 spacing, approx. 170 plants per acre
Strawberries	
Tree Farm	Planting rate – 300 to 1000, depending on species
Green House/Nursery	

Poultry, Ostrich, Emu, Rhea, Fish, Other

Note: All applications for timber require a forestry plan. Farm plans require a lease when applicable, along with other documentation depending on the intended commercial usage.

Agricultural information: (352) 374-5232

Tangible Personal Property: (352) 374-5234

Web Site: www.acpafll.org