

FLORIDA PLANNING TOOLBOX

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Agricultural Zoning

Agricultural zoning is a specialized form of zoning where the type and intensity of land use and land development are compatible and consistent with food and fiber production. Agricultural zones are typically adopted in areas interested in protecting, stabilizing, or preserving the agricultural land base and, at the same time, keeping individuals employed in the production of food and fiber crops. There are two general types of agricultural zoning: exclusive and nonexclusive. The more widely used and less restrictive is nonexclusive agricultural zoning, which recognizes agriculture production as the preferred use in certain areas but does not prohibit other land uses in the agriculturally zoned area. Nonexclusive agriculture zones typically allow non-farm uses of land if approved by a local zoning agency. Nonagricultural land uses must be compatible with agriculture production (for example, livestock feed stores, farm implement dealers, retail nurseries, and greenhouses), and limit population density by requiring large lot sizes for residential units (usually in the range of one dwelling unit per 20 acres or greater). The intent is that the larger lot sizes represent the minimum size land base needed for sustainable agriculture production. Exclusive agricultural zoning is more restrictive. Non-farm residences, non-agriculture activities, and retail businesses are usually prohibited. Allowable uses might be roadside farm sales from producing farms or nursery retail sales from producing nurseries within the agricultural zone. Other uses, which can be placed on lower quality land but which also provide services to the agricultural uses, may be allowed in exclusive agricultural zones. Examples of these uses include cemeteries, landfills, schools, churches, and animal hospitals.



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Martin County Agricultural Development Zone

The goal of Martin County's agricultural development future land use policies is to preserve areas with soils that are important for agricultural-related uses. Of the 250,974 acres outside the county's Primary Urban Services District (PUSD), the majority (210,552 acres) are in the agricultural designation. In this area, residential development is restricted to one single-family unit per gross 20-acre tract and no centralized water or sewer service is allowed. Farm-related uses, such as congregate housing for farmworkers, are permitted. To further protect the agricultural area, the land areas between it and the PUSD are designated for lower-density rural residential development (one unit per one acre or one unit per two acres) that does not require urban services (centralized water and sewer). *(More information on Martin County's agricultural zoning is available from Goal M of the county's comprehensive plan policies [www.martin.fl.us/].)*



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Sarasota County Agricultural Reserve (AR) Resource Management Area (RMA)

Sarasota County's AR limits nonagricultural land uses to those that directly relate to a permitted AR agricultural use. The purpose is to strengthen the agricultural economy and protect agricultural resources by permitting a range of small-scale agricultural production and farm-related businesses, such as road-side farm stands and agritourism. Supportive policies include the ability to transfer existing development rights (discussed later in this section) while preserving the agricultural production rights, and prohibiting the construction of major public infrastructure in the AR. The AR is defined in the Sarasota 2050 Plan, which operates as an incentive-based overlay and provides for a tiered approach that moves from urban west of the Interstate to the rural Agricultural Reserve in the eastern of part of the county. *(More information on the Sarasota 2050 Plan and the Agricultural Reserve RMA is available from*

*<http://scg.co.sarasota.fl.us> and A Guidebook to
New Urbanism in Florida 2005
(www.cnuflorida.org.)*

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