



## ***Purpose of Agricultural and Forestral District Program***

The Agricultural and Forestal District (“AFD”) Program was formed in 1979 under State enabling legislation.

The State Code of Virginia §§15.2-4300 through 15.2-4314, characterizes the purpose of an AFD as a means to “...conserve, protect and encourage the development and improvement of agricultural and forestal lands for the production of food and other agricultural and forestal products, and conserve and protect agricultural and forestal lands as valued natural and ecological resources which provide essential open spaces for clean air sheds, as well as for aesthetic purposes.

Loudoun County supports these goals and is committed to working with district land-owners to preserve the rural and agricultural integrity and character of the County.

## **Related Agricultural and Forestal District Programs and Services**

Department of Economic Development  
703-777-0426

[www.loudounfarms.org](http://www.loudounfarms.org) or  
[www.loudoun.gov/agdistricts](http://www.loudoun.gov/agdistricts)

- Assistance to Rural Business
- Emerging Rural Economy Enterprises
- Networking to Foster Rural Business
- Farm Viability Program
- Farmland For Lease Program
- Agricultural & Forestal District Program
- Farmers Markets
- Agriculture Products and Events Marketing

Cooperative Extension  
703-777-0373

[www.offices.ext.vt.edu/loudoun/](http://www.offices.ext.vt.edu/loudoun/)

- Agriculture & Horticulture Production Technical Information
- Pest Management Recommendations
- Crops and Livestock Budgets
- Soil Analysis and Fertilizer Recommendations
- Insect and Plant Identification

Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District  
571-918-4530

[www.loudounsoilandwater.org](http://www.loudounsoilandwater.org)

- Conservation Practices Cost-Share
- Conservation Farm Plans
- Grazing and Pasture Management
- Natural Resources Conservation Education

Commissioner of the Revenue’s Office  
Real Estate Assessment Division  
703-777-0260

[www.loudoun.gov/cor](http://www.loudoun.gov/cor)

- Use Value Taxation (Land Use)

Virginia Outdoors Foundation  
540-347-7727

[www.virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org](http://www.virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org)

- Conservation Easements

Virginia Department of Forestry  
540-347-6358

[www.dof.virginia.gov/index.htm](http://www.dof.virginia.gov/index.htm)

- Forestry Management Plans
- Timber Stand Improvement Programs
- Reforestation Programs

**LOUDOUN COUNTY**

## **AGRICULTURAL & FORESTAL DISTRICT PROGRAM**

*Conserve, Protect and  
Encourage Agricultural and  
Forestral Lands for Production  
of Food and Other Products*



**Loudoun County  
Department of Planning & Zoning**  
1 Harrison Street, SE—3rd Floor  
P.O. Box 7000  
Leesburg, VA 20177  
Phone: 703-777-0246  
Fax: 703-777-0441  
Email: [dpz@loudoun.gov](mailto:dpz@loudoun.gov)

## **Benefits of Being Part of the Agricultural & Forestal District Program**

First, belonging to an Agricultural District guarantees you will have land use value taxation, provided you meet the land use eligibility requirements, even if the County rescinds its land use program.

Second, being part of a the district safeguards the rural character of the community by preserving agricultural and forestal land. It helps to continue rural uses of the land by strengthening the community with common goals and concerns.

Besides these benefits, districts offer some protection from eminent domain. Acquisition of land for power lines, roadways and other infrastructure within a District is subject to a special public review process. Also the expenditure of public funds for non-farm related purposes in a District is subject to a special review process.

Finally, local governments may not enact laws within a district that would unreasonably restrict farm structures, farming, or forestry practices unless the restrictions are directly related to health, safety and welfare.

## **Frequently Asked Questions About the Agricultural District Program**

### **How do I join an AFD?**

Any interested landowner may obtain an application for the creation of or the addition to an AFD from the Department of Planning & Zoning by calling (703) 777-0246, by emailing [dpz@loudoun.gov](mailto:dpz@loudoun.gov) or online at <http://www.loudoun.gov/agdistricts>. Interim addition applications are accepted through June 1 of each calendar year.

### **Do I have to be in an AFD to farm my land, have livestock, etc.?**

No. The Zoning Ordinance governs the uses of your property. Enrollment in an AFD provides some additional right-to-farm protections beyond what the zoning may permit.

### **Does a landowner have to put all of his land into a District?**

A landowner may leave some of his property out of the district. The portion to be left out should be clearly marked on a map, prescribed by the locality (GIS map), clearly showing the boundaries of the property and which acreage is to be included in the District.

### **Does being in an AFD reduce my taxes?**

No. Loudoun County has a Land Use Assessment Program that provides for the deferral of real estate taxes on properties that qualify for agricultural, horticultural, forestry or open space uses. For information on the Land Use Assessment Program, please contact the Office of the County Assessor at 703-777-0267.

### **Can land be withdrawn from an AFD?**

Property owners may remove their land from an AFD as a matter of right at the time the District is being reviewed by the Board of Supervisors for renewal. Between renewal periods, landowners may apply to withdraw from District based on death of a landowner or "good and reasonable cause." An applicant must submit a written request to withdraw and a \$500 fee to the program administrator. The ADAC and PC review the withdrawn applications and make recommendations to the Board. The Board makes the final determination concerning early withdrawal. Please contact the program administrator for withdrawal inquiries at (703) 777-0246.

### **If I sell my property, do I need to advise the new owner that the property is in the District?**

Yes. The AFD program encumbers the land. Selling or transferring ownership does not remove the encumbrance. It is very important that the new owner understand they are bound to the same restrictions and will receive the same benefits of all property in the District. Many new buyers think they can subdivide and then learn they cannot due to restrictions imposed by inclusion in the District. They may incur expensive subdivision costs with no chance of completing the division until the District term expires.

### **Can land within an AFD be subdivided?**

Land in an AFD can be subdivided provided it meets the District's requirements. The ordinance for each AFD lists the term limit (date of enactment and date of review and renewal), the subdivision minimum size for parcels enrolled in the district and any other conditions applicable to parcels in the district. The subdivision minimum defines the minimum size of any parcel that may be created by boundary line adjustments of subdivision while enrolled in the AFD program. Please consider the term limits, subdivision requirements and other conditions carefully. If you are considering subdividing your land (through clustered development), or a boundary line adjustment that would result in a parcel below the subdivision minimum, you should consider making the adjustments prior to joining the District. Once in a District, those landowners seeking to subdivide or move a boundary line must adhere to the subdivision minimum listed for each District, or make an official request to withdraw from the District. Approval of a withdrawal during the middle of a term requires a \$500 fee and is not guaranteed.

**For more information or to obtain an application, please call (703) 777-0246, or email [dpz@loudoun.gov](mailto:dpz@loudoun.gov) or download an application online at <http://www.loudoun.gov/agdistricts>**