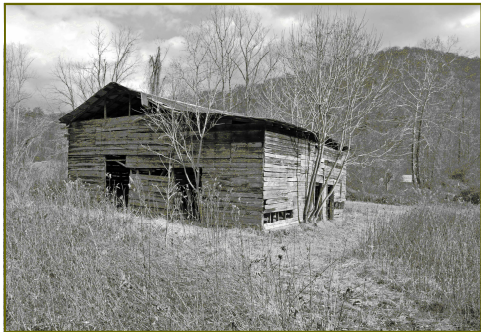


WHAT OTHER PROGRAMS ARE THERE TO ENCOURAGE PRESERVATION OF FARMLANDS?

The Farmland Preservation Ordinance has been revised to allow the County to hold permanent conservation easements on farms in the county. These easements are designed to protect rural lands, particularly in the vicinity of urban growth, near high priority waterways and other environmentally sensitive areas. This gives land-owners another option when faced with the pressures of development.

The County also recently adopted an Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Plan which contains information about farming enterprises in the County, and a list of items that the County can take to preserve farmland. A copy of the plan can be obtained from the Buncombe SWCD.



"What a country chooses to save is what a country chooses to say about itself."
Mollie Beattie

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

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Buncombe County Planning Department
46 Valley Street
Asheville, NC 28801
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N. C. Cooperative Extension Service
94 Coxe Avenue
Asheville, NC 28801
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BUNCOMBE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM



Voluntary Agricultural Districts



WHAT IS THE FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM?

The farmland preservation program was developed to encourage the voluntary preservation and protection of farmlands from non-farm development. This is in recognition of the importance of agriculture to the economic and social life of North Carolina.

The General Assembly of the State of North Carolina authorizes counties to undertake a series of programs to encourage the preservation of farmland in their communities. In November of 1989, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners adopted a **Farmland Preservation Ordinance**, tailored to meet the needs of Buncombe County, the first of its kind in the state. This ordinance provided for the creation of an Agricultural Advisory Board to administer this program. The Board acts as support for local farmers by reviewing and approving applications for qualifying farmland as well as establishing VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS.

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD?

The Board is composed of nine county residents, appointed by the County Commissioners. A minimum of five of the Board members must be actively engaged in farming. Those five are selected from candidates recommended by the Soil and Water Conservation District, the N. C. Cooperative Extension Service, and the Farm Services Agency committee. The names and telephone numbers for current Board members are listed on the back of this brochure.



WHAT IS CONSIDERED AN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT?

An agricultural district consists of at least 50 acres of qualifying farmland, individually or separately owned, which are located within one mile of each other. In order to be considered "qualifying farmland", the land must meet a short list of requirements. Almost all farms in the county meet those requirements. A complete list of requirements is available from the agencies listed on the back of this brochure.

Participating landowners will sign an agreement to sustain, encourage and promote agriculture. Maps designating participating farms, that form agricultural districts will be posted in the Register of Deeds office, Code Enforcement office, Land Records, Soil and Water Conservation District and Agricultural Extension.

WHAT ROLE DOES THE PRESENT-USE-VALUE PROGRAM PLAY?

To become a member of the Farmland Preservation program the landowner must first be participating in the **Present-Use Value Taxation Program**. This program enables the county tax department to consider the value of property based on the ability of the land to produce income in its current use as either agriculture, horticultural or forestland, rather than by market value. The primary qualifications for this taxation program are as follows:

- Individually owned agricultural land, consisting of at least ten (10) acres, that has produced an average annual income of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) over a three year period, or
- Individually owned horticultural land, consisting of at least five (5) acres, producing an average income of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per year, or
- Individually owned forestland consisting of at least 20 acres that are in actual production and not included in a farm unit. This land must be certified by the USDA - Natural Resource Conservation Service as appropriate for this Farmland Preservation Program.



WHAT WILL JOINING THE FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM DO FOR ME?

Members of the Farmland Preservation Program will have increased protection from nuisance suits and other negative impacts on their land. As part of the Program, public hearings will be required on proposed condemnation by state or local public agencies. Landowners in certified districts will not be required to connect to water and/or sewer systems nor to be assessed water and sewer charges until property is connected to such services.

WHAT RESTRICTIONS WILL BE PLACED ON MY LAND IF I JOIN THE PROGRAM?

The Farmland Preservation Program members are responsible to abide by a conservation agreement between the County and the landowner that prohibits non-farm use or development of that land for a period of at least 10 years. The conservation agreement, however, will allow the development of up to three lots on the participating farms included in a District.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I WANT TO REMOVE ALL OR PART OF MY LAND FROM THE PROGRAM?

This is a VOLUNTARY program. Therefore, a landowner may remove all or a portion of his/her land from the Program by giving written notice to the Agricultural Advisory Board. If a portion of the land is removed from the program, the remaining land must meet the program conditions and qualification for the farm to continue in the program.