A Voluntary Agricultural District is a program to encourage the voluntary preservation of farmland from non-farm development.

What are the benefits?

**Recognition and public education about agriculture**
Members of the program have farmland preservation district signage to post identifying their farm as a member of the district. This indicates to neighbors and passersby that your land is committed to the preservation of the agricultural way of life.

**Increased protection from nuisance suits**
Notice on the property signaling district membership and a notice on the County GIS system making those within a 1/2 mile of the district aware of the potential for noise, odor, dust or slow moving farm vehicles associated with farming.

**Eligibility for Funding**
District members may be eligible for farmland preservation funds, local, state or federal.

**Public hearings required for proposed condemnation**
Public hearing held by Agricultural Advisory Board if the land in an Agricultural District is considered for public project that may condemn land.

**County-wide economic benefit**
There is a net gain of revenue for the tax base for Agricultural land because working land brings in more money than it requires in county services.

**Quality of Life**
Protecting Agricultural Lands protects open space, scenic views, clean water, wildlife, locally grown food, natural resources and rural heritage.

**Waiver of water and sewer assessments**
Landowners within Agricultural Districts who are not connected to water or sewer operated by county can have these assessments waived.
Additional Benefits for Enhanced Voluntary Ag District

- Eligible to receive higher percentage of Cost-share Funds (90 percent) under the Buncombe soil and Water Conservation District’s Agricultural Cost-share Program.

- May receive up to 25% of its gross sales from the sale of nonfarm products and still qualify as a bona fide farm that is exempt from zoning regulations under G.S. 153A-340(b).

Interested in joining VAD or EVAD?

Contact Ariel Zijp
Buncombe Soil and Water Conservation District
Farmland Preservation Coordinator
Ariel.zijp@buncombecounty.org or 828-250-4794
or use the QR code to visit our website.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELIGIBILITY</th>
<th>VAD</th>
<th>EVAD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm participating in Agriculture, Horticulture or Forestry use in the Present-Use-Value taxation program G.S. 105-277.2 - 105-277.7 or be actively engaged in Agriculture as defined in NC G.S. 106-581.1.</td>
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<td>Farm managed in accordance with USDA erosion control practices that address Highly Erodible Land (HEL).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farm is subject to a conservation agreement between county and owner that prohibits non-farm development for a period of 10 years.</td>
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<td>Agreement may be revoked by written notice sent to the County.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agreement may be not be revoked during the period of 10 years. A conservation deed is recorded at the register of Deeds protecting the property for 10 years.</td>
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