

Your Agricultural Land is a Valuable Asset to the Citizens of Forsyth County.

Citizens of Forsyth County derive many benefits from your farmland: clean water and air, plant and animal habitat, fresh fruits, vegetables, meat and dairy products, horticultural products, and scenic rural vistas. Now you can enroll in a program that demonstrates your pride and commitment to agriculture and celebrates your contribution to the exceptional quality of life in Forsyth County.

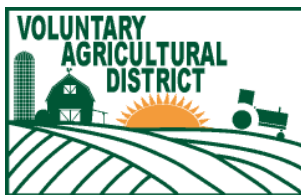
Voluntary Agricultural Districts Promote the Pride and Tradition of Forsyth County Agriculture.

Forsyth County's Voluntary Agricultural District Program enhances the identity of the agricultural community by encouraging the voluntary preservation and protection of farmland from non-farm development.

Benefits of Becoming a Voluntary Agricultural District.

Recognition.

The County will place signs (see below) to identify the areas included within the Forsyth County Voluntary Agricultural Districts. These signs will indicate to passersby that you, the farm owner, are committed to the preservation of the agricultural way of life in Forsyth County.



Increased Protection from Nuisance Suits.

Persons buying land in rural areas will do so with the knowledge that a bona fide agricultural operation exists nearby. Agricultural Districts will be identified on County maps, which shall be displayed for public view in County offices including the Planning Department and the Register of Deeds.

Deferment of Water and Sewer Assessments.

Landowners within Agricultural Districts will not be required to connect to water or sewer systems owned and/or operated by the City/County Utilities Commission, nor will they be assessed water and sewer charges until their property is connected to such service.

Eligibility for Preservation Funds.

Agricultural Districts may be eligible for farmland preservation grants, should funding become available from local, state, or federal sources.

Participation in Agricultural Tourism.

Landowners in a Voluntary Agricultural District may be eligible for the Agricultural Tourism use classification as outlined in the Unified Development Ordinance. Examples of activities allowed under Agricultural Tourism include outdoor special events such as weddings; bed and breakfasts; and limited restaurant and retail uses. These uses would be allowable without a change in zoning. For more information, contact the City/County Inspections Division.

Qualifying Measures to Become a Voluntary Agricultural District.

To become an Agricultural District, a farm must first be certified as Qualifying Farmland. To secure certification, a farm must:

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- Be certified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as being a farm on which:
 - At least 2/3 of the land is composed of soils that best suited for agricultural purposes; or
 - At least 2/3 of the land has been actively used in agricultural, horticultural, or forestry operations during each of the last five years.
- Consist of at least 5 acres of horticultural land, 10 acres of farmland, or 20 acres of forestland.
- Be managed, if highly erodible land exists on the farm, in accordance with the Natural Resources Conservation Service defined erosion control practices that are utilized to treat highly erodible land.

Agricultural District Membership Requires a Voluntary, Non-Binding Conservation Agreement.

A Voluntary Agricultural District member will be subject to a **non-binding** conservation agreement between Forsyth County and the landowner that prohibits non-farm use or development of such land for a period of at least 10 years, except for the creation of not more than three lots that meet applicable county zoning and subdivision regulations. You may revoke the agreement at any time with a 30 day written notice to the Agricultural Advisory Board.