



Purpose of Agricultural and Forestral District Program

The Agricultural and Forestal District ("AFD") Program was formed in 1977 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, watershed protection, wildlife habitat as well as for aesthetic and other environmental purposes."

Louisa 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 Community Development

540-967-3430

www.louisacounty.com/189/Community-Development

Cooperative Extension

540-967-3422

www.louisa.ext.vt.edu

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

**Thomas Jefferson Soil and
Water Conservation District**

540-967-3422

www.tjswcd.org

- Conservation Practices Cost-Share
- Conservation Farm Plans
- Grazing and Pasture Management
- Conservation Easements

Commissioner of the Revenue Office

540-967-3432

<https://www.louisacounty.com/160/Commissionerof-theRevenue>

- Use Value Taxation (Land Use)

Virginia Outdoors Foundation

540-347-7727

www.virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org

- Conservation Easements

Virginia Department of Forestry

540-347-6358

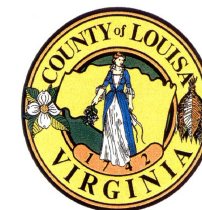
www.dof.virginia.gov/index.htm

- Forestry Management Technical Information and Forest Management Plans
- Reforestation Programs
- Conservation Easements

LOUISA COUNTY

AGRICULTURAL & FORESTAL DISTRICT PROGRAM

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



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Development
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Phone: 540-967-3430
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Benefits of Being Part of the Agricultural & Forestal District Program

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

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

Additionally, 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. The expenditure of public funds for non-farm related purposes in a district is also 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.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) **About the Agricultural & Forestal District Program**

What is an Agricultural and Forestal District?

It's a way people involved in agriculture or forestry can protect their land from future development. Members of a district agree to not develop their lands for a fixed period, subject to renewal.

What are the benefits of being part of an Agricultural and Forestal District?

- Guarantee that you can keep your land in agriculture or forestry; and
- Protect yourself against new laws that may unreasonably restrict your ability to farm or normal forestry practices, unless those laws are directly related to health; and
- Provide some protection against eminent domain.

How much land do I need to establish an Agricultural and Forestal District?

Each district must have a core of at least 200 acres. This could be one parcel of land, or several parcels that connect to each other. Once the core is established, parcels of an size can join the district, provided that:

- they're within 1 mile of the core; or
- they're connected to a parcel that is already part of the district; or
- they're considered to be "agriculturally or forestry significant".

Do I have to put all my land into an Agricultural and Forestal District?

No. You can just put in a portion.

Are there any tax benefits to being in an Agricultural and Forestal District?

Not at this time. Louisa County has a Land Use Assessment Program where land is valued for tax purposes on its use, rather than its market value. Agricultural, horticultural, forestal and open space lands in the county already enjoy a reduced tax valuation because of this. Should the county ever decide to end the program, though, property in the districts would still be guaranteed this lower tax valuation, if the requirements for such use-value assessment are satisfied.

Once I put my land in an Agricultural and Forestal District, is it in the district forever?

When an Agricultural and Forestal District is created, it's set up for a fixed period. At the end of this time, any landowner who wants to can remove their land from the district. If you want to remove your land from the district before this period ends, you can apply to the county to do so. Removal isn't guaranteed.

Can I develop my land once it's in an Agricultural and Forestal District?

You can subdivide and develop your land to:

- Provide for more intensive agricultural or forestal production; or
- a family subdivision of the land; or
- to provide dwellings for the immediate family of the property owner, or anyone who earns a substantial part of their income from the agricultural or forestal operation.
- **You cannot subdivide then sell your land to someone who is not a family member.**
- Other types of development and subdividing are not allowed.

For more information, or to obtain an application to create or add to an existing AF District, please call (540) 967-3430 or www.louisacounty.com