

Agricultural and Forestal Districts - FAQ

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 the 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.

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

Not right now. 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 value because of this. Should the county ever decide to end the program, though, property in the districts would still be guaranteed this lower tax value, so long as they continue to meet the requirements for land use valuation.

If I put my land into an Agricultural and Forestal District, do I still need to complete land use paperwork annually or biannually?

Yes. See our [Land Use webpage](#) for more information.

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 any 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 forestally significant".

What makes land "agriculturally or forestally significant"?

Land is considered agriculturally or forestally significant if:

- it has been used for agriculture or forestry;
- is still suitable for agriculture or forestry; or
- if factors such as soil quality, topography, markets, farm structures, etc. make it appropriate to retain for agriculture or forestry.

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 fixed period. This is usually 10 years, although it can be less. 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 or subdivision of the land isn't allowed.

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

No. You can just put in a portion.

How much does it cost to join an Agricultural and Forestal District?

Louisa County has waived all fees relating to Agricultural and Forestal Districts.

OK, I'm in. How do I join?

[Download the application](#), or contact Louisa County's Department of Community Development at 540.967.3430

For more information

- [Louisa County Municipal Code §§ 86-497 through 86-501](#)
- [Virginia Code §§ 15.2-4300 through 15.2-4314](#)