

Agricultural Classification – Property Access and Inspection Authorization Requirement

Our records indicate either an original application for agricultural classification is on file or an existing agricultural classification status of the above-referenced property is up for annual renewal. In order for the Property Appraiser’s Office to offer an initial grant or reassessing the existing agricultural classification, physical evidence supporting the desired classification must be, obtained for purposes of confirming the bona fide commercial agricultural use. This process will require periodic site inspections of the subject property.

I understand that failure to grant the Property Appraiser’s representative reasonable access may result in the denial or non-renewal of the agricultural classification. If bees are pollinating other locations, a pollination schedule, pollination contracts and/or business plan confirming this use, should be submitted to the Property Appraiser’s Office. You are encouraged to keep the Property Appraiser’s Office apprised of any changes in previously submitted documents should any such changes subsequently occur.

If access restrictions or hazardous conditions exist on your property, please provide a brief explanation and a contact phone number. Restrictions include, but are not limited to the following: ongoing construction, a locked gate, perimeter fencing, a “No Trespassing” sign, “Keep Out” sign, “Beware of Dog” sign, electric fence, aggressive animals, and/or periodic application of herbicides, pesticides, fertilizer or waste products.

Explanation of Restriction/Hazard	Contact Information/Phone Number of Signee Listed Below
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I understand that the Property Appraiser’s Office requires periodic site inspections for purposes of confirming bona fide commercial agricultural use and that by executing this document I am agreeing hereby to such inspections. I understand that failure to allow the Property Appraiser’s representative reasonable access to the subject property may result in the denial or non-renewal of the agricultural classification.

 Print Name

 Signature

Please sign and return this authorization form. If you have previously completed a property access and inspection authorization form in connection with this specific parcel and that remains in effect, you may disregard this correspondence.

Key West
 County Courthouse
 500 Whitehead St.
 (305) 292-3420
 (305) 292-3431 (Fax)

Marathon
 Marathon Government Center
 2798 Overseas Hwy, Ste. 310
 (305) 289-2550
 (305) 289-2555 (Fax)

Plantation Key
 Plantation Government Center
 88700 Overseas Hwy.
 (305) 852-7130
 (305) 852-7131 (Fax)

AGRICULTURAL CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES

GENERAL INFORMATION

January 1st is the statutory assessment date. Therefore, the property must be in use on this date. The applicant must complete each classification's agricultural application by March 1st. Once received, with all support documentation provided, and an on-site review of the property has occurred, then and only then will a formal decision shall be made. Verbal communications are not a final determination. The intent of the applicant is not a consideration. The Monroe County Property Appraiser's office will inspect the property, as identified by the applicant in the application for an agricultural classification, before the final determination. The Monroe County Property Appraiser's office reserves the right to request additional information from the property owner to determine eligibility. If the application is denied, the applicant will be mailed a certified Notice of Denial by July 1st. Please refer to Statute 193.461 for more information.

At various times during the year, it will be necessary for the Property Appraiser's office to access the property and review the parcel to ensure a bona fide use. Refusal to allow for inspections may result in denying the application/classification. Properties deemed neglected, abandoned, or no longer used for commercial agriculture will result in a denial of the classified use, regardless of a lease. Excessive mortality rates may fall under the category of neglect. The property owner's responsibility, not the lessee, is to ensure requirements comply and notify us of any changes. Owners of multiple properties must qualify each property on its own merits.

The Monroe County Property Appraiser's office understands that considerable costs may be associated with a commercial agricultural endeavor. Obtaining an agricultural classification may not alleviate existing code violations on a given property. While "agricultural buildings and structures" may be exempt from code, alterations can still require permits. Check with the Building and Zoning Department before you alter a structure. Agricultural buildings no longer used as such may be subject to building codes.

Livestock, Citrus, Row Crops, and Nurseries

Under Florida Statute 380.0552, the Florida Keys are protected and designated as an area of critical state concern. The legislative intent is to protect the natural resources and environment as provided in s. 7, Art—II of the State Constitution. In adherence with this statute, the Monroe County Property Appraiser is committed to protecting nearshore water quality while optimizing and protecting our limited natural resources. Additionally, the Monroe County Property Appraiser's office is concerned with protecting our state's agricultural resources. Balance must be obtained, and the Monroe County Property Appraiser's office must balance the two with equal concern. Fecal matter runoff from livestock threatens to undermine the water quality of nearshore waters, and excessive irrigation is a concern since the Keys do not have the benefit of independent irrigation sources (freshwater wells) as afforded to other areas of the state.

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The Monroe County Property Appraiser office will consider the legislative intent of our inclusion (Monroe County/The Florida Keys) in Florida Statute 380 regarding protecting our sensitive environment and natural resources. Due to the above, grazing livestock and liberal watering demands to sustain certain crops and vegetation stand as concerns.

If livestock is an intended use, then appropriate documentation as to the disposal of fecal matter and proper methods to prevent runoff of fecal matter into nearby waters needs to be provided with the agricultural application.

The citizens and municipalities of the Florida Keys have applied and invested substantial resources in reversing the effects of contamination in our local waterways. The Monroe County Property Appraiser's office will consider efforts by the applicant to conserve our limited natural resources; all row crops, citrus lands, nurseries, and other uses involving any vegetation will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

A minimum of ten acres per parcel is required for livestock.

ROW CROPS

1. Typically, five acres or used in conjunction with other properties.
2. "Row Crops" refers to certain agricultural products called vegetables.
3. Production of crops for personal use does not qualify, i.e., garden.
4. If the property is leased, the lease must be effective as of January 1st. Please provide a copy of the lease and contact information for all parties.

NURSERY

1. Typically, 1-acre minimum. Nurseries should have a state agricultural certificate and occupational license. Sales should be on a wholesale level.
2. Only the areas used for the nursery and service areas shall receive the agricultural classification. Types of nurseries include in-ground (Ornamental), Above Ground (In Pots), and Tree Nursery (Christmas Trees*) *State agricultural certificate is not required for this type.

CITRUS LANDS

1. Typically, 1 acre minimum and 100 trees per acre. Land must be planted by January 1st unless the land is ready for planting and proof of securing trees is provided.
2. Proper care and management of the grove must be evident. Please state the variety.

CUT FOLIAGE, FERN, AND FLOWERS

1. 1-acre minimum and must be on a wholesale basis.
2. Proper care and management must be practiced.
3. If the property is leased, the lease must be effective as of January 1st. Please provide a copy of the lease with contact information for all parties.

MISCELLANEOUS AGRICULTURE – SPECIALTY CROPS

1. Poultry, blueberries, peaches, pecans, aquaculture, etc., are handled case-by-case.
2. Production for personal use does not qualify. Sales are required.

APIARIES

1. Certificate of Apiary Registration in effect as of the statutory assessment date (January 1st). The State of Florida requires a minimum of 100 registered hives to be considered a commercial beekeeper.
2. If honey sales, provide copies of honey sales receipts.
3. If honey production, provide documentary proof of beekeeper access to honey extraction equipment.
4. provide copies of queen or bee sale receipts if bee breeding.
5. the farming lease agreement between the property owner and commercial beekeeper shall be provided when leasing property. The agreement shall be in effect as of the statutory assessment date. It should include the property owner's and beekeeper's name, contact information, lease terms, parcel identification number, leased acreage, number of colonies, lease start date, lease term, lease renewal policy, and exchange in value (compensation).
6. Commercial beekeeping must be the property's primary use for a significant portion of the year, with a minimum of 100 hives per parcel.
7. Wild-growing vegetation not commercially planted will not be included as forage areas.

POULTRY

Free-range chickens do not qualify as bona fide commercial agriculture. Chicken coops are generally too small by themselves to measure out for agricultural classification or primary use of the land. Requirements for commercial poultry and egg farms can be found in Florida Administrative Code Chapters 5K-4, 5K-5, and 5K-6 and Florida Statute Chapter 583.