



## **Agricultural Land Classification**

The State of Colorado has an Agricultural Land Classification designed to help legitimate farmers and ranchers continue agricultural operations on their land. When an agricultural property is purchased, the new owners must continue using the land in an agricultural endeavor in order to keep the agricultural classification. Properties that are not currently classified as agricultural can qualify using the process outlined below.

The land must be used for farming or ranching three continuous years in order to establish agricultural classification. Please be advised zoning is not a determinant. The classification for tax purposes is based on actual use. Once established, the land must be used each year, without interruption, for farming or ranching. If the agricultural classification is removed, it will take three years to re-qualify. The property will be subject to inspections to verify the agricultural use.

For assessment classification purposes ranching is defined as land used for grazing livestock for the primary purpose of obtaining a monetary profit. Farming is defined as land used to produce agricultural products for the primary purpose of obtaining a monetary profit.

If used for ranching, qualifying livestock must graze the majority of the property, with occasional supplemental feeding. Qualifying livestock are defined as domestic animals used as food for human or animal consumption, breeding, draft, or profit. This may include cattle, sheep, goats, llamas, alpacas, yaks, buffalo, and breeding equine. The grazing and boarding of pleasure horses does not qualify as ranching use.

The property owner may lease his land to another party for farming or ranching. A written lease should be provided the Assessor's Office stating the terms of the lease and include signatures of both parties. It is the property owner's responsibility to provide supporting documentation to the Assessor's Office and insure the land is being used properly and responsibly.

**Note:** Whoever leases the property must meet the requirements outlined above in order for the parcel to qualify for agricultural classification.

To initiate the three-year qualification procedure, download, complete and return the Request to Qualify/Requalify Letter and the Agricultural Land Questionnaire. Please include supporting documentation of the agricultural endeavor. Supporting documents are listed on the Questionnaire. The staff from the Assessor's Office will conduct ongoing inspections to determine actual use. If all qualifications have been met, the property will be reclassified as agricultural in the third year.

**(Cont.)**

**Forms to Initiate Qualification for Agricultural Classification**

Request to Qualify/Requalify Letter

Agricultural Land Questionnaire

\*\*If the parcel contains a residence, the owner must complete the “Integral Use Activity” Check List and return with documentation listed above.

Other classifications for agricultural parcels are outlined below.

**Forest Ag Classification**

Authorized by House Bill 1229, certain forest lands are allowed similar tax valuation as that of traditional agricultural lands. Participants manage their forest lands to produce wood products to sell. Landowners not interested in harvesting wood products are not eligible for this program. Landowners must own at least 40 forested acres and contact the local Colorado State Forest Service to participate in the program. In Elbert County contact the Franktown Office at (303) 660-9625

**Conservation Reserve Program**

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a land conservation program administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.

Contact the Farm Service Agency in Simla (719) 541-2266 or Colorado Springs (719) 632-9598

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CONTACT THE ELBERT COUNTY ASSESSOR’S OFFICE

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