
Why Have Agricultural Districts?

The State of North Carolina passed the Farmland Preservation Enabling Act in 1985, authorizing counties to establish farmland preservation programs, including agricultural districts. In 2000, Guilford County adopted a Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program Ordinance, creating the Agricultural Districts Advisory Board (ADAB) and procedures for establishing Voluntary Agricultural Districts. The purpose of the ordinance is to promote the preservation of farmland in Guilford County so that development and growth will be accompanied by protection of farms from non-farm development and other negative impacts on properly managed farms, recognizing the importance of agriculture to the economic and cultural life of the county.

What is the Agricultural Districts Advisory Board?

The Agricultural Districts Advisory Board is composed of a number of County residents, which includes farmers representing newly-formed Agricultural Districts. ADAB members are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. The ADAB reviews and approves applications to the Agricultural Districts program. They also advise the Board of County Commissioners on projects, programs, or issues affecting the agricultural economy or way of life within the county.

About the Agricultural Districts Advisory Board.

The Agricultural Districts Advisory Board supports voluntary measures and incentives that will lead to the continued and future viability of farming, as well as farmland preservation in Guilford County. The goals of rural preservation, which encompass the conservation of prime farmland, the scenic vistas of the agricultural landscape, the family farm tradition, and the economic viability of agriculture in Guilford County, would be served by keeping farming a viable enterprise.

***FOR MORE INFORMATION
PLEASE CONTACT:***

County Extension Director
NC Cooperative Extension Service
3309 Burlington Rd.
Greensboro, NC 27405
Tel: (336) 375-5876

District Secretary
Guilford Soil & Water Conservation District
3309 Burlington Rd.
Greensboro, NC 27405
Tel: (336) 375-5401 Ext. 3

***Voluntary
Agricultural
Districts***



***Guilford County,
North Carolina***



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

Citizens of Guilford 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 Guilford County.

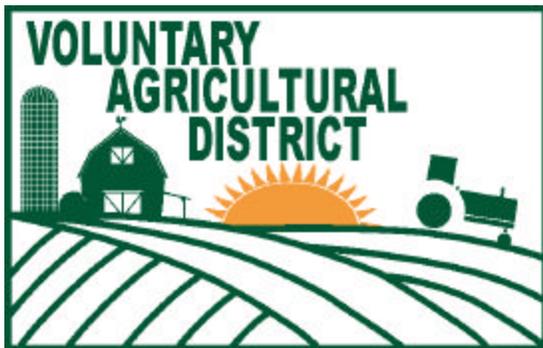
Voluntary Agricultural Districts Promote the Pride and Tradition of Guilford County Agriculture

Guilford 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.

How Your Farm Can Benefit From Becoming a Voluntary Agricultural District

Recognition.

The County will place signs (see below) to identify your farm as a Guilford County Voluntary Agricultural District. These signs will tell passersby that you, the farm owner, are committed to the preservation of the agricultural way of life in Guilford 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. Agricultural Districts will be identified on County maps, which shall be displayed for public view in County offices including offices of the Planning Department and the Register of Deeds.

Waiver 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 Guilford County, 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.

How Your Farm Can 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:

- ◆ Be participating in the farm Present Use Value Taxation program or is otherwise determined by the Guilford County Tax Department to meet all the qualifications of this program set forth in G.S. 105-277.3.
- ◆ Be certified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as being a farm on which:

-at least two-thirds of the land is composed of soils that are best suited for agricultural purposes; or

-at least two-thirds of the land has been actively used in agricultural, horticultural, or forestry operations during each of the last five years.

- ◆ Be managed, if highly erodible land exists on the farm, in accordance with the Natural Resources Conservation Service defined erosion control practices that are addressed to highly erodible land.
- ◆ Be the subject of an agreement between the county and the owner of the land.

An Agricultural district must consist of at least 20 contiguous acres of qualified farmland or two or more tracts of qualifying farmland that contain a minimum total of 20 acres and are located within one-half mile of each other.

Contact one of the agencies listed in this brochure for more information on qualifying as a Voluntary Agricultural District.

Agricultural District Membership Requires a Voluntary, Non-Binding Agreement

A Voluntary Agricultural District member will be subject to a **non-binding** agreement between the 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.

Membership may be Revoked at any Time by Member

Should you decide to sell your land you may revoke the agreement at any time through a written notice to the County.