

# Keeping Farm Animals in the Rural Residential District

This handout addresses some common questions regarding the keeping of farm animals within the Rural Residential Zoning District in the City of Columbus. This informational handout should only serve as only a general summary of the City of Columbus Code. To find out more information please refer to City Code Chapter 7A-804 "General Provisions for the Rural Residential District and Public Utility and Public Service Facility Standards".

## ARE FARM ANIMALS ALLOWED IN THE RURAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT?

Yes, the City Code states that customary farm animals may be housed in the RR District, subject to Minnesota Law and the provisions listed in Section 7A-804 (H.)

## WHAT IS CONSIDERED A FARM ANIMAL?

The City of Columbus Code defines "Farm Animal" as any species of animal commonly associated with a farm or performing work in an agricultural setting. Such animals can include:

- Equestrian family (horses, mules)
- Bovine family (cow, bulls)
- Sheep
- Poultry (chickens, turkeys)
- Fowl (ducks, geese)
- Swine (including Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs)
- Goats
- llamas
- Ostriches
- Emus
- Burros and Donkeys
- Bees
- Other animals associated with a farm, ranch, or stable.

## WHERE CAN ANIMAL STRUCTURES BE BUILT?

A permanent wood structure or pre-manufactured farm animal structures are required for the safe keeping of all farm animals. Structures must be compatible with standards recommended by the University of Minnesota Extensions Service.

The standard setbacks are as follows:

- 100 ft from abutting property residence.
- 75 ft from the side and rear yard.
- Not allowed in the Front Yard of any property.

## SANITATION

Animal structures and outdoor runs shall be cleaned of manure and feed residue as needed. Manure and feed residue shall be disposed of or composted in a manner that does not result in odors or unsanitary conditions impacting neighboring properties.

## ANIMAL FEEDING AND WATER

Animal feed shall be kept in secure containers to prevent attraction to rodents or other vermin. Animals shall have daily access to water.



**WHAT IS FARM ANIMAL DENSITY?**

The City defines density as the number of Animal Units Per Habitable Acres. There are 3 things to consider with density- Type of Animal, Habitable Acreage, and what an Animal Unit is.

1. Type of Animal:
  - a. Hooved: are limited to horses, cows, swine, sheep, goats, and other non-bird or furbearing animals.
  - b. Non-Hooved: Poultry, Roosters, Fowl, Farm-Birds, Rabbits, and Other Furbearing Animals.
2. Habitable Acres: An area is considered habitable if it is fenced as required to restrain the animal, adequately drains so that it is not flooded, accessible to the animal at all times of the year, and does not include the primary and alternate septic areas, the animal structure, or other structures.
3. Animal Units (A.U.): A typical Animal Unit is based off a 1,000 lb. Cow. The number will vary from animal to animal.

**DENSITY STANDARDS**

**(Animal Unit per Habitable Acres)**

1. Hooved Animals (Cows, Horses, Swine, ect):
  - 1 A.U. per 0.5 Habitable Acres.
2. Non-Hooved Animals:
  - Poultry, Fowl, Farm-birds, Rabbits, and other Furbearing Animals = 16 Animals per 1 Habitable Acre.
  - Roosters shall only be permitted on lots of 5 acres or more.
3. The maximum number of Animal Units per Acre applies to animals over the age of 3 months.


**OTHER ANIMAL RELATED REGULATIONS AND ORDINANCES**

1. Feed Lots: Feed lots with ten (10) or more animal units and the raising of hogs or swine are not allowed on parcels less than twenty (20) acres.
2. Dog Kennels: Subject to provisions in §7A-809.
3. Slaughtering of animals, except for personal consumption, is prohibited.
4. The sale of farm animals, eggs, meat, or other animal products shall be compliant with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Dairy and Food Inspection Requirements.

**WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?**

You can visit the Columbus City Ordinances, Chapter 7A found on the City of Columbus website. If you have any additional questions, please contact the Planning and Zoning Permit Tech at (651)419-9007, or email your questions to [pzpermittech@ci.columbus.mn.us](mailto:pzpermittech@ci.columbus.mn.us).

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Animal Units (A.U.)	
1 Mature dairy cow	1.4
1 Slaughter steer/heifer	1.0
1 Horse	1.0
1 Swine weighing <i>over</i> 55 lbs	0.4
1 Swine weighing <i>under</i> 55 lbs	0.05
1 Duck	0.2
1 Sheep	0.1
1 Turkey	0.018
1 Chicken	0.01

For other animals, the A.U. is the average weight of the type of animal divided by 1,000 lbs.