

DRAFT

"Prepare a brochure targeted to the general public that outlines programs and incentives available for the preservation of local farmland."

❖ *Agriculture in Clallam County (adapted from the Comp Plan and Zoning Code)*

Agriculture in Clallam County has played a vital role in the heritage, culture, and economy of the area. The County's temperate climate, good soils, and irrigation system provide a strong basis for commercial agriculture. Clallam County was once a major producer of a wide variety of agricultural products such as milk and butter, potatoes, apples, and vegetables. Clallam County can no longer compete in most of these markets. For farmers to succeed here they need to be innovative and entrepreneurial and to find markets that are not satisfied by the industrial agricultural and food industry.

Products such as organic baby salad greens, gourmet lavender barbecue sauce, or farmstead gouda cheese are the high-value, niche products that many small farmers are turning to in order to make a profit. This will require enhanced capacity to perform local processing and increased efforts to effectively brand and market Clallam County farm products. These and other new agricultural opportunities can continue and expand in the County if supported by local land use policies and regulations that allow farm entrepreneurs to explore and exploit these types of farming niches. There are a few large, commercial farms left in Clallam County that have adapted to changing economic conditions, but the future of agriculture in Clallam County will largely be determined by operators who produce high-value, unique products and agricultural services on relatively small farms.

Benefits provided to Clallam County citizens by farms and farmland include:

- Improved food security, selection, and quality through diversified local production geared to local markets;
- Preservation of the rural character, local culture, and quality of life;
- Creation and maintenance of a visually pleasing landscape;
- Preservation of valuable historic and cultural resources;
- Preservation of biodiversity and wildlife habitat;
- Improved watersheds/reduced likelihood of flooding (compared to development);
- Recharging of aquifers through irrigation;
- Economic diversification;
- Attraction of tourists and tourism dollars to the County; and
- Preservation of options for future generations.

Clallam County retains many attributes that can support continued agriculture:

- A moderate, temperate climate that is ideal for the production of caneberries (e.g., raspberries, blackberries) and brassica crops (e.g., cabbage, cauliflower), and which makes year-round production of some vegetable crops possible;
- Excellent agricultural soils, some of them unique to Western Washington;
- An irrigation system that mitigates impacts to production in drought years;
- Unique microclimates – varied rainfall patterns, elevations, and temperatures across the County make crops such as mushrooms, rhubarb, and artichokes ideal for the West End of the County, while the East End has microclimates suitable for other types of crops such as caneberries and brassica crops;
- High tourism draw from the combination of farms, mountains, and sea, all in close proximity; and
- Access to a large progressive market in the greater Puget Sound that is receptive to high quality, high value products that can be grown here.

Most importantly, Clallam County still has many resilient, innovative, and committed farmers and farm families who want to retain their agricultural lifestyle and livelihoods. These farms include both traditional, large-scale commercial enterprises and new small-scale, intensive agricultural ventures producing alternative farm products such as high value vegetable seeds, lavender, flowers, berries, and organic vegetables.

❖ *Clallam County land use regulations and resources*

- What is your land use designation?
 - You can determine what your particular parcel is designated and zoned by looking it up on the “Maps” section of the County’s website. You will need your parcel number from your property tax statement. After entering your property parcel number (found on your tax statement) at the bottom of the browser window, you can view a map of your land —up close or in a larger context. Special information can be overlaid on your parcel map showing the view from aerial photography, topography lines, parcel numbers, land use designations, ecological features, etc.
 - Clallam County has designated agricultural lands of long-term significance and zoned approximately 6,194 acres of land as Agricultural Retention (AR). All of this acreage is located in the Sequim-Dungeness Planning Region. Clallam County further supports agriculture as an allowed land use within lands designated and zoned as rural.
 - Contact DCD Planning staff at 360-417-2420 with questions about your zone or accessing and operating the mapping program.
- What is the Right to Practice Agriculture?
 - Agricultural activities, operations, facilities or appurtenances thereof, operating in a Forestry Zone or an Agricultural Cluster Zone are favored land uses in Clallam County. As long as these uses are allowed under CCC Title 33 and are conducted or maintained in a manner consistent with current best management practices and do not violate local, State or federal regulations they shall not be considered a nuisance or be declared a nuisance as defined in Clallam County Code. This protection will be effective regardless of past or future changes in the surrounding area’s land use or zoning designation.
- What property tax relief programs are available to agricultural land owners and users?:
 - The Open Space Taxation Act, enacted in 1970, allows property owners to have their open space, farm and agricultural, and timber lands valued at their current use rather than at their highest and best use for their tax assessment purposes.
 - What does owning farm and agriculture land mean for your property tax assessment?
 - Qualifying land owners may apply to classify their land as commercial agricultural lands. The authority provided by the Open Space Taxation Act allows classified lands a reduced property tax assessment based on the current use rather than the highest and best use for the duration of the classification. There are penalties and interest charges for non-compliance removal as well as voluntary removal from the current use program. Contact the Assessor's office for more information.

- There is a specific regulatory exemption for agricultural *practices* and specific *structures* within the jurisdiction of a regulated Shoreline in the State of Washington Shoreline Management Act (WAC 173-27-040). Construction and practices normal or necessary for farming, irrigation, and ranching activities including the construction of a barn or similar agricultural structure and the construction and maintenance of irrigation structures are exempt. However, a feedlot of any size, all processing plants, other activities of a commercial nature, or alteration of the contour of the shorelands by leveling or filling other than that which results from normal cultivation shall not be considered normal or necessary farming or ranching activities, and thus are not exempt. A shoreline exemption permit may still be required to memorialize the proposed activities. Contact Planning staff for information on your proposal and any pertinent ecological area regulations.
- What regulations/ buffer zones/setbacks are Agricultural Buildings subject to?
 - All new buildings or additions to existing buildings are required to meet all applicable zoning setbacks and critical area buffers. Contact the Planning Division with questions about your specific project.
 - Building Division requirements for new agricultural buildings vary depending upon the proposed location and type of use they will support. Contact the Building Division with questions about your specific project.
 - State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) Review: The construction of a barn, loafing shed, farm equipment storage building, produce storage or packing structure, or similar agricultural structure, covering 10,000 square feet, and to be used only by the property owner or his or her agent in the conduct of farming the property is exempt from SEPA review. This exemption shall not apply to feed lots. Contact the Planning Division with questions about your specific project.
- What are the stormwater and grading regulations for Agriculture?
 - Clallam County does not currently have a clearing and grading or stormwater ordinance. Proposals that are within the jurisdiction of ecologically sensitive areas require review and approval prior to the commencement of clearing and grading. The CA Code discusses exemptions for ongoing farm activities if best management practices are being used as outlined in a conservation plan. See the section above that addresses CA issues and agriculture for more details.
- ❖ *Do you have water? How are you using it?*
 - Irrigation Districts- include map of districts and companies from Conservation District, and contacts to ditchwalkers.
 - Water Rights: The Department of Ecology is the contact for information on well use limitations and agriculture use exemptions:
 - <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/PROGRAMS/wr/rights/water-right-home.html>

- ❖ *What is your soil type?*
 - The Natural Resource Conservation Service has an interactive online mapping tool to discover what type of soils are on your property and what kinds of agricultural practices they will support.
 - <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>

- ❖ *How can I sell the products I produce?*
 - Port Angeles Farmers Market:
 - The Port Angeles Farmer's Market highlights locally grown produce and fresh fruits, crafts, art, bread, fish, coffee and much more! Clallam County is home to some exceptional farmers, and they are committed to growing over 100 varieties of greens, roots, fruits, grains and eggs. The PAFM is a year round market which means that 12 months a year, you can eat delicious nutritious food and support your local economy.
 - Farmer's Market Manager: 360-460-0361
 - <http://www.portangelesfarmersmarket.com/index.php>
 - Sequim Open-Aire Market
 - Everything you see at the Sequim Open Aire Market is made, grown or prepared by the person selling it. Enjoy musical entertainment, special events and celebrations. An abundance of sights, sounds, aromas and community spirit creates the perfect spot for friends, neighbors and townspeople to gather weekly to renew friendships. Local residents are joined by tourists from all over the country and around the world to enjoy the celebration of life in a festive small-town atmosphere. This unique Market averages 55 – 60 local vendors each week and the quality and variety of products available is unmatched. Live musicians entertain on-site starting mostly at 11 AM and continuing until 2 PM on the JACE Real Estate Music Stage. New vendors join us frequently, so come OFTEN!
 - <http://www.sequimopenairemarket.com/index.html>
 - Puget Sound Meat Producers Cooperative
 - The PSMPC is a non-profit cooperative of local ranchers, farmers, butchers, restaurant owners and others joined in the operation of a mobile, USDA-inspected meat processing unit servicing King, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pierce, and Thurston counties. The PSMPC Mobile Meat Processing Unit (MMPU) is a 45-foot tractor/trailer designed to meet USDA specifications which travels to local farms & ranches to process the animals, then transports the animal carcasses to a cooperative partner cut & wrap facility for further processing.
 - <http://pugetsoundmeat.org>
 - Port Angeles and Sequim Locallygrown Mercantile
 - The Market at PA & Sequim Locally Grown Mercantile is a large group of farmers, growers, and producers located around Port Angeles and Sequim, Washington. All member farms are dedicated to supplying their customers with the freshest and highest quality vegetables, herbs, mill products, dairy, eggs, meats, fruits, flowers, and transplants. Member farms vary in size and specialty, but all carry the common thread of dedication to community, environment, health and education. The Locally Grown Mercantile works to find new and innovative methods to preserve greenspace, protect our natural resources, support our local economy, provide meaningful work, and return to a more self-sufficient community life.
 - <http://pa.locallygrown.net/>

- <http://sequim.locallygrown.net/>
 - Clallam Grown
 - Clallam Grown's focus is to educate the people of Clallam County about the many reasons why local food is best. From personal health, to the environment, and our local economy, we need these elements to be strong so that we may all have better lives. We intend to make the process easier for both consumers and producers to participate in our food network, building connections and ensuring everyone has access to local goods.
 - <http://www.clallamgrown.org/home.htm>
- ❖ *Who are the other organizations I should talk to?*
- Clallam County Conservation District
 - Contact the Clallam Conservation District for more information on services and programs. Technical and financial assistance is available to assist residents with best management practices that protect/improve water quality including agricultural best practices and livestock management, including compliance with Critical Area regulations.
 - Clallam Conservation District:(360) 452-1912 ext. 5.
 - <http://clallam.scc.wa.gov/>
 - Conservation Opportunities
 - The North Olympic Land Trust is a non-profit conservation organization serving the communities of the North Olympic Peninsula. Our mission is to protect special qualities of the North Olympic Peninsula in Clallam County, Washington
 - North Olympic Land Trust 360-417-1815
 - <http://www.northolympiclandtrust.org/>
 - The mission of Friends of the Fields' is to preserve and protect sustainable agriculture in Clallam County, Washington, ensuring the availability of local food and the quality of life that our rural setting provides.
 - Friends of the Fields 360-681-0169
 - <http://www.friendsofthefields.org/>
 - Washington State Extension office
 - WSU Cooperative Extension has a long history of providing education and volunteer opportunities in horticulture, agriculture, 4-H youth development, water quality, and other programs to Clallam County citizens. They encourage you to explore their site to discover the programs and resources currently available in Clallam County:
 - <http://clallam.wsu.edu/index.html>
 - Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)
 - Rich soils, diverse climates and large-scale irrigation make Washington one of the most productive growing regions in the world. The state's deep-water ports and its proximity to important Asian markets also provide natural advantages for agricultural trade. More information from WSDA is available via their website:
 - <http://agr.wa.gov/>

- WSDA also has a Small Farm & Direct Marketing assistance program. The mission of the program is to increase the economic viability of small farms, build community vitality and improve the environmental quality of the region. They offer legal advice on direct marketing and connecting farms to school cafeterias, among other resources.
 - <http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/>
- Washington State Office of Farmland Preservation
 - Our mission is to promote the vitality of farming, farmers, and ranchers by ensuring that we will continue to have productive agricultural lands in Washington State. We will achieve this through policy recommendations to the Governor, the Legislature, the Office of Farmland Preservation and others and by enlisting public support. Programs will be voluntary, recognize local priorities, and provide for economic incentives.
 - <http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/index.php/about-us>
- Natural Resources Conservation Service:
 - Farmers, ranchers and other conservation-minded agricultural producers rely on NRCS for assistance through conservation programs and technical information to help them protect the natural resources on their land. Your local USDA Service Center can help you plan and install the best conservation practices for your land. Ag producers also work with our locally led Conservation District partners who strive to increase voluntary conservation practices among farmers, ranchers and other land users. Cost-share programs and technical assistance are available.
 - Local contact- Jim Poffel 360-452-8994 ex.105