

CHAPTER 26. AGRICULTURE PROTECTION AREA

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Article 26-1. Definitions

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For the purposes of this Chapter, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them below:

(a) "Advisory Board" means the Agriculture Protection Area Advisory Board created by this Chapter.

(b) (1) "Agriculture production" means production for commercial purposes of crops, livestock, and livestock products.

(2) "Agriculture production" includes the processing or retail marketing of any crops, livestock, and livestock products when more than 50% of the processed or merchandised products are produced by the farm operator.

(c) "Agriculture protection area" means a geographic area within the unincorporated part of Utah County created under the authority of Chapter 41, Title 17, Utah Code Annotated, 1953 as amended, and of this Chapter, that is granted the specific legal protection contained in Chapter 41, Title 17, Utah Code Annotated, 1953 as amended.

(d) "Applicable legislative body means:

(1) the Board of Utah County Commissioners if the land included in or proposed to be included in an agriculture protection area is within the unincorporated part of Utah County; or

(2) the legislative body of the city or town if the land included in or proposed to be included in an agriculture protection area is within the boundaries of a city or town.

(e) "Contiguous" means touching along a common side or so close in proximity as to be separated only by the width of a road, canal, railroad track, easement, or similar right-of-way.

(f) "Crops, livestock, and livestock products" includes:

(1) land devoted to the raising of useful plants and animals with a reasonable expectation of profit, including:

- (A) forages and sod crops;
- (B) grains and feed crops;
- (C) livestock as defined in Subsection 59-2-102(19)(d), Utah Code Annotated, 1953, as amended;
- (D) trees and fruits; or
- (E) vegetables, nursery, floral and ornamental stock; or

(2) land devoted to and meeting the requirements and qualifications for payments or other compensation under a crop-land retirement program with an agency of the state or federal government.

(g) "Planning Commission" means the Utah County Planning Commission, a Township Planning Commission, or a planning commission of a city or town.

(h) "Political subdivision" means a county, city, town, school district, or special district.

(i) "Proposal sponsors" means the owners of land in agricultural production who are sponsoring the proposal for creating an agriculture protection area.

(j) "State agency" means each department, commission, board, council, agency, institution, officer, corporation, fund, division, office, committee, authority, laboratory, library, unit, bureau, panel, or other administrative unit of the state.

(k) "Unincorporated" means not within a city or town. (Ord. No. 1998-13, 07-21-98)(Ord. No. 2015-4, 03-3-15)

Article 26-2. Establishment of Agriculture Protection Area Advisory Board

26-2-1. Designation.

26-2-2. Duties.

26-2-1. Designation.

There is hereby created an Agriculture Protection Area Advisory Board consisting of five (5) members appointed by the Utah County Commission from Utah County's soil conservation district boards of supervisors. The members shall serve without salary, but may be reimbursed for mileage or other actual expenses incurred. The members of said Board shall be appointed to terms of five years and until their successors are appointed. For the first Advisory Board, the terms of the regular members shall be staggered so that the term of one member shall expire each year on December 31st. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the unexpired term of the vacant office. (Ord. No. 1998-13, 07-21-98)

26-2-2. Duties.

The Agriculture Protection Area Advisory Board shall:

- (a) evaluate proposals for the establishment of agriculture protection areas and make recommendations to the applicable legislative body about whether or not the proposal should be accepted;
- (b) provide expert advice to the Planning Commission and to the applicable legislative body about:

- (1) the desirability of the proposal;
 - (2) the nature of agricultural production within the proposed area;

- (3) the relation of agricultural production in the area to Utah County as a whole;

- (4) which agriculture production should be allowed within the agriculture protection area;

- (5) the minimum number of continuous acres that must be included in an agriculture protection area, and

- (c) perform all other duties as required by this Chapter. (Ord. No. 1998-13, 07-21-98)

Article 26-3. Proposal and Approval of Agriculture Protection Area

26-3-1. Proposal for Creation of Agriculture Protection Area.

26-3-2. Area Requirements.

26-3-3. Notice Requirements.

26-3-4. Review of Proposal.

26-3-5. Public Hearing.

26-3-6. Evaluation Criteria.

26-3-7. Adding Land to an Agriculture Area.

26-3-8. Removing Land from an Agricultural Protection Area.

26-3-9. Review of Agriculture Protection Areas.

26-3-1. Proposal for Creation of Agriculture Protection Area.

(a) A proposal to create an agriculture protection area or an amendment to an existing agriculture protection area within the unincorporated part of the County may be filed with the County Commission by completing the standard forms adopted by the County Commission and by filing said forms in the office of the County Commission.

(b) (1) To be accepted for processing by the County Commission, a proposal under Subsection (a) shall be signed by a majority in number of all owners of real property and the owners of a majority of the land area in agricultural production within the proposed agriculture protection area.

(2) For the purpose of Subsection (b)(1), the owners of real property shall be determined by the records of the County Recorder.

(c) The Clerk/Secretary of the County Commission, or other person designated by the County Commission to receive and process proposals, shall accept and process such forms only if they are properly completed and accompanied by the filing fee. The filing fee is set forth in the adopted Utah County Government Fee Schedule.

(d) The proposal shall contain the following information:

(1) the boundaries of the land proposed to become part of an agriculture protection area;

(2) any limits on the types of agriculture production to be allowed within the agriculture protection area; and

(3) for each parcel of land:

(A) the names of the owners of record of the land proposed to be included within the agriculture protection area;

(B) the tax parcel number or account number identifying each parcel; and

(C) the number of acres of each parcel.

(e) An agriculture protection area may include within its boundaries land used for a roadway, dwelling site, park, or other nonagricultural use, if that land constitutes a minority of the total acreage within the agriculture protection area. (Ord. No. 1998-13, 07-21-98)(Ord. No. 2015-4, 03-03-15)

26-3-2. Area Requirements.

In accordance with Section 17-41-301, Utah Code Annotated, 1953, as amended, the minimum number of continuous acres that must be included in an agriculture protection area within the unincorporated part of the County is hereby established as forty (40) acres. A variance to the minimum acreage requirement may be given for land which is used in intensive livestock operations or in fruit production. A variance may also be given if the acreage is contiguous to an existing agriculture protection area or contiguous to an existing or proposed agriculture protection area that is not within the unincorporated part of the County. Creation of an agriculture protection area shall not impair the ability of land within the area to obtain the benefits of Title 59, Chapter 2, Part 5, Farmland Assessment Act. The eligibility of land for the benefits of Title 59, Chapter 2, Part 5, Farmland Assessment Act, shall be determined exclusively by the provisions of that act, notwithstanding the land's location within an agriculture protection area. (Ord. No. 1998-13, 07-21-98)

26-3-3. Notice Requirements.

(a) The County Commission shall provide notice of the proposal for an agriculture protection area within the unincorporated part of the County by:

(1) publishing notice in a newspaper having general circulation within the proposed agriculture protection area; and

(2) posting notice at five public places designated by the County Commission, within or near the proposed agriculture protection area.

(b) The notice shall contain:

(1) a statement that a proposal for the creation of an agriculture protection area has been filed with the County Commission;

(2) a statement that the proposal will be open to public inspection in the office of the County Commission;

(3) a statement that any person or entity affected by establishment of the area may, within 15 days of the date of the notice, file with the County Commission written objections to the proposal or a written request to modify the proposal to exclude land from or add land to the proposed agriculture protection area;

(4) a statement that the County Commission will submit the proposal to the Advisory Board and to the Planning Commission for review and recommendations; and

(5) a statement that the County Commission will hold a public hearing to discuss and hear public comment on:

(A) the proposal to create the agriculture protection area;

(B) the recommendations of the Advisory Board and Planning Commission; and

(C) any requests for modification of the proposal and any objections to the proposal.

(c) Any person wishing to modify the proposal for the creation of the agriculture protection area shall, within 15 days after the date of the notice, file a written request for modification of the proposal, which identifies specifically the land that should be added to or removed from the proposal.

(d) Any person wishing to object to the proposal for the creation of the agriculture protection area shall, within 15 days after the date of the notice, file a written objection to the creation of the agriculture protection area. (Ord. No. 1998-13, 07-21-98)

26-3-4. Review of Proposal.

(a) After 15 days from the date of the notice, the County Commission shall refer the proposal and any objections and proposed modifications to the proposal to the Advisory Board and Planning Commission for their review, comments, and recommendations.

(b) Within 45 days after receipt of the proposal, the Planning Commission shall submit a written report to the County Commission that:

(1) analyzes and evaluates the effect of the creation of the proposed area on the county's planning policies and objectives;

(2) analyzes and evaluates the proposal by applying the criteria contained in Section 26-3-6;

(3) recommends any modifications to the land to be included in the proposed agriculture protection area;

(4) analyzes and evaluates any objections to the proposal; and

(5) includes a recommendation to the County Commission either to accept, accept and modify, or reject the proposal.

(c) Within 45 days after receipt of the proposal, the Advisory Board shall submit a written report to the County Commission that:

(1) recommends any modifications to the land to be included in the proposed agriculture protection area;

(2) analyzes and evaluates the proposal by applying the criteria contained in Section 26-3-6;

(3) analyzes and evaluates any objections to the proposal; and

(4) includes a recommendation to the County Commission either to accept, accept and modify, or reject the proposal.

(d) The County Commission shall consider a failure of the Planning Commission or Advisory Board to submit a written report within the 45 days under Subsections (b) and (c) as a recommendation of that committee to approve the proposal as submitted. (Ord. No. 1998-13, 07-21-98)

26-3-5. Public Hearing.

(a) After receipt of the written reports from the Advisory Board and Planning Commission, or after the 45 days has expired, whichever is earlier, the County Commission shall:

(1) schedule a public hearing;

(2) provide notice of the public hearing by:

(A) publishing notice in a newspaper having general circulation within the area proposed for inclusion within the agriculture protection area; and

(B) posting notice at five public places, designated by the County Commission within or near the proposed agriculture protection area; and

(3) ensure that the notice includes:

(A) the time, date, and place of the public hearing on the proposal;

(B) a description of the proposed agriculture protection area;

(C) any proposed modifications to the proposed agriculture protection area;

(D) a summary of the recommendations of the Advisory Board and Planning Commission; and

(E) a statement that interested persons may appear at the public hearing and speak in favor of or against the proposal, any proposed modifications to the proposal, or the recommendations of the Advisory Board and Planning Commission.

(b) The County Commission shall:

(1) convene the public hearing at the time, date, and place specified in the notice; and

(2) take verbal or written testimony from interested persons.

(c) Within 120 days of the submission of the proposal, the County Commission shall approve, modify and approve, or reject the proposal.

(d) The creation of an agriculture protection area is effective at the earlier of:

(1) the County Commission's approval of a proposal or modified proposal; or

(2) 120 days after submission of a proposal complying with Subsection 26-3-1(c), if the County Commission has failed to approve or reject the proposal within that time.

(e) In order to give constructive notice of the existence of the agriculture protection area to all persons who have, may acquire, or may seek to acquire an interest in land in or adjacent to the agriculture protection area, within ten days of the creation of an agriculture protection area, the County Commission shall file an executed document containing a legal description of the agriculture protection area with:

(1) the County Recorder; and

(2) the Planning Commission.

(f) Within ten days of the recording of the agriculture protection area, the County Commission shall:

(1) send written notification to the Commissioner of Agriculture and Food that the agriculture protection area has been created, and include in said notification the following:

(A) the number of landowners owning land within the agriculture protection area;

(B) the total acreage of the area;

(C) the date of approval of the area; and

(D) the date of recording.

(g) Failure by the County Commission to record the notice required under Subsection (e) does not invalidate the creation of an agriculture protection area.

(h) The County Commission may consider the cost of recording notice under Subsection (e) and the cost of sending notification under Subsection (f) in establishing a fee under Subsection 26-3-1. (Ord. No. 1998-13, 07-21-98)

26-3-6. Evaluation Criteria.

(a) In evaluating a proposal and in determining whether or not to create or recommend the creation of an agriculture protection area, the Advisory Board, Planning Commission, and County Commission shall apply the following criteria:

(1) whether or not the land is currently being used for agriculture production;

(2) whether or not the land is zoned for agriculture use;

(3) whether or not the land is viable for agricultural production;

(4) the extent and nature of existing or proposed farm improvements; and

(5) anticipated trends in agricultural and technological conditions. (Ord. No. 1998-13, 07-21-98)

26-3-7. Adding Land to an Agriculture Protection Area.

(a) Any owner may add land to an existing agriculture protection area within the unincorporated part of the County by:

(1) filing a proposal with the County Commission; and

(2) obtaining the approval of the County Commission for the addition of the land to the area.

(b) The County Commission shall comply with the provisions for creating an agriculture protection area in determining whether or not to accept the proposal. (Ord. No. 1998-13, 07-21-98)

26-3-8. Removing Land from an Agriculture Protection Area.

(a) Any owner may remove land from an agriculture protection area within the unincorporated part of the County by filing a petition for removal of the land from the agriculture protection area with the County Commission.

(b) The County Commission shall:

(1) grant the petition for removal of land from an agriculture protection area even if removal of the land would result in an agriculture protection area of less than the number of acres established by the County Commission as the minimum under Section 26-3-2; and

(2) in order to give constructive notice of the removal to all persons who have, may acquire, or may seek to acquire an interest in land in or adjacent to the agriculture protection area and the land removed from the agriculture protection area, file a legal description of the revised boundaries of the agriculture protection area with the County Recorder and the Planning Commission.

(c) The remaining land in the agriculture protection area is still an agriculture protection area.

(d) When a municipality annexes any land that is part of an agriculture protection area, the County Commission shall, within 30 days after the land is annexed, review the feasibility of that land remaining in the agriculture protection area according to the procedures and requirements of Section 26-3-9.

(1) If appropriate, the County Commission shall remove the annexed land from the agriculture protection area. (Ord. No. 1998-13, 07-21-98)

26-3-9. Review of Agriculture Protection Areas.

(a) The County Commission shall review any agriculture protection area created under the authority of this Chapter in the 20th calendar year after it is created.

(b) In the 20th year, the County Commission shall:

(1) request the Planning Commission and Advisory Board to submit recommendations about whether the agriculture protection area should be continued, modified, or terminated;

(2) at least 120 days before the end of the calendar year, hold a public hearing to discuss whether the agriculture protection area should be continued, modified, or terminated;

(3) give notice of the hearing using the same procedure required by Section 26-3-3; and

(4) after the public hearing, continue, modify, or terminate the agriculture protection area.

(c) If the County Commission modifies or terminates the agriculture protection area, it shall file an executed document containing the legal description of the agriculture protection area with the County Recorder.

(d) If the County Commission fails to affirmatively continue, modify, or terminate the agriculture protection area in the 20th calendar year, the agriculture protection area is considered to be reauthorized for another 20 years. (Ord. No. 1998-13, 07-21-98)