



## States' Agritourism Statutes

### STATE OF FLORIDA

*Current with chapters in effect from the 2008 Second Regular Session of the Florida Legislature.*

#### **§ 570.96. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services - Agritourism**

The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services may provide marketing advice, technical expertise, promotional support, and product development related to agritourism to assist the following in their agritourism initiatives: the Florida Commission on Tourism; convention and visitor bureaus; tourist development councils; economic development organizations; and local governments. In carrying out this responsibility, the department shall focus its agritourism efforts on rural and urban communities.

#### **§ 570.961. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services - Definitions**

As used in §§ 570.96-570.962, the term:

- (1) "Agritourism activity" means any activity carried out on a farm or ranch or in a forest that allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy rural activities, including farming, ranching, historical, cultural, harvest-your-own, or nature-based activities and attractions. An activity is an agritourism activity whether or not the participant paid to participate in the activity.
- (2) "Agritourism professional" means any person who is engaged in the business of providing one or more agritourism activities, whether or not for compensation
- (3) "Farm" means the land, buildings, support facilities, machinery, and other appurtenances used in the production of farm or aquaculture products, including land used to display plants, animals, farm products, or farm equipment to the public
- (4) "Farm operation" has the same meaning as defined in § 823.14.

#### **§ 570.962. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services - Agritourism participation impact on land classification**

- (1) In order to promote and perpetuate agriculture throughout the state, farm operations are encouraged to engage in agritourism. The conduct of agritourism activity on a bona fide farm or on agricultural lands classified as such pursuant to § 193.461 shall not limit, restrict, or divest the land of that classification.
- (2) Local governments and agricultural representatives shall meet for the purpose of discussing the benefits of agritourism to local economies and opportunities for cooperation, conflict resolution, regulatory streamlining, and incentives.

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# Sustainable Agriculture: An Introduction

A Publication of ATTRA, the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service • 1-800-346-9140 • [www.attra.ncat.org](http://www.attra.ncat.org)

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ATTRA is the national sustainable agriculture information service operated by the National Center for Appropriate Technology, through a grant from the Rural Business-Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. These organizations do not recommend or endorse products, companies, or individuals. NCAT has offices in Fayetteville, Arkansas, Butte, Montana, and Davis, California.



*Photo courtesy USDA NRCS*

## What is Sustainable Agriculture?

Sustainable agriculture is one that produces abundant food without depleting the earth's resources or polluting its environment. It is agriculture that follows the principles of nature to develop systems for raising crops and livestock that are, like nature, self-sustaining. Sustainable agriculture is also the agriculture of social values, one whose success is indistinguishable from vibrant rural communities, rich lives for families on the farms, and wholesome food for everyone. But in the first decade of the 21st Century, sustainable agriculture, as a set of commonly accepted practices or a model farm economy, is still in its infancy—more than an idea, but only just.

Although sustainability in agriculture is tied to broader issues of the global economy, declining petroleum reserves, and domestic

food security, its midwives were not government policy makers but small farmers, environmentalists, and a persistent cadre of agricultural scientists. These people saw the devastation that late 20th-Century farming was causing to the very means of agricultural production—the water and soil—and so began a search for better ways to farm, an exploration that continues to this day.

Conventional 20th-Century agriculture took industrial production as its model, and vertically-integrated agri-business was the result. The industrial approach, coupled with substantial government subsidies, made food abundant and cheap in the United States. But farms are biological systems, not mechanical ones, and they exist in a social context in ways that manufacturing plants do not. Through its emphasis on high production, the industrial model has degraded soil and water, reduced the biodiversity that is a key element to food security, increased our dependence



**L**ittle by little—one crop, one field, one family at a time—sustainable farming is taking root.

on imported oil, and driven more and more acres into the hands of fewer and fewer “farmers,” crippling rural communities.

In recent decades, sustainable farmers and researchers around the world have responded to the extractive industrial model with ecology-based approaches, variously called natural, organic, low-input, alternative, regenerative, holistic, Biodynamic, biointensive, and biological farming systems. All of them, representing thousands of farms, have contributed to our understanding of what sustainable systems are, and each of them shares a vision of “farming with nature,” an agro-ecology that promotes biodiversity, recycles plant nutrients, protects soil from erosion, conserves and protects water, uses minimum tillage, and integrates crop and livestock enterprises on the farm.

But no matter how elegant the system or how accomplished the farmer, no agriculture is sustainable if it’s not also profitable, able to provide a healthy family income and a good quality of life. Sustainable practices lend themselves to smaller, family-scale farms. These farms, in turn, tend to find their best niches in local markets, within local food systems, often selling directly to consumers. As alternatives to industrial agriculture evolve, so must their markets and the farmers who serve them. Creating and serving new markets remains one of the key challenges for sustainable agriculture.

## How Do We Achieve Sustainability?

Farmers and other agricultural thinkers have established a strong set of guiding principles for sustainability, based on stewardship and economic justice. Producers and researchers are annually increasing the pace of improvements in agro-ecology systems, making them more efficient and profitable. More Cooperative Extension offices and colleges of agriculture are endorsing sustainable practices. And every year more farmers are seeing the wisdom and rewards—both economic and personal—in these systems. (Organic products are the fastest growing grocery segment in the United States.) Little by little—one crop,

one field, one family at a time—sustainable farming is taking root.

Off the farm, consumers and grassroots activists are working to create local markets and farm policies that support sustainable practices. They are working to raise consumers’ awareness about how their food is grown and processed—how plants, animals, the soil, and the water are treated. And they are working to forge stronger bonds between producers and consumers that will, in time, cement the foundations of locally and regionally self-sufficient food systems. In contrast to monocropped industrial megafarms that ship

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*Jam processed on-farm is one example of a value-added product. Photo by Nathalie Dulex.*



throughout the world, the vision of sustainable agriculture’s futurists is small to mid-size diversified farms supplying the *majority* of their region’s food. (No one in Idaho has to give up orange juice, and there will still be cranberries in California for Thanksgiving.)

Listed below are some of the key considerations for making a farm more sustainable, along with relevant ATTRA publications in those areas. Because each farm is different, there’s no single formula for sustainable success, but these principles and publications are good places to begin learning what



it will take. And for a more detailed look at some of these same fundamentals, see the ATTRA publication *Applying the Principles of Sustainable Agriculture*.

## Know Your Markets, Protect Your Profits, and Add Value to Your Products

- Diversify enterprises.
- Market outside the commodity supply chains and corporate vertical integrators.
- Emphasize direct marketing and premium specialty markets.
- Consider forming a cooperative with other farmers.
- Add value through on-farm processing.

- *Holistic Management*
- *Evaluating a Rural Enterprise*
- *Moving Beyond Conventional Cash Cropping*
- *Entertainment Farming and Agri-Tourism*
- *Agricultural Business Planning Templates*
- *Enterprise Budgets and Production Costs for Organic Production*
- *Preparing for an Organic Inspection: Steps and Checklists*
- *Direct Marketing*
- *Farmers' Markets*
- *CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)*
- *Bringing Local Food to Local Institutions*
- *Selling to Restaurants*
- *Organic Certification and the National Organic Program*
- *Organic Marketing Resources*
- *Alternative Meat Marketing*



- *USDA-RBS Series on Cooperatives*
- *Keys to Success in Value-added Agriculture*
- *Adding Value to Farm Products: An Overview*
- *Grain Processing*
- *Oilseed Processing for Small Producers*
- *Food Dehydration Options*
- *Soyfoods: Adding Value to Soybeans*
- *Sorghum Syrup*
- *Value-added Dairy Options*

*Fresh peaches at a farmers market in California. Photo by Erik Dungan.*

## Build Soil Structure and Fertility

- Reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers by increasing on-farm nutrient cycling.
  - Make fertilization decisions based on soil tests.
  - Minimize or eliminate tillage.
  - Think of the soil not only as a physical and chemical substrate but as a living entity; manage the soil organisms to preserve their healthy diversity.
  - Maintain ground cover year-round by using cover crops and mulches and by leaving crop residues in the field.
- *Sustainable Soil Management*
  - *Drought Resistant Soil*
  - *Nutrient Cycling in Pastures*
  - *Manures for Organic Crop Production*

*No-till soybeans growing through wheat stubble in Kansas. Photo courtesy USDA NRCS.*