

EIGHT YEAR REVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Did you recently receive a letter from the Orange County Legislature informing you that your property was going to be removed, added or consolidated in the Orange County Agricultural Districts?

Here's why, and what you can do.

What is the purpose of an Agricultural District?

Agricultural Districts Nos. 1 and 2 were established in Orange County in 1972. Agricultural Districts are meant to identify agricultural lands for the purpose of defending and supporting farmers who are within the District by providing protections against nuisance lawsuits involving their agricultural practices and against overly-restrictive local laws that would inhibit a farmer's ability to run a profitable farm business. Being within or outside of a District has no impact on taxation or the ability to use your land as permitted by local regulations.

Why is Orange County conducting an Agricultural District 8 Year Review?

NYS Agriculture and Markets Law section 303, requires counties to conduct a thorough review of the lands contained within their agricultural districts. The purpose of the review is to determine if land within the districts is viable farmland and/or used for agricultural purposes.

Why did I get a Letter?

In 2020, the County Planning Department conducted an extensive analysis of the Districts using modern mapping technology to determine which parcels would benefit from remaining in or being added to the District. The County is also proposing to combine Districts 1 and 2 into one District, named Orange County Agricultural District No. 1.

As a result, the County is proposing to modify the Districts by reclassifying over 12,300 parcels to be either removed, added, or changed from District 2 to No. 1.

Each affected landowner was mailed a letter stating the proposed modification to their parcel's designation.

Why is it important to remove lands that are not viable farmland and/or used for agricultural purposes? NYS Ag & Markets Law states that Agricultural Districts must consist predominantly of viable agricultural land. On average, districts statewide contain approximately 70 percent farmland (source NYS Ag & Markets).

How do I voice my opinion during the District Review process?

A virtual public hearing will be held by the County Legislature on Thursday September 3rd at 3:15pm. (call 1-347-991-6654 Conference I.D. 521 402 152#), but anyone with an inquiry is

encouraged to call the Orange County Planning Department ahead of time since time will be limited during the hearing.

Where can I view a map of the proposed Districts and get more information?

Maps of the proposed modifications can be viewed online at

<https://www.orangecountygov.com/268/Eight-Year-Review>.

Also on this website is a Full Report that describes the purpose and utility of agricultural districts.

I still don't understand and/or need more information:

You can contact the Orange County Planning Department at 845-615-3840 to talk to someone who will discuss your particular parcel with you.

What if I don't want my land removed from the Agricultural District?

No problem. If, after discussing your particular parcel with the Planning Department staff, you want your land to remain in the agricultural District, let them know and they will be sure it stays in the District.

What is the Deadline?

NOVEMBER 4th, 2020 is the last day to delete parcels from the 2020 Agricultural District 8 Year Review Proposed Modifications.

The Orange County Legislature will vote on proposed modifications on November 5, 2020 so that the Revised Agricultural District No. 1 can be certified by the New York State Commissioner of Agricultural and Markets on or before November 20, 2020.