



Position Statement  
RaceTrac Truck Stop

Horse Farms Forever® **opposes** the application by RaceTrac to build a truck stop on a parcel of farmland deep inside the Farmland Preservation Area. After inspecting the parcel and surrounding area, it was clear to the HFF Board of Directors that this property is rural farmland and should remain rural farmland. It was also clear that if intense commercial development was allowed on this parcel, that sprawl would soon engulf this rural area. It brings to mind the Arabian saying, "Once the camel's nose is in the tent, the rest will likely follow."

This type of assault on the Farmland Preservation Area is exactly why Horse Farms Forever exists. The county's Farmland Preservation Area must be respected and protected. The Farmland Preservation Area serves as major recharge area for rainwater entering the county's primary springs, Rainbow Springs and Silver Spring. The parcel in question is located within the primary protection zone for Silver Springs.

We have respectfully advised RaceTrac that should they pursue this invasion of the Farmland Preservation Area, Horse Farms Forever will use the full extent of its resources and relationships to stop it. As there are multiple site options available to RaceTrac that don't require land use and/or zoning changes, it begs the question, why this site?

HFF expresses our trust in the judgement of the professional staff at Growth Services and the elected County Commissioners as they evaluate the effects of this application and its compatibility with the surrounding Farmland Preservation Area. The Marion County Board of Commissioners are to be complimented for their strong support of the Farmland Preservation Area and recognition of the valuable contribution made by the equestrian industry.

The mission of Horse Farms Forever® is to inspire conservation of horse farms through education, awareness and idea exchange so as to preserve the character and culture that horses and the Farmland Preservation Area make unique to Marion County. We are watchful of government and others to preserve and protect horse farms and farmland for future generations, especially in the Farmland Preservation Area. We are neither anti-growth nor anti-development, rather encouraging urban growth to remain inside the Urban Growth Boundary.

Horse Farms Forever® is registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as a charitable organization and approved as a tax-exempt 501 (C) (3) corporation by the Internal Revenue Service. Horse Farms Forever does not have a political mission. Our status as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization does not allow us to participate or intervene in political activities. The organization will neither advocate on behalf of political candidates nor advocate for the passage of legislation.