



Position Statement
Commercial Food Trucks on Agriculturally Zoned Land

Marion County is revising the Land Development Code (LDC) to regulate roadside vendors, which includes roadside stands and food trucks. The roadside vendors policy, Section 4.3.12 of the current LDC, permits food trucks by right in all agricultural zoning categories, even within the Farmland Preservation Area.

Horse Farms Forever's concern with the current roadside vendors policy is the potential for land use conflicts created by the "by right" use that allows commercial food trucks, that are unrelated to agricultural events, in all agricultural zoning categories.

Horse Farms Forever's mission is to inspire the conservation of horse farms through education, awareness, and idea exchange, and one of the core principals of our mission is to minimize land use conflicts in Marion County. The LDC revisions to regulate roadside vendors directly aligns with this mission by helping to ensure that commercial land uses are appropriately located and compatible with agricultural and equestrian land uses.

Horse Farms Forever® supports roadside stands and food trucks located on agriculturally zoned land **that serve bona fide agricultural events, horse shows, and agritourism activities.** These types of activities are already regulated through Florida's Right to Farm Act and agritourism policies, as well as Marion County's Temporary Use Permits and Special Event Permits.

Horse Farms Forever further supports ongoing, semi-permanent roadside vendors and commercial food trucks when located in designated commercial or industrial areas, such as the Rural Activity Centers in the Farmland Preservation Area. A Special Use Permit would allow for review of the site plan, parking, restrooms, etc.

Horse Farms Forever opposes ongoing semi-permanent commercial food trucks located on agriculturally zoned land that are unrelated to agriculture, because this creates a commercial use on agriculturally zoned land. We also **oppose allowing a Special Use Permit** to be issued on agriculturally zoned land for commercial food trucks that are independent of a bona fide equine, agricultural, or agritourism activity or event.

Marion County's agricultural lands are an important part of its rural and equestrian character and its economy. Roadside farm stands, and food trucks serving a horse show or agricultural event, are compatible with Marion County's rural and equestrian identity, and should be supported. However, an ongoing, semi-permanent commercial food truck located on an agriculturally zoned parcel is a much different land use, and it should be located in a designated commercial or industrial area.

The Role of Land Use, Zoning and Private Property Rights

The role of the County's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code is to ensure a well-planned community by reducing land use conflicts. Land use and zoning classifications are critical components that inherently protect the public health, safety, and welfare. They do so for the greater common good to efficiently plan for growth and the infrastructure needs.

Land use and zoning are the result of the County exercising its sovereign power to govern the use of private property for the common good of all citizens. One way to think of land use and zoning is to compare them to speed limits on roads. While your car can go very fast, the speeds you can drive have been governed for your own safety and the safety of others.

That is, just because you own a fast car doesn't mean you can drive it as fast as you want. In the same regard, just because you own private property doesn't mean you can do whatever you want on it. The land use and zoning classifications control what can be done on the parcel.

Horse Farms Forever® Mission Statement

It is the vision and mission of Horse Farms Forever® to inspire conservation of horse farms through education, awareness and idea exchange so as to preserve natural pasture land focusing on horses and their habitats, to protect soil and water on which they depend, and minimize land use conflicts in Marion County, Florida.

Horses, horse farms and the horse industry create the "character and culture" that define Marion County. **The aim of Horse Farms Forever®** is to raise awareness and education to ensure that this "sense of place" is protected for future generations.

The purpose of Horse Farms Forever® is to be watchful of government and others in actions pertaining to the character and culture that horses and the Farmland Preservation Area make unique to Marion County. That includes strategies to preserve horse farms and pastureland, especially in the Farmland Preservation Area, for future generations.

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.