



Living Next to Agriculture

People move to the country for numerous reasons. It is important to become acquainted with daily and seasonal activities that go along with the joy of living next to agriculture. Many farmers depend on their land to make a living; it is important for non-farming neighbors to have a clear understanding of an agricultural-based lifestyle.

Right-to-Farm

Agricultural operations are protected by Oregon's right-to-farm law, a policy that seeks to protect the investment farmers have made in their agricultural operations. Neighbors in rural communities understand the following principles regarding agricultural lands:

- Farm operations may involve practices that result in noise, dust and odor.
- Agricultural operations are sometimes conducted outside of normal business hours. Cutting and baling machinery often operate at night, and agricultural equipment can be noisy.
- Pesticides are commonly used in raising crops and their use is strictly regulated by state and federal governments.
- Tillage operations can raise dust, and field burning creates smoke.
- Agricultural equipment has the right of way on public roads.

Understanding Rural Living: Be a Good Neighbor

Problems arise when people don't understand what is happening and the reasons why. Avoid potential conflict by understanding some basic principles:

- **Communicate:** Get to know your neighbors and make an effort to understand more about their operation. With communication, many problems can be avoided. Don't assume anything.
- **Respect Private Property:** Ask permission before entering private property. If you are granted permission to travel down private roads, be sure to leave gates as they are found (closed or opened). Pay attention to "No Trespassing/Private Drive" signs.
- **Privacy:** Realize that while people who live in rural areas often value their privacy, they also depend on their neighbors for help, advice and, perhaps, a cup of sugar to finish their batch of cookies. Respect one another's privacy, but don't be afraid to extend some friendliness and courtesy.



Fences

Fences and property lines are often a source of conflict between neighbors. Remember that fences do not always indicate property lines. Before purchasing your land, locate your property lines and confirm whether the existing fences are properly placed. Be sure to discuss any concerns with your neighbors and learn of past agreements. Decide if you can abide by the same agreements. Often, fence lines are shared between two neighbors and, in most cases, each landowner shares half the expense and labor to maintain or install a fence. Work with your neighbors to improve cooperation and build strong relationships.

People are often unaware of private-property boundaries. Fences often imply private property; however, private property is not required to be fenced. It is the responsibility of individuals to know whose land they are on, regardless of whether it is fenced. Always ask permission to be on someone's property.

Gates

Properly maintained fences are important for the protection of livestock and wildlife. Fences also allow for good pasture-rotation planning in managing livestock.

When passing through another's gate, remember it is imperative that you leave the gate as you found it. If the gate was open, leave it open. If it was shut, close it after you pass through.

Dogs

Keep your dogs under control and on your property. Free-roaming dogs can be a threat to the public, livestock and wildlife. Livestock owners have the right to protect their livestock and in some cases will destroy dogs that threaten their herds. If your pet kills or injures livestock, you can be held financially responsible and your dog may be euthanized.

Pets should have collars and identification tags. Deschutes County requires a dog to be licensed if the animal is six months old or has its permanent canine teeth, whichever comes first. License forms are available at the Deschutes County Finance Department, veterinary offices and the Redmond and Central Oregon animal shelters. Spayed or neutered animals qualify for reduced fees.

Be a responsible pet owner. Always spay or neuter your dogs and cats.

Simple Hints for Getting Along With Your Neighbors

- Respect your neighbor's endeavors and recognize that being a good neighbor is a two-way street.
- Understand that some practices, such as burning along irrigation ditches, are common farming practices and necessary at certain times of the year.
- Farmers often work around the clock, especially during planting and harvesting seasons. The noise of equipment may temporarily disrupt the peace and quiet. Enjoy the sound of agriculture in action.
- Coordinate use of irrigation water on shared systems. Be aware of irrigation policies associated with your property.
- Proper pasture and irrigation management prevent pastures from turning into dusty, weedy fields. Do not over graze pastures; use water efficiently and wisely.
- Control weeds on your land. Good management practices will keep weeds from spreading to your neighbor's property through water systems, wind and other means.
- Alert neighbors if their livestock is on your property.
- Deschutes County has Open Range and Livestock Districts. If you are in an Open Range area and don't want other people's livestock on your property, you must build adequate fences or have natural barriers to keep livestock out. If you are in a Livestock District, the animal owner is required to keep the animals confined to their property.
- Be a courteous driver. Farm equipment often uses public roads to travel from field to field. Slow down, be patient and move over to make room for this equipment.

