

Yamhill County

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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DATE: February 19, 2026

SUBJECT: Agricultural Exempt Structures

This memo clarifies and outlines the procedure and requirements for obtaining an agricultural exemption permit. The exemption applies to **building permits only** and does not extend to electrical, plumbing, or mechanical installations.

Please note that wiring methods for an exempt agricultural building differ from standard construction and must comply with Article 547.20 of **NFPA 70 – National Electrical Code (2023)**. For additional information, contact the Yamhill County Electrical Department.

If the occupancy of an agricultural building changes later, a structural evaluation and report by a licensed engineer is required, as well as a standard building permit, and required inspections will be necessary. It is important to understand how these requirements may affect your construction project before proceeding, as addressing them after the fact can result in significant additional costs.

Before an agricultural exemption permit can be issued, the Planning Division must first determine whether the property is located on farm or forest land. Only structures located on a qualifying farm or forest parcel are eligible for the exemption.

To apply for an agricultural building permit exemption, the applicant must complete the Agricultural Building Application and a separate Affidavit. The affidavit must be signed in the presence of a Notary Public. The intended use of the building must be clearly stated on the affidavit so the planner can determine whether the structure and proposed use(s) qualify for the exemption.

A detailed site plan must be submitted with the affidavit showing:

- The location of the proposed structure
- All existing structures on the property
- Septic system location (if applicable)
- Well location
- Distances to property lines

If the agricultural building permit exemption is approved, the structure may be constructed without a standard building permit; however, a zoning permit and setback inspection will still be required. If the exemption is not approved, a standard building permit application must be submitted.

Definition of a Farm

A farm is defined as private land used for **the primary purpose of obtaining a monetary profit** through:

- Raising, harvesting, and selling crops; or
- Feeding, breeding, managing, and selling livestock, poultry, fur-bearing mammals, honeybees, or their products.

Farming is a business. Properties not primarily engaged in the business of farming do not meet the legal definition of a farm. “Hobby farms,” gardens for personal consumption, or keeping animals primarily as pets (such as horses or goats) do not qualify. If the principal use of the property is residential, the building will not qualify for exemption.

County Policy – ORS 455.315

Exemption of Agricultural Buildings, Agricultural Grading, Equine Facilities, and Dog Training Facilities

To determine what qualifies for exemption under ORS 455.315, Yamhill County applies the following standards:

- The application must state that the structure will be used as part of a farm or forestry operation.
- Some portion of the property must be receiving a farm or forest deferral.
- The property must be zoned for farm use, forest use, or both.
- The use must be permitted under ORS 215.213(1)(z) or ORS 215.283(1)(x).
- No more than 10 people may be present in the structure at any one time.

Agricultural Building

An agricultural building is a structure located on a farm or forest operation and used for:

- a. Storage, maintenance, or repair of farm or forest machinery and equipment
- b. Raising, harvesting, and selling crops or forest products.
- c. Feeding, breeding, managing, and selling livestock, poultry, fur-bearing animals, honeybees, or their products.
- d. Dairying and the sale of dairy products; or
- e. Other agricultural, forestry, horticultural, or animal husbandry uses, including preparation and storage of farm or forest products and marketing or disposal of those products.

An Agricultural Building Does Not Include:

- a. A dwelling;
- b. A structure (other than for growing plants) where 10 or more persons are present at any one time;
- c. A structure regulated by the State Fire Marshal pursuant to ORS Chapter 476;
- d. A structure used by the public; or
- e. A structure located in a floodplain and subject to the National Flood Insurance Act.

Equine Facility

An equine facility is a building located on a farm and used by the farm owner or the public for:

- a. Stabling or training equines; or
- b. Riding lessons and training clinics.

An Equine Facility Does Not Include:

- a. A dwelling;
- b. A structure where 10 or more people are present at any one time;
- c. A structure regulated by the State Fire Marshal pursuant to ORS Chapter 476; or
- d. A structure located in a floodplain and subject to the National Flood Insurance Act.

Dog Training Facility

A dog training facility is a farm building used for dog training classes or testing trials, where no more than 10 people are present at any one time.

Forestland

Forestland is defined as land used for the growing and harvesting of forest tree species. Forest tree species are those capable of producing logs, fiber, or other wood materials suitable for lumber, sheeting, pulp, firewood, or other commercial forest products. This definition does not include trees grown for Christmas trees.

If the total area of outbuildings exceeds 1,000 square feet, a driveway inspection by the local fire chief will be required.