

SPRINGWATER OFFICIAL PLAN
SECTION 17 - AGRICULTURAL POLICIES

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[This entire section was appealed to the OMB by Mayer and withdrawn on April 7/98]

17.1 **Introduction**

17.1.1 The Township contains significant areas of land which have historically been, and remain, devoted primarily to agriculture. The 'Agricultural' classification of land shall mean that the predominant use of land in the areas so designated shall be for agricultural purposes and farm-related uses which may also include reforestation, forestry and hunting. Policies relating to agricultural lands are based on the recognition that agriculture is the most important segment of the Township's economy. The agricultural industry must be protected in recognition of the increasing pressure from urban type development on such lands and the danger of the encroachment of non-agricultural uses into agricultural areas. *The rural landscape, and the built heritage resources which contribute to it, must be protected. [Modified by OMB Sept. 23/09]*

17.2 **Objectives**

17.2.1 To make available lands for agricultural use on a long term basis.

17.2.2 To promote conditions which encourage the efficient operation and economic viability of agricultural operations within the Township.

17.2.3 To keep to an absolute minimum those uses that are incompatible, disruptive and/or competitive with farming activity and practices.

17.2.4 To encourage good farm and land stewardship practices.

17.2.5 *To encourage the preservation and conservation of heritage resources which contribute to the rural landscape. [Modified by OMB Sept. 23/09]*

17.3 **Permitted Uses**

17.3.1 The Agricultural classification shall mean that the predominant use of land in areas so designated shall be general and specialized agricultural uses including buildings and structures normally accessory to an agricultural use such as a dwelling, barns and sheds. Even if such lands are not being used for these purposes at the present time, they shall be considered as good agricultural lands. Secondary farming uses and agriculturally related uses shall also be permitted subject to the policies as described herein.

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17.3.2 The Township recognizes that the nature of farming is changing and that additional activities, such as home industries can be carried out in the Agricultural designation that would not have an impact on the preservation of agricultural land and/or interfere with agricultural land use practices.

17.3.3 **Primary Agricultural Uses**

17.3.3.1 These may include the growing of crops, raising of livestock and other animals for food or fur including poultry and fish.

17.3.3.2 Furthermore, accessory buildings which may include one single detached dwelling per separate farm holding, barns, silos and buildings and structures for packing, storage and processing of products grown or raised on the farm are also permitted.

17.3.4 **Secondary Farm Uses**

17.3.4.1 *Included uses which are secondary to a primary agricultural use such as a home occupation, home industry or uses which produce value added agricultural products **primarily** [OMB Order #2575] from the farm operation on the property. [Mod. #50 - Jan.28/98]* Value-added products could include farm vacations, cottage wineries, bed and breakfast, produce stands and seed cleaning and sales.

17.3.5 **Agricultural-Related Uses**

17.3.5.1 Include those *small scale* [Mod. #51 - Jan.28/98] farm related industrial and commercial uses directly related to the farming operation. Examples of agriculture-related uses include livestock assembly yards, grain drying, cold storage facilities, custom spraying, husbandry services and abattoirs and are required in close proximity to a farm operation. Non-related agricultural uses such as forestry, kennels, passive recreation and conservation are also permitted.

17.3.5.2 This would not include such uses as golf courses including driving ranges, tent and trailer parks, equestrian residential developments, agrominiiums, the removal of topsoil, tree nurseries, farm implement dealers and institutional uses. [Mod. #52 - deletion of sod operations - Jan.28/98]

17.4 **Policies**

17.4.1 It shall be the policy of this Plan to protect and preserve existing and

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potentially productive agricultural land to the greatest extent possible. Agricultural uses shall take precedence over all other uses. This policy shall also include the preservation, wherever possible, of the natural landscape and rural characteristics of the area.

- 17.4.2 The policies of this Plan relating to the ■Agricultural■ and the ■Rural■ designations are generally based on a differentiation between good agricultural land and marginally productive agricultural land or nonagricultural land.
- 17.4.3 While delineation of the capability of land for agriculture has been made on the various schedules forming part of this official plan, generally through the use of the Canada Land Inventory information, local knowledge and air photo review, and the Simcoe County Soil Survey, the boundaries of the ■Agricultural■ designation should be considered approximate. Consideration of applications for development that may be affected by the policies of this Section should be based on a determination of good agricultural land that takes into account the following:
 - 17.4.3.1 Land classified as Class 1, 2, and 3 on the Canada Land Inventory Soil Capability for Agriculture maps.
 - 17.4.3.2 A report of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs or the appropriate government agency, should be obtained describing the agricultural potential of the land.
 - 17.4.3.3 A report by a qualified professional in the agricultural sector.
 - 17.4.3.4 Past crop records shall be examined where these are available.
- 17.4.4 The Township shall evaluate the above matters collectively, and based on this evaluation as well as their local knowledge of the area, shall determine the quality of the agricultural land involved in specific development proposals or land use matters.
- 17.4.5 **[Deleted by Mod. # 53 - Jan.28/98]**
- 17.4.6 **[Deleted by Mod. # 53 - Jan.28/98]**
- 17.4.7 **[Deleted by Mod. # 53 - Jan.28/98]**
- 17.4.8 The conversion of a farm related residential dwelling into two or more attached dwellings shall not be permitted.

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- 17.4.9 Specialized or intensive agricultural uses shall, where possible, be conducted in accordance with the latest standards of the Provincial Minimum Distance Separation Formula as amended.
- 17.4.10 The implementing Zoning By-law may define a farm and set minimum lot sizes for farm uses. Minimum farm size requirements may vary according to the type of agricultural use involved.
- 17.4.11 The implementing Zoning By-law may use an agricultural zone in regard to this designation. Agricultural uses permitted under this Section of the Plan may be allowed to develop without the requirement of an amendment to the implementing Zoning By-law. **[Mod. # 53 - Jan. 28/98] Deletion of sentence**
- 17.4.12 The planning and location of utility corridors, lines, towers and associated uses shall, wherever possible, respect the intent of this Plan which is to protect and preserve existing and potentially productive agricultural land to the greatest extent possible. Such uses should be encouraged to locate in areas having poorer soils and should be located and designed so as to minimize disturbance to existing farm operations. Such uses shall not require an amendment to the implementing Zoning By-law.
- 17.4.13 The Provincial Minimum Distance Separation Formula, as amended, should be *applied* **[Mod. # 53 - Jan.28/98]** when considering the locations and or renovation of intensive agricultural uses such as feed lots and poultry farms. In addition to any other policies of this Plan, the Formula should also be applied reciprocally to new uses being proposed on adjacent lots so as to prevent any interference with existing farm operations.
- 17.4.14 Wherever possible in the Agricultural designation, development of permitted uses on existing lots of record shall encourage the appropriate setback from any agriculturally related buildings and structures.
- 17.4.15 New secondary farm uses and agricultural related uses including home occupations, home industry, bed and breakfast, cold storage facilities, husbandry services, abattoirs and kennel uses permitted by the policies of this section may be subject to site plan control. In addition to the above, the development or redevelopment of existing secondary and agricultural-related uses located within the Agricultural designation, which would result in an expansion of approximately 25% or greater of usable floor area of the use or lot area of the use may be subject to site plan control. Reference should be made to Section 29 in regard to additional policies concerning site plan control.

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17.4.16 The policies of Section 28, Consent Policies shall apply to all lands designated Agricultural in this Plan.

17.5 **Special Urban Settlement Area Policies**

17.5.1 The planning objective in regard to the Agricultural land use designation is to preserve and protect agricultural lands and operations in these areas and to prevent incompatible uses from developing in the area. Because the Agricultural designation abuts one or more of the settlement related designations or is in close proximity to such designations, Council shall carefully evaluate any application to alter the boundary of the Agricultural designation in this area. Such applications shall be considered in terms of their impact on the planning objectives stated above. Any change in the delineation of the Agricultural designation which would conflict with the objective should not be permitted.

17.6 **Exceptions**

17.6.1 Lot 18, Concession 6, (former Vespra), Schedule "A-3"

17.6.1.1 Notwithstanding any policies of this Official Plan to the contrary, the lands designated Special Policy Area and noted above may be used for the purpose of an airport. Accessory uses to such a facility including business offices, flight training school, restaurants, maintenance and repair facilities, associated storage and similar uses may be permitted.