

Property Standards Review: Agricultural Lands and Normal Farm Practices

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The Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh has formed an Agricultural Property Standards Working Group to consider updating the Property Standards By-law to **apply to all properties, including agricultural lands.**

Currently, agricultural lands (AG1, AG3, AG4) are exempt from the Township's Property Standards By-law. This broad exemption means the Township cannot address concerns on those lands, even if the issues have nothing to do with farming (for example maintenance and property condition issues). By removing the blanket exemption, the by-law would apply fairly to all properties. At the same time, normal farm practices would remain fully protected under provincial law.



At this time, **no decision has been made**. The purpose of this working group is to explore the option, understand potential implications, and gather information and feedback before considering any recommendation of changes to Council.

What does this mean for property standards if agricultural lands are included?

- The Township could enforce property standards on agricultural lands if the issue is not related to farming (e.g., unsafe or derelict structures, hazards to public safety).
- If the concern is related to a normal farm practice, the property owner is protected by the FFPPA, and the by-law cannot be used to restrict that practice.

What are "normal farm practices"?

Normal farm practices are activities carried out as part of a legitimate farming operation that:

- follow sound farming principles,
- use accepted customs and standards, and
- may include the use of new technology if applied properly.

Examples include:

- running farm machinery at different hours of the day,
- spreading manure or fertilizers,
- raising livestock and poultry,
- using drainage, irrigation, or soil management techniques.

Who decides if something is a normal farm practice?

If there is a dispute, the decision is made by the Normal Farm Practices Protection Board (NFPPB), a provincial tribunal.

- Farmers can apply to the Board for a determination.
- The Board has the authority to confirm whether an activity is protected under the FFPPA.

Have Your Say

Opportunities for public input will be available before any amendment is considered by Council. Details on how to provide feedback and participate will be shared as the review progresses. More information regarding the Agricultural Property Standards Working Group can be found at www.acwtownship.ca/government/projects-initiatives/agricultural-property-standards-working-group

To view the current Property Standards By-Law visit

www.acwtownship.ca/government/by-laws/building-and-property/46-2018-property-standards