

Agricultural Preservation

The county's agricultural resources are often overshadowed by the dominance of metropolitan Sioux Falls, yet agriculture remains a vital part of the local and regional economy. Significant strides have occurred in recent years to protect the farming industry, but major challenges still exist for agriculture to continue as an economic force into the 21st century.

Routine farming practices are threatened by the emergence of nonfarm residences in agricultural areas, undermining the freedom that farmers enjoy in operating their businesses. As the size of farms increases, operations diversify, and innovative business concepts are introduced, land use conflicts between farming and residential uses are certain to become an even greater problem.

The current density zoning standard allows up to 16 residences on each square mile of land. This density may be contrary to long term farming interests who must endure more nonfarm population while attempting to sustain a profitable business without causing conflicts with neighbors.

The county should assist the agricultural sector in exploring methods for preserving and protecting agricultural resources, including exclusive agricultural areas established as special zoning districts. If this concept is to succeed, farmers must be involved at the grass roots level, delineating the district boundaries and formulating district regulations.