

Chapter 509 “A” Agricultural District

509.01 Purposes

The purpose of the Agricultural District is to implement the following Rice County Comprehensive Land Use Plan goals and additional objectives:

- A. **Goal 38.** Allow rural housing of one unit per quarter-quarter section with a second allowed when the crop equivalency rating (CER) is 65 or below, with clustering of the units encouraged.
- B. **Goal 50.** Encourage clustering of any rural residential development in close proximity to roads in an effort to protect agricultural land, environmentally sensitive areas and to facilitate emergency service.
- C. **Goal 52.** Maintain a diverse economic mix for Rice County by promoting agriculture and associated businesses.
- D. **Goal 53.** Discourage scattered site residential development and promote clustering
- E. **Goal 54.** Allow for the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) within a Township.
- F. Minimize conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses.

509.02 Permitted, Conditional and Accessory Uses, Agricultural District

- A. Permitted, conditional and accessory uses of land are as specified in Table 508-1. All other uses shall be prohibited.
- B. Permitted and conditional uses may be combined on a single parcel, provided that each use meets the density standards in §509.03 and any specific standards in Chapter 507.
- C. Additional requirements, including standards for signs, parking, water supply, waste disposal and sewage treatment, are set forth in Chapters 505 and 506 of this Ordinance, as well as other applicable provisions of this Ordinance and other County ordinances.

509.03 Density Standards

- A. The base density permitted in the Agriculture District is one (1) dwelling unit per quarter-quarter section of land. All existing dwellings, including those on parcels of record, are counted towards calculation of the overall base density per quarter-quarter section. Rights that have been transferred from a quarter-quarter section shall be counted against the base density in the quarter-quarter section they have been transferred from.
- B. A second dwelling unit per quarter-quarter section may be permitted on lands that meet one of the requirement of Subsections 1 through 3 below:
 1. The quarter-quarter section must have a weighted average Crop Equivalent Rating (CER) of sixty-five (65) or less as established by Revised 2002 Productivity Factors and Crop Equivalent Ratings for Soils of Minnesota as published by the Minnesota Extension Service of the University of Minnesota, or
 2. The parcel to be developed must include at least 1.25 acres of forest land, as defined in this Ordinance. The dwelling need not be located in the forest land to qualify for this provision, or
 3. An abandoned farm homestead may be used as a building site for an additional dwelling, provided that there is physical evidence that there was once a dwelling on the site. This provision shall not apply to an existing residence unless it is no longer in habitable condition.
 4. An additional dwelling shall not be permitted in the following areas:
 - a. Areas classified as wetlands, floodplain and peat areas or other areas of poor drainage.
 - b. Slopes of twelve percent (12%) or greater, unless accompanied by an engineer’s report showing adequate footing, drainage and grading plans.
 - c. Locations that would require a new public dedicated street.

5. All lots permitted under this subsection shall meet the dimensional standards of §509.05 and the standards of the Rice County Sewage and Wastewater Treatment Ordinance
6. Dwellings shall be sited to minimize intrusions into agricultural land and potential interference with agricultural operations
- C. Once a given quarter-quarter section has been developed with a single dwelling unit and, where permitted, a second dwelling unit, no further residential development is permitted within that quarter-quarter section, with the exception of undeveloped parcels of record, or utilizing transferable development rights from another quarter-quarter section.
- D. Free-standing rural businesses, defined as non-agriculture-related commercial or production uses on separate parcels, shall be limited to a maximum of one per quarter-quarter section. (These uses are classified in Table 508-1 as “Commercial and Industrial Uses.”)

509.04 Density Transfers

Within the Agriculture District, density units may be transferred across quarter-quarter section boundaries and between parcels as specified in Chapter 520, Transfer of Development Rights Regulations and Chapter 521, Cluster Development Standards. Density units may be transferred from the Agriculture District as specified in Chapter 520.

509.05 Dimensional Standards

- A. **Minimum lot area, residential lot:** 35 acres, or a minimum of 1 acre if the site qualifies under §509.03 B.
- B. **Minimum lot area, dwelling of record:** A parcel containing a dwelling of record may be reduced in size to 1.0 acres. The remainder of the parcel may only be used or developed in accordance with the density standards of §509.03.
- C. **Minimum lot area, all other uses:** 2.5 acres, or as specified by conditional use permit.
- D. **Minimum lot width:** 50 feet
- E. **Minimum front yard setback:**

County road, State Highway	100 feet
Township, other road	70 feet
Front property line	70 feet
- F. **Minimum side yard setback:** 20 feet, with the exception of buildings containing livestock, which shall have a minimum setback of 100 feet.
- G. **Minimum rear yard setback:**
 1. Principal buildings: 70 feet
 2. Accessory buildings: 20 feet
 3. Livestock buildings: 100 feet
- H. **Maximum height:** 35 feet. Agricultural structures are exempt from height limitations.
- I. **Feedlot setback:** The minimum setback for new residences from existing feedlots shall be the same as the requirements established in the Rice County Feedlot Ordinance for setbacks of feedlots from existing residences.
- J. **Minimum dwelling unit size:** All single-family dwelling units except temporary farm residences shall be a minimum of 960 square feet in area and 16 feet in width.