

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, owning farm animals and other non-traditional pets has become more popular with suburban and urban homeowners.

“Urban agriculture,” as it’s often called, can include traditional farming practices such as cultivating, processing and distributing vegetables or animal products. It allows communities to be more sustainable while providing additional food security and creating more green space.

Other reasons for having these types of animals include educational, companionship and service purposes.

Zoning for farm animals and other non-traditional pets is an emerging topic in the planning community. New provisions are being created to regulate the number of animals permitted, lot size, setbacks, coop or enclosure size, disposal, feed storage, and on-site sales of products such as eggs, honey and milk.

Several types of regulations should be considered in the zoning ordinance. Minimum lot size requirements are common because of noise or odor concerns.

Setbacks are also important to consider, with many municipalities considering setbacks from exterior lot lines, existing dwelling units, natural water sources (perennial stream, river, spring, lake, pond or reservoir), as well as an active public water supply.

BENEFITS

- Provides sustainable and local food products such as milk, eggs and honey.
- Provides educational opportunities for urban residents.
- Service animals can assist individuals who are mentally or physically impaired.

DRAWBACKS

- Can be difficult to regulate and control issues such as noise, odors and disease.
- Local businesses may resist allowing service animals into their establishments.

TIPS TO CONSIDER

- **CONNECT WITH NEARBY MUNICIPALITIES FOR ZONING CONSISTENCY.**
- **WORK WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES TO DISCUSS ACCEPTING OTHER SERVICE ANIMALS IN ADDITION TO DOGS.**

RESOURCES

- [Cumberland County Model Ordinance](#)
- [East Hanover Zoning Ordinance \(Page 78\)](#)
- [Swatara Township Zoning Ordinance \(Section 295-67\)](#)
- [American Planning Association Resources](#)
- [U.S. Service Animal Certification](#)

RELATED FACT SHEETS ON PLANNINGTOOLKIT.ORG

- Agricultural and Natural Resource Protection
- Community Gardens
- Traditional Zoning Ordinances

