

## AGRICULTURAL LANDS ELEMENT

### Introduction

"Agricultural Lands" as set forth within the context of Statewide Planning Goal No. 3 are defined as land of predominately Class I, II, III, IV, V, and VI soils as identified in the Soil Capability Classification System of the United States Soil Conservation Service, and other lands which are suitable for farm use taking into consideration soil fertility, suitability for grazing, climatic conditions, existing and future availability of water for farm irrigation purposes, existing land use patterns, technological and energy inputs required, or accepted farming practices. Lands in other classes which are necessary to permit farm practices to be undertaken on adjacent or nearby lands, shall be included as agricultural land in any event.

Within the same context, "Farm Use" is defined in reference as set forth in ORS 215.203 and includes the non-farm uses authorized by ORS 215.283.

Morrow County agriculture contributes about \$72 million in annual income to the County and supports local food processing, transportation, trade, and service employment and payrolls. The County's agricultural sector has consistently ranked among the top ten Oregon counties in total agricultural productivity. As agriculturalists enter new crop markets and as continued irrigation and technological advancements are developed, the sector's importance to the County and state will be ensured.

Problems facing County agriculture include formation of water allocation policies between local, state, and inter-state interests, shortages in affordable labor supplies, increased costs of supplies, electricity, equipment, and transportation, development of new markets for County products and in some areas, increased land use pressures among competing interests (i.e., industrial, commercial, recreational, and agricultural). Proper planning, policy formulation, education, and coordination efforts may alleviate some of these problems in the future.

### General Resource Description

The U.S. Census of Agriculture (1974) reported a total of 1,107,840 acres (84% of total County) as being classified in farm use. Although the reported number of farms in the County is shown to have decreased from the 1969 total of 347 to the 1974 total of 341 acres in farm use for the same time period increased substantially from 20,759 acres to 78,178 acres. For 1979, irrigated farm land is reported to total 90,000 acres.

The change in irrigated acreage is directly reflective of an increase in agricultural productivity in the County. Further, much of the increase in irrigated farm land often involved previously less intensively used lands, thus contributing significantly to the increase in value of production. The expansion in irrigation has been especially significant in Morrow County, and irrigated acreage increased by 185 percent during five years.

If irrigators are able to substitute Columbia River water or develop new surface impoundments, it is reasonable to assume that more land in Morrow County will come under irrigation in the future. Studies by Oregon State University indicate that irrigated acreage in the County could double by 2000 or earlier, if market demand, sprinkler technology, economics and water availability allow.

Even if irrigation does not advance much beyond present levels in Morrow County it is reasonable to project an increase in this area's share of Oregon's total agricultural production, due to the greater pressure on Willamette Valley farmland for conversion to other uses. It is likely that sufficient sources of water alternative to underground aquifer sources will be developed to sustain present levels, if not to expand.

Another fact of available data is presented by the number of irrigated farms. Essentially, the number of irrigated farms remained constant while the irrigated acreage increased tremendously, indicating irrigators are increasing either total holdings or total holdings under irrigation, or both. Clearly, most irrigated farms in the County are large, progressive capital intensive farms.

Many of the capital intensive irrigated farms are family or large corporations that seasonally employ a large number of workers. Several farms comprise over 10,000 irrigated acres and employ from 50 to 100 full time equivalent persons. Many other irrigated farms range from 1000 to 10,000 acres and may employ several family members and from 3 to 20 persons or more at peak seasons. Non-irrigated farms support lower levels of employment with perhaps a proprietor and a hired hand performing most of the year's work while students or other part time workers may be hired during harvest.

All in all, irrigation development has enabled Morrow County to become one of the largest potato producing counties in the nation and has provided the impetus for processing plant construction, increased cattle feeding (potato culls) and increased prosperity in local agribusiness. Entrepreneurs that were attracted to the County by irrigation development and potato potential are now evaluating the feasibility of other crops such as mint, wine grapes, parsnips, carrots, rutabagas and with the addition of a hydro-cooler, sweet corn and cantaloupe. Within the livestock sector of the County's agriculture, cattle and calves receipts experienced the lowest rate of annual increase (7.4% average). This is probably due to low cattle prices in 1974, 75 and 76 and higher prices in the early 1970's.

Morrow County experienced the same trends as other Oregon Counties as beef inventories increased and sales decreased in 1973 and 1974. Even though many wheat farmers liquidated their beef cattle in 1975 and 76 when prices were below the cost of production, the number of cattle in Morrow County has increased substantially since 1969. The following inventory figures are from the Census of Agriculture for 1969 and 1974 and estimates prepared by Harold Kerr, the Morrow County Extension Agent, for subsequent years.

Head of Inventoried Cattle and Calves					
<u>1969</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>
27,473	35,000	38,258	38,000	41,000	43,500

The Table that follows shows 1976 and 1977 estimated gross income generated from the primary commodities produced in Morrow County. Total gross farm income fell to \$59 million in 1977 from well over \$64 million in 1976 and \$69 million in 1975 according to these estimates. However, overall change from 1970 to 1976 equaled a 465% increase (from \$11,438,000 to \$64,635,000). This huge increase in total sales accompanied the growth in irrigated crop land and a shift in cropping patterns. The severe drought during 1977 was in part responsible for that

decrease as dryland wheat yields were low and that receipts were about half the 1976 level. It should be noted that income from livestock sales were increased in all categories.

In 1970, potatoes comprised only 6.5% of total County receipts and in 1976 they accounted for 49.6%. At the same time, grain receipts, while increasing an average of 32% per year, fell as a share of total receipts from 55% in 1970 to 31.6% in 1976. Livestock receipts followed those of grain, dropping from 32.8% of 1970 receipts to 9.0% in 1976. Hay and silage receipts increased \$5,037,000 or about 200% per year, growing from 3.1% of total receipts in 1970 to 8.3% in 1976.

Grass and legume seeds fluctuated through the 1970's and none were marketed in 1976. Vegetable crop receipts increased from \$35,000 in 1970 to \$617,000 in 1976 (about 240% annually) and grew from 0.3% of total agricultural receipts to 1.0%. Though vegetables are a very small share of total County crops, growers have increased production tremendously. Specialty crops receipts experienced a marked increase (from \$54,000 to \$224,000) but fell as a share of total receipts (from 0.5% to 0.3%).

Gross farm sales for 1979 in Morrow County were estimated to be \$72,145,000, reports Harold Kerr, Morrow County Extension Agent. This compares to \$72,531,000 in 1978, a decline of less than 1%. Such is shown in a table that follows.

Wheat was the number one crop with total sales of \$34,170,000, up 19.8% from 1978. The large increase was due to an increase of 14,000 acres of irrigated wheat. Overall yields increased slightly. Wheat was produced on 212,000 acres in Morrow County.

Potatoes declined almost 7 million dollars to \$17,710,000. The 39% reduction from \$29,262,000 in 1978 was due to 7,000 less acres; a 10% loss in yield and a 6% lower price.

Other crops total sales were \$10,356,000 up 28% from last year. Crops included in this total are barley, corn, alfalfa, beans, peas, watermelons, mint and others. Livestock sales improved 14% to total \$9,909,000. Beef cattle accounted for the majority of this amount with sales in 1979 of \$7,871,000.

The figures are prepared by O.S.U. Economist Stan Miles in cooperation with the Morrow County Extension Service Staff. Readers are reminded that gross sales are not reflective of agricultural income since there is a wide variety of cost involved to produce the various crops. Most of the increases or decreases are due to fluctuations in acreage and actual sales per acre have not kept pace with inflation.

Table 11  
1978 Reported and 1979 Estimated Gross Farm Income  
Morrow County

Agricultural Commodity	1978 Acres Harvested	1978 Gross Sales	1979 Acres Harvested	1979 Gross Sales
Wheat	204,000	\$27,389,000	212,000	\$34,170,000
Potatoes	27,350	29,262,000	20,150	17,710,000
Forage Crops	26,200	4,378,000	18,900	5,240,000

Feed Grains	9,050	706,000	8,000	949,000
All Other Crops	3,475	2,353,000	5,695	4,167,000
<b>TOTAL CROPS</b>	<b>271,075</b>	<b>\$64,088,000</b>	<b>264,745</b>	<b>\$62,236,000</b>
Beef Cattle		\$ 7,073,000		\$ 7,871,000
Sheep & Wool		703,000		1,512,000
Dairy		510,000		386,000
Swine		82,000		65,000
Misc. Livestock		75,000		75,000
<b>TOTAL LIVESTOCK</b>		<b>\$ 8,443,000</b>		<b>\$ 9,909,000</b>
<b>TOTAL GROSS FARM SALES</b>		<b>\$72,531,000</b>		<b>\$72,145,000</b>

prepared by: Harold E. Kerr, Morrow County Extension Agent; John P. Nordheim, Morrow County Extension Agent; Darrell C. Maxwell, Area Extension Agent; and Stan Miles, Extension Economist, Agricultural Economics, OSU, Corvallis, Oregon

In addition to the irrigated farm lands described hereinbefore, there are approximately 560,000 acres of rangeland in Morrow County. The rangeland conditions vary from excellent to poor with the majority in above average condition.

The balance of the farm land total acreage of the County is predominately classified as dryland crop land (380,000 acres) of which a large portion is the primary basis for the important cereal grain industry.

#### Farm Residential-FR-40 Area

Morrow County Agricultural Plan policy 20 (as amended) requires that the SF-40 zone be "applied only to areas having an existing overall ownership pattern of less than 80 acres." This is to protect the existing resource value of these areas by maintaining the existing lot sizes. The area currently zoned SF-40 meet the requirement of policy 20. A review of ownerships in this area shows that the average ownership size is 34 acres. With a 40 acre minimum parcel size, only two 80-acre parcels can be further partitioned (see Exception Map-West Boardman area).

#### Review of Land Division below 160 acres

The purpose of this section is to explain County requirements for creating farm parcels below 160 acres and siting a farm dwelling on parcels below 160 acres in size. This also provides the rationale for having flexibility in the review of land divisions below a fixed minimum lot size (160 acres) and still maintain Goal 3 requirements. Based on the results of a parcel size study for Umatilla County and finding similar geographic agricultural areas and farming practices in Morrow County, special conditions exist in both counties that have permitted commercial

agricultural operations on a more intensive basis (on smaller parcels). Usually, water availability and special soil conditions, like those situations that could be found within irrigation districts or along river and creek drainages, permitted specialty crops and crop rotation patterns on smaller acreage.

To determine if a parcel or dwelling would be appropriate to continue the existing commercial agricultural enterprises within an area, the County will inventory commercial farm parcels within a two mile radius of the proposed land division or parcel requesting the dwelling. Soils, crops and land use pattern in the area will be factored into this area review. Therefore, if the proposed land division or farm dwelling request is located within a drainage-way, then only those areas having the similar soils and crops will be included in the inventory. Areas outside these similar type areas (outside the drainage-way on bench land) will not be included in the inventory. A review of farm parcels within two miles of a proposed land division or farm dwelling request would include an area sometime as large as 16 square miles. This certainly would capture the typical agricultural activities occurring in the area as required by OAR 660-05-015(6). The logical standard to measure appropriateness of whether a proposed division or dwelling would be appropriate to continue the existing agricultural enterprises in the area would be that the median size of commercial farm parcels in the area had to be as large or larger than the parcels proposed or existing parcel requesting the dwelling. Of course all non-farm parcels and parcels less than 20 acres are considered non-farm and will not be counted as part of the parcel review.

Another standard used by Morrow County to determine if a parcel or dwelling would be appropriate to continue the existing commercial agricultural enterprises within an area is the availability of water for irrigation. Inventory information document the fact that farm parcels below 160 acres are usually found in areas having water available for irrigation. Areas meeting both the parcelization review standard described above and having water available for commercial irrigation are generally found within the West Extension Irrigation District located in northern Morrow County and in the flood plains and foothills along Willow Creek, Rhea Creek, Butter Creek and some of their tributaries. Applying both the parcelization and water availability standard will limit land divisions and dwelling proposal to only those areas found to be appropriate for the continuation of existing commercial agriculture.

One other standard used by the County to assure compliance with Goal 3 address management suitability of the proposed parcel. This standard requires a finding that the resulting parcels must be a size and shape that is suitable for the continuation of the present agricultural enterprises considering farm management efficiency. In addition, land use proposals that: result in appreciably increased per acre management cost of appreciably reduced yields or management efficiency; or materially alter the stability of the overall land use pattern in the area will not be approved.

#### Findings, Problems and Potentials of the Agriculture Sector

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing Morrow County farmers is the securement of adequate water supplies. Irrigators now depend on wells and the Umatilla and Columbia River either as individuals, or as a part of an irrigation district. Adequate water supplies are, however, vital to the entire agricultural sector.

Part of Northern Morrow County lies within a critical groundwater area according to the Oregon Water Resources Department. Consequently, the State Engineer has not accepted any new applications for appropriation of groundwater from deep basalt aquifers since June 3, 1965 and

has not issued permits for the use of shallow basalt wells since April 26, 1971 for irrigation purposes. The Department is now in the process of developing new recommendations and policies regarding construction of new wells and regulation of existing wells.

Local irrigators, agricultural agency personnel and local government officials should be actively involved in groundwater policy formulations, for groundwater regulations may not only impact affected irrigators, but could cause repercussions throughout the economy as other industries are affected and as secondary sectors are impacted.

The West Extension Irrigation District serves approximately 575 Morrow County landowners and 150 Umatilla County farms in the Irrigon-Boardman-Umatilla area. The district provides water for 8,708 acres in Morrow County from two diversion points in the Umatilla River. One diversion dam is located three miles up river from the City of Umatilla and the second take out is located in the mouth of the Umatilla where John Day Dam backwater is utilized. The West Extension District was a 1916 Bureau of Reclamation project and is therefore, subject to the 160 acre per owner limitation. The district's water sources are generally adequate to meet present demand and no major expansion or renovation is planned at this time.

Farmers along Butter and Willow Creeks have utilized stream water since the land was homesteaded. Though stream flows are inadequate to meet all landowners needs, they are still an important water source. Many Butter Creek landowners envision supplementing the Butter Creek flow with water diverted from Camas Creek near Ukiah. Consequently the Snipe Creek irrigation project, proposed in 1976, is being re-evaluated. Much work remains to be done on the project, but there is strong support and if farmers, the County and involved agencies can pull loose ends together, it should provide a valuable resource to Morrow County and its agriculturalists.

The Stanfield Westland irrigation project is another plan for possible utilization of Columbia River water. This project did not receive enough support in its original form to go ahead with development in 1978. However, a project of smaller scale is still being discussed. This district would serve low elevation farms in the Boardman area and, where water levels in irrigation wells have dropped in recent years (primarily in the Ordinance area), would provide a viable water source to producers.

The 208 water quality laws which are part of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 and are now being administered by the Environmental Protection Agency, provide another influence on water use and conservation in Morrow County. On a State basis, the program is administered by the State Soil & Water Conservation Commission, and Morrow County has an active 208 Water Quality Committee.

All in all, water is the backbone to Morrow County's recently developed intensive irrigated crop production. As the highly productive land in California and the Willamette Valley experiences increased pressure for other uses, Central and Eastern Oregon's irrigable land will realize an increasing share of Oregon and U.S. agricultural production. Thus, farmers, Morrow County officials and local and state agencies should press for a comprehensive interstate policy for utilization of the Columbia River.

Concurrent with this need is the associated need for a regional power policy. Relatively cheap hydro-electricity has been a cornerstone for irrigation development in northern Morrow County, as it has been for industrial development in other parts of the Northwest. Any move to equalize

power costs throughout the nation would cause power rates in Morrow County to increase to a prohibitive level for irrigators, considering present crop prices and market conditions. Morrow County irrigators should work closely with State and Federal representatives from the Northwest to ensure adequate input at the Federal level as these issues are debated and decisions are made.

More efficient irrigation methods, such as drip irrigation, use of small megawattage hydro generators and application of fossil or nuclear fueled power plant reservoirs to agricultural uses may offer alternatives for handling water and power supply problems in the future. Technological advancements in solar and wind power generation may render these resources economically feasible.

Many of the entrepreneurs that were responsible for the recent irrigation development and associated potato and alfalfa processing plant construction are now evaluating the feasibility of growing other crops and entering new markets. Growers are researching and testing such crops as wine grapes, carrots, rutabegas, parsnips and mint. If a hydro-cooling facility were constructed, producers could enter the sweet corn and cantaloupe markets.

With piggy-back railroad transportation, growers in the County would better compete with California vegetable producers in Chicago and New York markets. Some growers and manufacturers have formed nonprofit organizations to pool resources and utilize truck trailers. In addition to the cost benefits realized by agriculturalists and manufacturers, the railroads are not required to make heavy capital investment in climate controlled freight cars since trailers are purchased by individuals and leased to the marketing organization.

Morrow County's geographic location, and specifically Boardman's location, provides it with some unique transportation advantages. Boardman is located at the junction of main east-west railroad lines and a major waterway, the Columbia River. This is the closest major transfer point for north and midwest producers shipping produce west by rail for eventual Orient markets, to take advantage of generally cheaper water transport. Dock facilities exist at the Port of Morrow and there is certainly potential for additional development.

Another transportation issue affects all farm producers. That is the PUC licensing regulations. Farmers may now obtain two types of special license plates that enable them to utilize truck and truck trailer rigs more efficiently.

Morrow County also has many of the attributes necessary to support a strong dairy industry. Locally grown alfalfa and feed grain could be utilized within the County instead of being shipped to other areas. The County is located within marketing distance of Portland, Tri-Cities and the Pendleton-Walla Walla areas. With increasing urban pressures on Willamette Valley dairies, and increased population throughout the State, the County could realize a large share of the State's dairy production. One constraint, however, that may indirectly limit dairy development in parts of northern Morrow County is the critical groundwater designation. Since no wells can be drilled in the designated area, and since most existing wells have limits on annual water usage, farmers may not be able to obtain adequate water to meet the needs of dairying.

Two of the strongest influences on the Morrow County economy are foreign trade and domestic agricultural policies. Farm products are such an integral part of United States production and exports that they are continually used as a foreign policy tool and may not be marketed to the

producer's advantage. Marketing specialists and producers must remain abreast of economic conditions in foreign countries, currency values and the political climate among nations.

One final subject that should be dealt with is taxes and other government regulations. Inflation, rising land prices (while commodity prices have remained low) and the Oregon Property Tax System have combined to raise havoc with farm land owners and their balance of payments. The farm land deferral program has helped to ease the squeeze and it must be maintained for lack of more equitable tax system reforms. Without such a farm tax deferral program, landowners (especially marginal producers) are encouraged to take land out of production in favor of the higher returns associated with other uses that may be incompatible with neighboring agricultural enterprises.

Government regulations also increase production and labor costs to farmers as they do other businesses. Unemployment and industrial accident insurance programs and health and safety regulations should be closely analyzed when applied to farm workers who are most often seasonal, and part time employees. The benefits of such labor, health, conservation and environmental programs and regulations must be balanced with their effect on farmers and their ability to absorb or recoup these costs.

#### Agricultural Lands Exceptions

This portion of the Agricultural Lands Element will contain a summary of Exceptions approved to the Agricultural Lands Element, with the bulk of the Exception documentation included in the Exceptions Element.

HARP Solar Energy Facility: In early 2018 OE Solar 1, LLC, made application to site a solar photovoltaic energy generation facility on land zoned for Exclusive Farm Use under Conditional Use Permit provisions within the Morrow County Zoning Ordinance. The evaluation includes a requirement for a Goal 3 Agricultural Lands exception when more than 12 acres of high value farmland or 20 acres of arable farm land is impacted by the proposed development. For this facility it would trigger the 20 acre arable land threshold and would most likely trigger the 12 acre high value threshold. For that reason the applicant submitted a concurrent request for an exception to the Morrow County Comprehensive Plan Agricultural Lands Element.

The Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on April 24, 2018, and made Findings of Fact based on the application and staff review that the exception to Goal 3 was warranted. Upon the Planning Commission recommendation the Board of Commissioners at a Public Hearing held on May 30, 2018, concurred and approved the Goal 3 Agricultural Lands exception based on the following findings:

- ▶ The proposed solar photovoltaic energy generation facility by OE Solar 1, LLC, known as HARP, does require an exception to Goal 3 Agricultural Lands as it will impact over 20 acres of arable land and may impact over 12 acres of high value farm land.
- ▶ The Morrow County Comprehensive Plan Economic Element when updated in 2016 identified the Energy Sector and was written envisioning projects like this one and supports responsible renewable energy development that has limited impacts. The Energy Sector discussion ends as follows: "...and provide mechanisms to maintain and improve energy generation and movement in and through Morrow County." This application achieves that desire.

- ▶ Economic Element Goal 3 states, “To diversify local businesses, industries and commercial activities and to promote the economic growth and stability of the County.” This activity creates a new energy facility which would achieve this stated Goal.
- ▶ Economic Element Policy 3A state, “To encourage local producers to new markets for local products and to seek out new products that are in demand in the market place and that can be produced locally.” Clearly there is a market demand as well as state policy that supports this development. This is a new and emerging product in Morrow County and fits the vision around Policy 3A.
- ▶ Economic Element Goal 4 states, “To encourage the development of compatible land uses throughout the County and to protect areas suitable for industrial development from encroachment of incompatible land uses.” This Economic Element goal can be interpreted to allow renewable energy development on land zoned Exclusive Farm Use where it is allowed conditionally when an applicant can meet the determined standards. The related Conditional Use Permit CUP-N-331 evaluates a variety of criteria and has determined that the application can be approved if an exception to Goal 3 Agricultural Lands is granted.
- ▶ Another interpretation of Economic Element Goal 4 would be that allowing this activity on land zoned for Exclusive Farm Use protects land zoned Port or General Industrial from uses that consume large amounts of acreage, but do not either create jobs or significant tax base. Placing the proposed solar photovoltaic energy generation facility on land zoned for Exclusive Farm Use preserved industrial land for higher density and impact uses.

#### Findings - General

1. Open lands used for agricultural purposes are an efficient means of conserving natural resources that constitute important physical, social, aesthetic, and economic assets to all of the people living in rural, suburban and urban areas of the County.
2. The preservation of a maximum amount of the present supply of agricultural land is necessary to the conservation of the County's economic resource base, and the preservation of such land in large blocks is necessary in maintaining the economy of the County.
3. Expansion of urban and suburban development and non-farm rural residential subdivisions into the rural areas of the County outside the Urban Growth Boundaries of the Cities is a matter of public concern because of unnecessary increases in costs of public and community services including police, fire, education, transportation, health and welfare; conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural activities; increasing costs and liabilities to agriculture; loss of open space, natural beauty and nonrenewable resources; detrimental effects on wildlife habitats and migration patterns; increased fire hazards, limits to carrying capacities of air, water and land resources; and conflicts with the conservation of energy.
4. Although existing agricultural land policies set forth in applicable State Planning Goals and Statutes are substantial in scope and afford considerable protection for intensive crop land agricultural practices, such is determined not adequate to insure the desired and necessary preservation and protection of the large-scale cereal grain and range livestock operations and base resources common and important to the County. The full

recognition is that the mere preservation of "all" irrigated lands in the area "will not" preserve the "total" agricultural economy.

5. As set forth by Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 215.253, the application of Exclusive Farm Use Zoning pursuant to ORS 215.203 prohibits any state agency, city, county or political subdivision of the state from exercising any powers to enact local laws or ordinances or impose restrictions or regulations within said EFU Zones in a manner that would unreasonably restrict or regulate accepted farming practices because of noise, dust, odor or other materials carried in the air or other conditions arising therefrom if such conditions do not extend beyond the boundaries of the established EFU Zone.
6. Obviously, Morrow County ranks high in agricultural production among Oregon counties. Thereof, based on Extension Service data showing the ten top agricultural counties to gross farm sales in recent years, Morrow County ranked 9th in 1972-74 but moved to 4th in 1975 and 1976, when irrigated crop land in the Northern End came into production. Estimates for 1977 indicated the County dropped to 6th, probably due to severe drought conditions and resulting drop in dryland wheat production.
7. Agriculture is the mainstay of the Morrow County economy, producing \$60 to \$90 million in direct income annually, and supporting local food processing, transport, construction, trade, service and government employment.
8. Morrow County has become increasingly important to the agricultural economy of Oregon during recent years, accounting for 2.25 percent of the State's farm marketings in 1971 and 6.25 percent in 1976.
9. Largely responsible for this increase in share of state farm income has been the recent expansion onto previously under or unused land of potato, alfalfa and grain production, made possible by private investment in sprinkler irrigation technology relying in part on deep well groundwater sources.
10. The State Water Resources Board has identified critical groundwater areas in the northeastern portion of the County and imposed restrictions on pumping for irrigation in those areas.
11. Surface water from new impoundments and the Columbia River will be required both to maintain present levels of agricultural productivity and to bring more presently under or unused land into production.
12. County residents need to ensure that any shutdown of existing wells will be based on accurate data obtained from continuous, non-seasonal monitoring of individual wells from the dates meters were installed until the present time. Evaluation of this data must involve a constant, logical process with enough flexibility to allow for any recent changes of special conditions. The records maintained by the state should be open for public review and inspection.
13. Fluctuations in domestic and international demand for locally produced commodities and chronically depressed grain and beef prices argue for further diversification where economically feasible.

14. A variety of high value per acre crops not currently grown in the County could be successfully produced here if processing facilities were locally available and markets were developed.
15. Expansion of irrigated acres has increased the potential for dairying and beef feeding operations in the County.
16. Existing zoning of some large tracts in the North End for residential or commercial uses could interfere with future cost-effective rational agricultural development and with current farm practices such as chemical spraying and operation of machinery at night.
17. Capital intensive agriculture requires adequate transportation and storage facilities, housing for temporary workers and reliable sources of power, water, supplies, and machinery parts.
18. Although presently used for grazing, the potentially higher productive land tied up in the U.S. Navy Bombing Range could be detrimental to further agricultural, industrial and energy developments in Morrow County.
19. Northern Morrow County's irrigated agricultural economy depends on the continued availability of relatively less expensive hydro-electric power.
20. The existing acreage of low condition range results in poorer quality forage, lower production, imbalance in year-round forage availability, reduced feed and cover for wildlife, and increased erosion hazard. Range condition can be improved through use of range management practices such as fencing, water developments, salt distribution, deferred grazing, proper grazing use, rotation grazing systems, and proper stocking.
21. Private landholders suffer financial losses in the public interest because wild game species forage freely and without limits on their farm and rangelands.
22. Because of the great disparity in farm size in Morrow County, median size is a meaningful measure by which to judge ownership size patterns. Median refers to the dividing point between two equal parts. In Morrow County the median farm size in 1974 for irrigated and dryland farms was 148 acres. In the same year the average farm size was 1380 acres.

County	Median Size (1978)	Average Size (1974)
Morrow	148 (1974)	1380
Grant	874	3999
Malheur	151	1122
Umatilla	99	1144
Union	184	727
Wallowa	354	1828

23. The 160 acre size in the EFU zone is appropriate because it closely conforms to the Median Size shown previously. In addition it is the average size for the circle type irrigation system prevalent in much of the Agricultural land. One circle, which encompasses 160 acres is adequate for farming and each circle can be farmed independently of the others.
24. Average farm size in Morrow County is not a meaningful standard by which to measure future divisions of agricultural lands because ownerships for smaller than 1380 acres contribute to the local agricultural economy in a substantial way and help maintain agricultural processors and farm markets.
25. The overwhelming majority of farms in our County are family farms. The one hundred sixty acre standard allows future generations of young people the chance to own and operate a family farm. Larger minimums escalate the purchase price and decrease the purchasing ability of young farmers and ranchers.
26. One hundred sixty acres will stay in production because they are too large and too expensive to affordably remain idle.

#### Objectives

1. To maintain a viable agricultural base, preserve agricultural lands for agriculture, and to protect agriculture as a commercial enterprise.
2. To conserve natural resources constituting important physical, social, aesthetic and economic assets through the development and adoption of realistic land use and development policies intended to achieve an economic-environmental balance, minimize public costs, and maximize energy conservation.
3. To minimize and actually prevent conflict between farm and non-farm uses and resultant increased economical costs to the agricultural sector.
4. To provide maximum opportunity for optimum management and operational practices, and provide adequately efficient supportive resources and services.

#### Agricultural Policies

1. It shall be the policy of Morrow County, Oregon, to preserve agricultural lands, to protect agriculture as its main economic enterprise, to balance economic and environmental considerations, to limit non-compatible nonagricultural development, and to maintain a high level of livability in the County.
2. It shall be the policy of Morrow County to concentrate the major portion of the County's population growth within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) of the Cities of the County. Development outside the UGB will be permitted only where conflicts with productive agricultural areas are minimal and only when in compliance with the factors set forth in ORS 215.213 and the Comprehensive Plan. Subdivision development in rural areas shall be directed to nonproductive agricultural land.

3. In order to afford maximum economical and regulatory incentives for agriculture, Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) Zoning pursuant to ORS Chapters 215.000 and 215.213 shall be applied to agricultural lands of the County.
4. It shall be the policy of the County to develop and implement comprehensive and definitive criteria for the evaluation of all non-farm developments to ensure that all objectives and policies set forth herein are complied with to the maximum level possible.
5. Rangelands shall be preserved and maintained for rangeland uses compatible with multiple resource management. These lands shall be inventoried and preserved by adopting exclusive farm use zones, i.e., EFU.
6. The needs of the farm community should be considered in evaluating County policies and future development projects in other sectors of the economy.
7. The County shall encourage conservation of agricultural lands through utilization of best management practices, and agricultural productivity shall be encouraged in the County, especially in light of continuing conversion of Western Oregon farmland to other uses.
8. In order to protect the agricultural capital investment of local companies and resident individuals, County government should promote the preservation of access to cheap, reliable power and adequate water supplies through participation in the ongoing Bonneville River Compact resource allocation process.
9. The County should work with state officials and irrigators in formulating water resource allocation policy both between Oregon irrigators and in-stream users and among the four Columbia drainage basin states for all uses.
10. The County should support proposed energy generating projects offering to release water from their reservoirs for irrigation purposes and proposed new irrigation projects, such as the Snipe Creek project, that could cost-effectively provide Morrow County farmers with surface water.
11. Morrow County should continue to encourage, as part of cooperative range management, programs among Fish and Wildlife, SCS, Extension Service, private and public landowners, and other state and federal land and wildlife management agencies, development of overall systems of forage allocation among control, forage-planting practices most likely to maintain and enhance the range-fed livestock industry, and programs and management practices which conserve soil and related resources and minimize soil erosion.
12. The County should promote cooperation among the Forest Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and local landowners, rancher's associations and hunters to determine the extent of damage, to reach agreement on permissible animal numbers and forage allocation plan and controlled hunts where needed.
13. Morrow County, together with agricultural groups, should actively encourage Oregon's congressional representatives to oppose the recent GAO study urging equalization of BPA power rates with national electrical costs.

14. The County should encourage continuation and expansion of present research efforts, both in the private and public sectors, to develop new varieties of crops suited to this area, and should support programs designed to build overseas and domestic markets for all products.
15. The County and Port of Morrow should encourage private investor efforts to finance a local vegetable processing plant, which would allow more crops to be grown and processed in the County.
16. The County should cooperate with investors, local development associations, financial institutions, irrigators and stockmen to interest dairymen in Morrow County, which is well within the Portland metropolitan milkshed.
17. The County, Port, regional and state agencies should work with private citizens to secure utilization of the Navy's north Morrow tract, so that when market conditions permit, the land may be developed for more intensive agriculture, or other compatible and/or complementary uses including industrial and energy purposes.
18. It shall be the policy of Morrow County that all farm divisions on EFU land shall be appropriate for the continuation of the existing commercial agricultural enterprise within the area.
19. Where lands are designated by the Plan as Agricultural and where parcels contain 160 acres or greater shall be presumed to be commercial agricultural entities.
20. Lands designated by the Plan as Small Farm and zoned (SF-40) shall be applied only to areas having an existing overall ownership pattern of less than 80 acres.
21. Policy 21 Review by Planning Commission; Findings; Burden of Proof

All partitions and subdivisions of land zoned for exclusive farm use will be reviewed by the Planning Commission to assure compliance with the policies of the Morrow County Comprehensive Plan and standards of the zoning and subdivision ordinance. The Planning Commission will prepare written findings of fact and legal conclusions based on the findings of fact as the basis for each approval or denial of an application for a partition or subdivision. The failure of an applicant to submit relevant information addressing one or more of the applicable criteria will bar the Planning Commission from approving the application. The County may supply such relevant information but is not obliged to do so.

22. For any farm division creating parcels between 160 and 40 acres in the EFU zone and intended to be a commercial agricultural operation, each parcel shall be found to be typical of the existing commercial agricultural operations in the area.

The following factors shall be addressed in the development of the required findings:

- A. Each parcel resulting from the proposed division is as large or larger than the median size of commercial farms within a 2 mile radius of the subject property relative to similar soil types, crops and land use pattern in the area.
  - (aa) If the inventory line includes only a portion of a commercial farm operation, the entire farm shall be included in the inventory.

- (bb) Non-farm parcels and all parcels less than 20 acres will not be used in the inventory of commercial farms.
- (cc) Farm operations which do not meet the commercial test under subsection (C) below shall be excluded from the inventory of commercial farms.
- B. Any proposed parcel between 160 acres and 40 acres shall have useable water rights and water availability of adequate quantity to ensure the operation of irrigated farming techniques at commercial levels.
- C. The proposed parcels must be of a size and shape that is efficient for the use of farm machinery including: cultivating; harvesting and spraying equipment. If the proposed division would probably result in appreciably increased per acre management cost of appreciably reduced yields or management efficiency on new lots, the application shall be denied. If the proposed division would materially alter the stability of the overall land use pattern of the area the application shall be denied.

For the purposes of this policy, a commercial farm operation is one which meets one or more of the following standards:

- (1) Gross farm income is greater than or equal to \$10,000.
- (2) The farm requires the labor of at least one head of household for 20 hours or more per week averaged on an annual basis.
- (3) Gross farm income is equal to 1/3 or more of the total family income.

- 23. Single-family residential dwellings, not provided in conjunction with farm use, may be established, subject to a conditional use in any area zoned for exclusive farm use upon a finding that each such proposed dwelling:
  - A. Is compatible with farm uses described in ORS 215.203(2) and is consistent with the intent and purposes set forth in ORS 215.243;
  - B. Does not interfere seriously with accepted farming practices, as defined in ORS 215.203(2)(c), on adjacent lands devoted to farm use;
  - C. Does not materially alter the stability of the overall land use pattern of the area;
  - D. Is situated upon generally unsuitable land for the production of farm crops and livestock, considering the terrain, adverse soil or land conditions, drainage and flooding, vegetation, location and size of the tract; and
  - E. Complies with such other conditions as the governing body of the County considers necessary.
- 24. No planned unit developments or subdivisions creating non-farm lots shall be allowed on land qualified for exclusive farm use zoning unless an exception is taken to the applicable resource goal under the Statewide Planning Goals. Any such development that creates new urban development on rural land an exception to Statewide Goals 11 and 14 shall be required under OAR 660, Division 14.
- 25. All land divisions in the EFU and SF-40 zone shall comply with ORS 215.243 and ORS 215.263.
- 26. All homestead partitions shall be reviewed against the criteria for non-farm dwellings in ORS 215.283(3).