



FACT SHEET 2.5

HOW DO LOCAL REGULATIONS AFFECT YOUR HOBBY FARM?

Most communities have zoning bylaws and other regulations that specify allowed and prohibited land uses, and requirements that may apply to activities you plan for your Hobby Farm.

Whether you are starting a new hobby farm, adding activities or improving an existing hobby farm to make it “stormwater friendly,” you should learn about your community’s regulatory requirements. The following is a brief summary of local regulations that may affect your farm and where you can usually obtain more information.

REGULATION	HOW IT MAY AFFECT YOUR FARM?	WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION
PLANNING OR ZONING BYLAW	Planning or zoning bylaws may affect the number and type of animals you own, farming activities you can conduct, and whether you can carry on any commercial activities (e.g., operating a vegetable stand). Some zoning regulations may have specific restrictions and requirements on how you manage your site, especially if you are within a ‘water resources protection’ district or ‘water supply protection’ district.	Start with the Code Enforcement Office (sometimes known as the Office of the Building Inspector), or municipal Planning Department
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS	Many communities have regulations for the management of stormwater that apply to disturbance of land above a certain threshold.	Jurisdiction varies by community - inquire at your Municipal Offices
BOARD OF HEALTH	<p>Many communities have a Board of Health (BOH) and/or Health Agent that administers a variety of regulations that may affect your farm and how you manage stormwater and wastewater on your property, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping and Care of Animals – If regulated, your selection of livestock will need to meet local health regulations, which may govern the type, number, and minimum standards of care for the animals. • On-site Sewage Disposal (Septic Systems) – If you have an on-site sewage disposal system, the Health Agent may have records showing its location so you can take measures to protect it from damage by any proposed farm activities. Activities near your system may be restricted and there may be setback requirements for certain stormwater management facilities, such as dry wells and ditches. 	Local Board of Health Office
LOCAL WETLAND AND WATER RESOURCES BYLAW	Many communities have adopted local wetland and water resource bylaws that are more stringent than the State Wetlands Protection Act. Activities within a certain distance require approval.	Local Conservation Agent



OTHER REGULATIONS

Other local regulations may affect your farming activities and the use of your property. This handbook highlights several regulations that relate to managing stormwater runoff from your farm. For additional information on local rules and regulations that apply to Hobby Farms, please contact your local municipal departments.

See Checklist 2B to document how regulations may impact your hobby farm.

REGULATORY CHECK

Important things to learn from local rules:

- Do the rules allow the farming activities you want on your Hobby Farm?
- Are there special rules that apply to your farm because it is near a drinking water supply or other critical resource?
- Are there protected wetlands or water resources near your hobby farm (even if they are not on your property) that are regulated?

