

From: [Oliver Orjiako](#)
To: [Jeffrey Delapena](#)
Cc: [Christine Cook](#)
Subject: FW: Small farms are the lifeblood of farming in Clark County
Date: Wednesday, August 14, 2024 3:41:40 PM

Hello Jeff:

FYI. Please, add to the comp plan index of record. Thanks.

From: Clark County Citizens United, Inc. <cccuinc@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2024 3:35 PM
To: Gary Medvigy <Gary.Medvigy@clark.wa.gov>; Karen Bowerman <Karen.Bowerman@clark.wa.gov>; Michelle Belkot <Michelle.Belkot@clark.wa.gov>; Glen Yung <Glen.Yung@clark.wa.gov>; Sue Marshall <Sue.Marshall@clark.wa.gov>; Kathleen Otto <Kathleen.Otto@clark.wa.gov>; Oliver Orjiako <Oliver.Orjiako@clark.wa.gov>; Jose Alvarez <Jose.Alvarez@clark.wa.gov>; Brent Davis <Brent.Davis@clark.wa.gov>
Subject: Small farms are the lifeblood of farming in Clark County

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Clark County Council
August 14, 2024
P.O.Box 5000
Vancouver, Washington 98666

FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD

Re: Small farms are the lifeblood of farming in Clark County

Dear Councilors,

The annual Clark County Fair has ended and livestock raised by their keepers, was auctioned off. Clark County Citizens United, Inc. wonders just how many more years this can occur? 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) participants were lucky enough to live on small acreage, where they could raise their produce, fruits, nuts, sheep, goats, chickens, geese, ducks rabbits, llamas, pigs, horses and cattle. These folks worked hard to raise these items with the hope they will bring a good market price. Many of them use this money for their college education. One youngster raised a beef animal that earned \$16,000 towards his college fund. Another raised \$6,000 for the same reason. What will happen to them in the future, if they want to become full time farmers in Clark County?

The public hears so much about “saving the farmland”. Councilor Sue Marshall won in rural District 5, using that goal as her primary campaign statement. She is a member of Friends of Clark County, who voices the same goal, yet they both oppose the creation of smaller affordable land that can be farmed. But, what about saving the farmer? Nothing can happen on the land, without them. How is Clark County enabling that to happen? The answer is, they’re not. With the massive 1994 downzoning in the rural and resource areas, it will be impossible for young or old people to be able to afford to buy land for farming, given the large lot zoning in place today. For the most part, those smaller lots are all used up.

The only way future farmers can sustain farming activity, is a change to county zoning, which allows for land one can afford to buy, and farm. The problem is, thirty years have passed without any changes to the Comprehensive Plan large lot zoning, and the ability to create smaller rural and resource parcels, is almost gone. The landowners are left with no ability to create new lots, which equates to the inability to create new farms and farmers, or even sustain existing farmers.

So, just what does “save the farmland” really mean? Here in Clark County, the owner of rural and resource land is not expected to farm the land at all. They are just supposed to “preserve” and pay high taxes on the land, until it can be made into high density development. Farmers tilling farmland, is not even in the equation. Many of the older farms have been purchased by folks who operate horse stables, but even that activity is under fire by the county.

Since the 1930s, when Clark County’s economy depended on farms, farm records show that average farm sizes ranged from 2 acres to 10 acres. Only dairies and cattle farms had more, because they made hay and pastured their herds. 4-H was formed in 1902 and FFA was formed in 1928. They play a critical part in teaching our young people responsibility, hard work, financial management and personal integrity. But that is not the goal of those spouting “save the farmland”. The term sounds all fuzzy and warm and a goal worth attaining. But voters have been hoodwinked to believe that is what the term actually means, here in Clark County..

These young folks, showing their produce, fruits, nuts and animals at the Fair, can’t vote. It is critical those adults that can vote, become fully aware of candidate’s positions on this topic. Clark County is in critical need of small 2.5 and 5 acre parcels. Land must be available and affordable, in order for young and old farmers to have an opportunity to create a farm. Without this happening in the upcoming 2025 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, farmers, 4-H, FFA and the Clark County Fair, will be a thing of the past.

Sincerely,

Carol Levanen, Eec. Secretary

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