



# Agricultural Protection Areas in Utah

Preserving Agricultural Lands & Protecting Farmers  
Utah Code Title 17 Chapter 81

## What is an Agriculture Protection Area (APA)?

An Agricultural Protection Area (APA) is a designated geographic area created under specific legal statutes to protect agricultural activities. These areas are granted particular legal protections as defined in Utah Code Title 17, Chapter 81, which aims to support the continuity, development, and viability of agriculture in Utah. The creation of an APA is voluntary and initiated by landowners engaged in agricultural production who seek to safeguard their operations from potentially restrictive regulations and other hindrances.

## BENEFITS OF AN APA

- 1 Protection from nuisance lawsuits**  
Farming operations are shielded from complaints related to noise, dust, odors, and other normal agricultural activities.
- 2 Zoning stability**  
Land within an APA cannot be rezoned without written consent from all landowners in the APA.
- 3 Protection from unreasonable restrictions**  
Political subdivisions and state agencies cannot impose unreasonable regulations on farm structures or practices.
- 4 Eminent domain limitations**  
Government agencies face restrictions when attempting to condemn APA land for non-agricultural purposes.
- 5 State development project restrictions**  
Transportation corridors and other state projects must minimize or eliminate detrimental impacts on agriculture.
- 6 Disclosure for new developments**  
Prospective property buyers near an APA must be notified that they are moving next to an active agricultural operation.

## Who Can Apply?

Landowners with agricultural operations can apply to have their land designated as an APA; multiple landowners in the same area may submit a joint proposal. To begin the process, landowners should contact their local government, as the county or city legislative body handles these applications.

## Requirements for an APA

- Minimum acreage:** Typically, a minimum amount of land is required to qualify (varies by county).
- Agricultural Use:** The land must be actively used for farming, ranching, or other agricultural production, which includes the processing or retail marketing of crops, livestock, and livestock products when more than 50% of the products are operator-produced.
- Zoning Compatibility:** The land should be appropriately zoned for agricultural use. Compatible zoning designations generally allow agricultural activities as a primary use. These may include designations such as "Agricultural," "Agricultural Residential," or "Rural Residential," depending on local zoning codes, and often involve low-density restrictions to prevent overdevelopment.

### How to Apply

To apply for APA status, contact your local county commission or planning department. Specific requirements and steps will vary by county.

### Learn More

For more information about Agricultural Protection Areas, contact your local county commission or planning department or contact UDAF County Water & Land Conservation Manager Thayne Mickelson at 801.608.7688 or [tmickelson@utah.gov](mailto:tmickelson@utah.gov).