

Where there's smoke ...

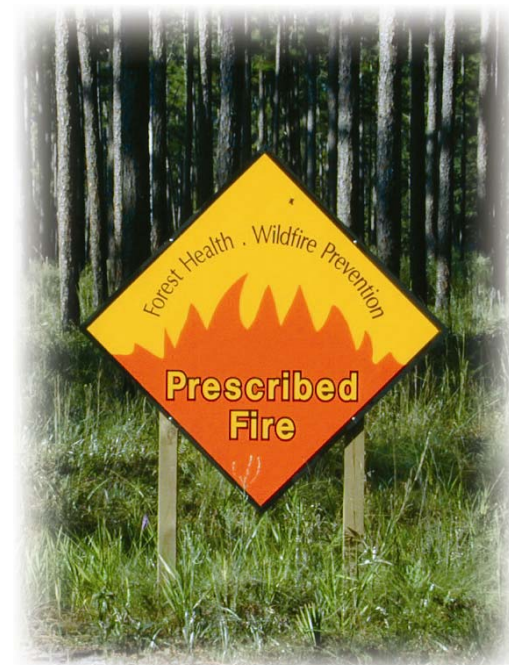
Fire. It can be scary. In the country, it can also be a useful tool. Called a *prescribed burn*, this kind of fire protects property and enhances the environment.

Wildfires can pose a danger to homes, outbuildings, crops and livestock. Prescribed burns, on the other hand, can benefit rural residents and agricultural operations.

Farmers and foresters use prescribed burns to keep underbrush under control and clear pastures of weeds and pests. The Florida Department of Agriculture's Division of Forestry is the agency that authorizes such burns. The Division also has responsibility for fire control on rural lands.

If you see what appears to be a wildfire, or a prescribed burn that may be out of control, you should call 911 and report it.

Alachua County Fire Rescue is also developing a program to prevent inadvertent wildland fires in rural/suburban transition areas.



Guidelines for Graceful Country Living:

Country residents are likely to experience odors, sounds and activities not found in urban or suburban environments.

State statutes have established that odors, sounds and activities associated with established farms do not constitute nuisances.

Get acquainted with your neighbors, including your farmer-neighbors.

Farmers restrict access to their land because they are concerned about your safety.

Farmers are concerned about the potential introduction of plant and animal pests and diseases. That's why they establish security measures.

Help fight rural theft. Good neighbors look out for one another.

"Good fences make good neighbors." They protect you, as well as the farmer. Don't damage fences!

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Alachua County Extension Office:
(352) 955-2402

Resource for questions regarding agriculture
Division of Forestry:
(352) 955-2010

Questions about open burning and wildfires
Alachua County Fire Rescue Dept:
(352) 384-3401

Questions about wildland fire prevention
Alachua County Sheriff's Office:
(352) 367-4000

Florida Farm Bureau
PO Box 147030
Gainesville, FL 32614
Phone: 352-374-1516
Fax: 352-374-1530
Email: rodkh@bellsouth.net

"Take Me Home, Country Road"

**Your guide to
harmonious
country living
in Alachua County**



**"Life's good
in the country!"**

May 2005

Good Neighbors

“Good fences make good neighbors.”

The old rural saying, “good fences make good neighbors,” had its origins in a simpler time. In today’s society with population growth occurring in rural areas, a better thought may be “understanding makes good neighbors.”

As you move into the “country” please be aware that there will be activities, sounds and odors that you haven’t encountered in urban situations. While such activities may cause temporary inconvenience, in connection with farming operations they are protected from legal challenge in most instances under Florida’s Right to Farm law.

Farmers ask, as you become their neighbor and enjoy the open area and scenery of their farms, to please keep in mind they will have to cultivate, spray, harvest and maintain their farming operations to remain viable. Also, Florida’s climate allows for year-round grazing and production.

Remember, as long as they are profitable, farms will be there for you to enjoy.

For more information on agriculture in your area please contact your County Extension Office.

Ag Activities and Expectations

Listed below are some common activities associated with production agriculture. Most farming operations will, at times, create some noise. Remember, these operations generally occur periodically and each is generally of short duration.

ACTIVITY	EXPECTATION
Plowing/Operations	Dust, heavy equipment cultivation
Pest Control (spraying)	Noise
Harvesting	Dust, increased worker activity
Fertilizing/ Manure Spreading	Noise, dust, odor
Irrigation	During severe drought, farmers may have to irrigate for extended periods to meet crop moisture needs.
Dairy Operations	Odor
Timber Harvesting	Dust, heavy equipment
Livestock	Cattle may be moved from Operations pasture to pasture
Equipment transport	Agricultural equipment on rural highways may be slow or oversized and may create temporary delays



Fitting into a Country Setting

In any neighborhood it is common courtesy to get to know your neighbor. In the country though, your farmer-neighbor may not live next-door. Farm families may live around the corner ... or miles away. Today’s farmer may own or lease the land he or she farms. With a little homework, you can identify the property owner, and that may help identify the person who is actually farming the land.

Farmers are generally proud of their farming operations and most are willing – even eager – to visit with you about them. However, if the first opportunity you have to visit with a farmer is in a crisis situation, it puts both of you at a disadvantage in building a neighborly relationship.

Farmers are sensitive to unauthorized access to their farms. Safety is a major concern to them as they don’t want anyone getting hurt on their land. Farming operations may also use large equipment that can injure someone who has little experience or knowledge about this equipment. And security is another concern. Threats of introduced plant or animal disease have made farmers very security conscious.

Theft is also a major concern to farmers, as it is to all businesses. Theft on a farm can range from the loss of expensive equipment or supplies to the unauthorized harvesting of a crop.

Fences are important in the country. They establish private property boundaries and should be respected. Fences also serve to keep livestock in a defined area. State law requires livestock owners to fence their animals in. Likewise; people with homes in rural areas should fence, pen or leash their pets at all times.

Here are a few rules for fences: don’t climb on them; don’t use a fence for a plant arbor; don’t attach structures to fences; don’t push on fence posts and don’t cut fences.

The bottom line: If you don’t have permission, don’t go on to private property!



“Understanding makes good neighbors.”