
HOBBY FARMS

How does the Township currently regulate Hobby Farms?

The Township's current Zoning By-law permits hobby farms and was amended in 2018 (By-law 2018-15) to include provisions to regulate hobby farm operations in terms of the number of livestock units permitted on property which does not meet the minimum lot area requirements for the keeping of livestock. These new provisions were implemented to permit small hobby farm operations on rural and agricultural properties which are less than 5 ha in size. Refer to [Section 4.17](#) of the current Zoning By-law and By-law 2018-15 for details.

How does the draft new Zoning By-law regulate Hobby Farms?

The draft new Zoning By-law carries forward much of the same provisions of the Township's current Zoning By-law to permit Hobby Farms on smaller lots within the Township's rural and agricultural areas while also providing additional clarity to interpreting the zone provisions. The proposed zone provisions for Hobby Farms can be found in [Section 4.4](#) of the draft Zoning By-law. These provisions are included in the draft new by-law with the intent to support local food production while also ensuring agricultural uses on smaller lot sizes are appropriately regulated. The draft new Zoning By-law regulates the minimum lot area (1.6 ha) a property must be in order to permit a hobby farm and the maximum number of livestock units (i.e. animals) that are permitted on a property depending on the lot area of the property.

How are livestock units and hobby farms defined in the new Zoning By-law?

Livestock Unit

- **LARGE LIVESTOCK UNIT**, for the purpose of this By-law, shall mean one of the following: cattle, horses, donkeys, alpacas, llamas, or similar.
- **MEDIUM LIVESTOCK UNIT**, for the purpose of this By-law, shall mean one of the following: sheep, goats, pigs, or similar.
- **SMALL LIVESTOCK UNIT**, for the purposes of this By-law, shall mean one of the following: chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese, rabbits, or similar

Hobby Farm shall mean a lot used primarily for residential purposes where accessory uses may include small market gardening and/or the keeping of farm animals for the personal use of the residents thereon. A hobby farm may include limited farm-gate sales of agricultural products, provided that they are produced on the hobby farm.

Hobby Farm Provision Summary

Refer to [Section 4.4](#) of the draft Zoning By-law for complete details of the proposed provisions

- Minimum lot of 1.6 ha (4 acres) required in the Rural (RU) and Agriculture (A) zones in order to have a hobby farm. Lots of smaller sizes are not permitted a hobby farm but may keep domestic fowl in accordance with [Section 4.4](#).
- On a lot 1.6 ha to 3.2 ha, a maximum of 8 small livestock units or their equivalent is permitted.
- On a lot greater than 3.2 ha and up to 5 ha in size a maximum of 12 small livestock units or their equivalent is permitted.

- On a lot greater than 5 ha, a maximum of 5 nutrient units are permitted as defined by the Minimum Distance Separation Formulae.
- Where more than 5 nutrient units are proposed on a lot greater than 5 ha, the setback requirements determined by the Minimum Distance Separation Formulae, developed by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs shall apply.

How are livestock units calculated?

- One small livestock unit is equal to one livestock unit
- Two small livestock units is equal one medium livestock unit
- Four small livestock units is equal to one large livestock unit
- Two medium livestock units is equal to one large livestock unit

Interpretating the Hobby Farm Provisions Example

A property zoned Rural (RU) is currently used for residential purposes and has a lot area of 2.5 ha. The owner wishes to establish a hobby farm on the property. The property is subject to [Section 4.4](#) Hobby Farm provisions of the Zoning By-law as the lot is 2.5 ha in size. Due to the property's lot area, a maximum of 8 small livestock units are permitted. This means the property is limited to 8 small livestock units which may include the following example combinations of livestock animals on the property:

- 8 chickens (8 small livestock units);
- 4 chickens (4 small livestock units), 1 sheep (2 small livestock units), and 1 pig (2 small livestock units);
- 2 horses (8 small livestock units); or
- 1 horse (4 small livestock units), 1 goat (2 small livestock units) and 2 chickens (2 small livestock units).