

Apiculture Agricultural Classification Guidelines

In order to qualify for an Apiculture Agricultural Classification, property owners should submit supporting documentation for consideration such as:

1. Application and Return for Agricultural Classification of Lands.
2. Property Access Authorization Form.
3. Certificate of Apiary Registration in effect as of the statutory assessment date (January 1st). If property is zoned non-agriculture, an executed Beekeeper's Compliance Agreement should also be included. The State of Florida requires a minimum of 100 registered hives to be considered a commercial beekeeper. A minimum of 40 hives is required in order to be considered a Sideliner.
4. Beekeepers Federal Income Tax Return (FITR) for prior year's apicultural activity.
5. If Honey Sales, provide copies of honey sales receipts.
6. If Honey Production, provide documentary proof of beekeeper access to honey extraction equipment.
7. If Bee Breeding, provide copies of queen or bee sale receipts.
8. If Bee Pollination, provide copies of all pollination contracts entered into during the six months preceding the statutory assessment date and the six months following the statutory assessment date. If bees are being used for pollination in other locations, pollination schedule should also be submitted.
9. Proof of Liability Insurance policy in effect as of the statutory assessment date.

When leasing property, the farming lease agreement between property owner and commercial beekeeper should be submitted. The agreement should be in effect as of the statutory assessment date. It should include the property owner's and beekeeper's name, lease terms, parcel identification number, leased acreage, number of colonies, lease start date, lease term, lease renewal policy and exchange in value (compensation).

Commercial beekeeping must be the primary use of the property for a significant portion of the year with a minimum of 24 hives per parcel.

The Property Appraiser would use the operational footprint guideline when granting agricultural classification based on apiculture uses when there is no discernable forage present on the property. The "Operational Footprint" is defined as 2,500 square feet per hive plus vehicular ingress/egress, loading area, honey extraction house, equipment storage, and any other land area identified as necessary to the commercial apiculture operation.

Foraging Areas

When considering foraging areas, a list of specific on-site nectar and/or pollen producing qualifying plants must be submitted with a property sketch depicting the location of bee hives and foraging plant sources along with their blooming periods. Bees must be on site during the blooming period of the qualifying plants. Forage will be granted according to the following guidelines:

- 0.10 – 5 acres requires 24 hives on site.
- 5.10 – 10 acres requires 36 hives on site.
- 10.1 – 15 acres requires 48 hives on site.
- 15.1 – 20 acres requires 64 hives on site.
- Over 20 acres requires 64 hives plus 2 hives per additional acre.

The Property Appraiser's office must conduct periodic site visits to verify the number of active bee hives and to identify forage sources located on the property identified in the submitted business plan and/or property sketch. It is advisable to submit a business plan that clearly defines the apicultural activity.