

INTERPRETATION REQUEST - SMALL LIVESTOCK FARMING

Applicable Code Sections:

- 21.06.1120 and 20.06.1120 (Small Livestock Farming/Definition)
- 21.14.030.D and 20.14.040.D (Small Livestock Farming/LDR)
- 21.16.030.K and 20.16.040.K (Small Livestock Farming/RDR)
- 21.14.030.P and 20.14.040.O (Intermittent Livestock Farming/LDR)
- 21.16.030.R and 20.16.040.P (Intermittent Livestock Farming/RDR)

Date: June 3, 2011

Requested by: Code Enforcement

Subject: Small Livestock Farming

What is the Question?

Do goats require 20,000 square feet of land per animal?

Short Answer:

No. The 20,000 square foot standard does not apply to small livestock, and goats are considered small livestock by definition.

Discussion:

The 20,000 square foot limitation goes back to the 1940s. However, in the 1980s Wanda Hickman was involved with a project that had approximately 30 goats on a 1 acre parcel in North County. The supervisor of the District was concerned about the impacts of goats on steep sandy soils. Major erosion impacts were occurring from the goats eating all the vegetation on the slopes. The department at the time told the Planning Commission that goats were limited to one for every 20,000 square feet of land. The intent of applying the limitation of one livestock for each 20,000 square foot of land was to mitigate impacts on neighboring properties due to small lots, erosion potential and resources impacts.

This is how the Code has been applied except in cases where goats are used for fuel management. However, the language of the Code would suggest that goats are not subject to the 20,000 square foot standard.

Facts of the situation:

In the LDR and RDR zoning designations, allowed uses also include; intermittent livestock farming or animal husbandry uses such as "4-H" projects on a minimum of twenty thousand (20,000) square feet. Allowed uses also include animal husbandry and small livestock farming; provided that not more than one horse, mule, cow, or similar livestock shall be kept for each twenty thousand (20,000) square feet of land area. As written, this use category creates a distinction between small livestock farming and larger livestock. The question is if goats fall under the term "similar livestock" as used with the zoning designation.

Webster dictionary defines "livestock" as animals kept or raised for use or pleasure; farm animals kept for use and profit. Goats/ sheep fall within this definition. However, Monterey County Codes define "small livestock farming" as the raising or keeping of small animals which

may include the following: chickens, pigeons, hogs, rabbits, ducks, geese, guinea fowl, peafowl, goats, sheep, or similar fowl or animals. Since goats and sheep are specifically included in the definition of small livestock, they would not fall into the category of "similar livestock" to which the 20,000 square foot standard would apply.

Confined animals and/or animals in areas limited areas can create erosion and impact resources, regardless of the size of the animal. Property owners remain responsible to implement appropriate BMPs appropriate for the type and number of animals to avoid impacts.

Interpretation Prepared By: Carl Holm, AICP, Assistant Director of Planning

Interpretation/Opinion Confirmed by Managers 