



**Marion County**  
OREGON

## So you want to raise chickens (or other animals) in your backyard?



### Regulations on keeping or raising pets and animals in Marion County

Marion County Planning Division  
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#### **Does Marion County regulate the raising, boarding, and/or keeping of animals?**

Yes. Marion County has differing regulations for “pets”, livestock, and other animals. The applicable regulations also depend on the location and zoning of the property. Rural areas of the County are covered by the Rural Zone Code and urban areas, within the urban growth boundary of a city, are covered by the County’s Urban Zone Code.

Generally speaking, there are no land use regulations regarding the raising and/or keeping your own pet(s) on your property.

#### **What qualifies as a pet?**

The Rural Zone Code (Chapter 17.110.457) and the Urban Zone Code (Chapter 16.49.202) use the same definition of “pet”:

“Pet” means a domestic animal customarily kept, and cared for, by the occupants of a dwelling for personal pleasure, and which are not raised for food, fur, or monetary gain. Typically, this includes dogs, cats, birds and other small mammals and reptiles, but not fowl, herd animals, goats or horses.

In addition, Rural Zone Code Chapter 17.126.020 “Pets”, states that “... a conditional use permit is required in the RS and AR zones if there are more than 10 mammals over four months old. No birds or furbearing animals, other than pets, and no livestock, poultry, or beekeeping are permitted in RS zones.”

#### **What are the regulations for other animals (horses, goats, llamas, cows, etc.)?**

Animals raised for food, fur or monetary gain are considered a form of livestock and a farm

use. Farm use is allowed in the rural farm and forest zones (EFU, SA, FT, TC) and the Acreage Residential zone, but not the Single Family Residential zone. This type of farm use is also not allowed in the County’s urban areas, with the exception of the UT (Urban Transition) Zone. Generally, farm use is also not allowed in any of the County’s industrial or commercial zones.

Specifically, Rural Zone Code Chapter 17.110.223 defines **“Farm Use”** as the current employment of land for the primary purpose of obtaining a profit in money by...the feeding, breeding, management and sale of, or the produce of, livestock, poultry, fur-bearing animals or honeybees or for dairying and the sale of dairy products or any other agricultural or horticultural use or animal husbandry or any combination thereof.

“Farm use” also includes stabling or training equines including, but not limited to, providing riding lessons, training clinics and schooling shows.

“Farm use” also includes the propagation, cultivation, maintenance and harvesting of aquatic species and bird and animal species that are under the jurisdiction of the State Fish and Wildlife Commission to the extent allowed by the rules adopted by the State Fish and Wildlife Commission.

#### **Can I raise chickens in my backyard?**

As noted in the regulations outlined above, if you live in a residential zone in Marion County, or within an urban growth boundary, (except the UT Zone) you **cannot** raise chickens in your backyard. Marion County has not approved the keeping, raising, and/or

breeding of birds, furbearing animals, livestock, poultry, or beekeeping in residential and urban areas of the County. Chickens are poultry and Marion County does not consider poultry as “pets”.

### **What about kennels?**

Both the Rural Zone Code Chapter 17.110.300 and the Urban Zone Code Chapter 16.49.140 define “Kennel” as any lot or premises on which four or more dogs and/or cats or pets over the age of four months are kept for sale, lease, breeding, boarding, shows, training, or racing.

As noted above, Rural Zone Code Chapter 17.126.020 “Pets”, states that “... a conditional use permit is required in the RS and AR zones if there are more than 10 mammals over four months old. No birds or furbearing animals, other than pets, and no livestock, poultry, or beekeeping are permitted in RS zones.”

### **What do I do if I have a neighbor that is violating these regulations?**

Assuming the property is outside any city limits, you can contact Marion County Code Enforcement. The number is (503) 373-4333 or [enforcement@co.marion.or.us](mailto:enforcement@co.marion.or.us). You can also use the complaint form on their website: <http://publicworks.co.marion.or.us/enforcement/PDF/Complaint.pdf>

Complaint information is kept strictly confidential.

### **Other Useful Animal-Related Resources:**

Complaints regarding dogs (barking, roaming at large, etc.) are handled by Marion County Dog Control. Contact their office at (503) 588-5366 or their website: <http://www.co.marion.or.us/pw/dogcontrol/>

The Willamette Humane Society provides adoption or surrender services, behavioral classes, takes reports on possible animal neglect, and provides temporary shelter for homeless animals. Contact WHS at (503) 585-5900 or the website at: <http://www.willamettehumane.org/>.

The Oregon Humane Society offers similar services and can be contacted at (503) 285-7722; <http://www.oregonhumane.org/>.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) is a nationwide program that offers adoption services on a national level, pet care information, reporting services for neglect or abuse, etc. Check out their website at: <http://www.asPCA.org/>.

For more information on land use regulations related to raising, boarding and/or keeping animals on your property, contact the Planning Division at (503) 588-5038 or [planning@co.marion.or.us](mailto:planning@co.marion.or.us)

