

# How much livestock do I need for farm special assessment?



This is a good question and one we are asked a lot! However, whether you are trying to get your property on farm special assessment for the first time or you just want your land to continue qualifying, there is **no simple answer**. Many factors affect the carrying capacity\* of land, including:



**Soil Quality**



**Use of Irrigation**



**Time of Year**



**Topography and Slope**



**Type and Size of Livestock**

A good resource for obtaining information on running your farm agri-business is the...








**Oregon State University Extension Office**

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/>

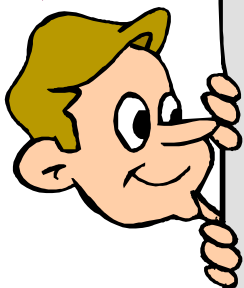
**(503) 588-5301**

Because of all the different possibilities, each property is **unique** in how many animals per acre it can likely support. The following **general guidelines** have been developed. Keep in mind that the **suggested** number of animals varies because the size and weight of an animal depends on its breed, sex and age.

## Approximate Requirements for Adult Animals on DRY Pasture

-  Horses (excluding those for pleasure\*\*) – 1 head per 2 acres
-  Cattle – 1 to 2 head per 2 acres
-  Llamas – 1 to 2 head per acre
-  Sheep – 2 to 4 head per acre
-  Goats – 3 to 5 head per acre
-  Range chickens – 50 per acre
-  Range turkeys – 25 per acre

**Did you know?**



At a bare minimum, a typical dry pasture with average soil should be able to support ½ Animal Unit\*\*\* per acre, with many pastures being able to comfortably support 1 Animal Unit per acre or more if irrigated.

Ultimately it is up to our appraisal staff to determine if stocking requirements are being met.

At the Marion County Assessor's Office, we give you only a **rough estimate** of how many "pounds per acre" of animals we would recommend for your farm – typically **500-800 pounds** at a **minimum** on dry pasture, and **1100 – 1400** on irrigated pasture.

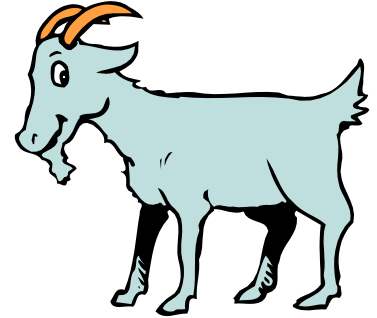


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**Important to remember:**

The fenced pasture itself must also be used fully and exclusively in an accepted farming practice with the primary intent of making a profit in money. This means it must contain good quality forage, be free of invasive weeds and brush, and must appear to be adequately fertilized. The forage must then be grazed by a sufficient number of livestock to keep it eaten down during the growing season. If a pasture has adequate livestock on it, but is full of blackberry briars, noxious weeds like scotch broom and tansy ragwort, or is full of debris like scrap metal... it will **NOT** qualify for farm use.



*NOTES*

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**\*Carrying Capacity:** The maximum stocking rate possible without inducing permanent or long-term damage to vegetation or related resources. The rate may vary from year to year in the same area as a result of fluctuating forage production.

**\*\*Horses:** Acceptable uses for horses include income-generating activities such as boarding, stabling, breeding, selling and training.

**\*\*\* Animal Unit (AU):** One mature cow of approximately 1,000 pounds and a calf up to weaning, usually 6 months of age, or their equivalent.

*-- as defined in the 2003 edition of the "National Range & Pasture Handbook"  
Published by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a division of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)*