Protecting farmland helps maintain fish and wildlife habitat and provides beautiful, natural aesthetic value which, blended with urban elements, diversifies the lifestyle that we cherish in the Pacific Northwest.

Consuming locally produced food is the most responsible, healthy and sustainable way to eat and supports our local economy.

Good farming practices protect and conserve natural resources — our soil, clean water and clean air.

All of these actions protect our land and our quality of life for future generations.

Did you know?

In King County...

- the total value of agriculture products sold annually is nearly $94 million.
- there are approximately 1,100 farms and 40 licensed dairies.
- there are approximately 25 farms still in existence that were established before 1800.
- there are approximately 20,000 horses, 12,000 mature dairy cows and approximately 1,000 sheep.
- the average dairy farmer produces enough milk for nearly 30,000 people per year.
- there are 61,500 acres — approximately 5% — in the unincorporated areas that are farmland and 42,000 acres of those are in designated Agriculture Production Districts (APD).
- there are 30 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms and 17 Farmers Markets — and those numbers are growing.
- the horse population is one of the highest in Washington.
- the Farmland Preservation Program, created by voters in 1979, is one of the first such programs in the United States.
- the development rights to over 13,000 acres of farmland is owned and preserved for farming through the Farmland Preservation Program.
- the Farmland Preservation Program has received grants totaling nearly $1.4 million from the United States Department of Agriculture Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program to assist in purchasing farmland development rights.
- the Agriculture Commission meets monthly to discuss agriculture related issues and agricultural land use.
- all citizens have at least one thing in common. We all eat!

Looking out for future generations

Brochure designed by King County DNRP WLR Visual Communications & Web Unit

This information will be made available in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities upon request. Call 206-296-6519 or TTY 711.
The King County Agriculture Program

A history of farms, food and livestock

King County has historically been a productive agricultural region with dairies, livestock operations, crop farms and berry fields. The rich agricultural areas in Enumclaw and the Kent, Auburn, Rainier, Sammamish and Snoqualmie valleys once supported hundreds of families and provided an abundant local food source for thousands. The Kent Valley was known for having some of the best agricultural soils in the world. Today, except for approximately 1,000 acres of farmland that have been permanently protected, parking lots and industrial centers cover most of the valley.

Increased land prices, regulations, urban pressures and drainage problems have all significantly contributed to the reduction of farmland in King County; however, farming is still a vital presence. King County has over 42,000 acres in its Agriculture Production Districts (APDs) – areas designated for agriculture by the King County Comprehensive Plan under the Growth Management Act. In addition, there remain thousands of acres still viable as working farms in the urban and rural areas of the county. The King County Agriculture Program supports farming within the APDs and throughout the County.

What we do for you and what agriculture does for all of us

Because the benefits of thriving agriculture are widespread, King County developed a program to encourage, maintain and support agricultural activity in our region. The services available are designed to work with you – as members of the agriculture community – and for you – as citizens of King County.

Working for you and with you

Agricultural Drainage Assistance Program
206-296-3979

The Agricultural Drainage Assistance Program (ADAP) provides technical and financial help to farmers to maintain agricultural watercourses and preserve water quality in our region. ADAP works with farmers to avoid harmful effects to fish, especially those listed under the Endangered Species Act. Program information, monitoring reports, and maps of agricultural watercourses are available online. http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/waterres/fnd/

Farmland Preservation Program
206-296-3470

As of 2003, more than 13,000 acres of King County farmland have been permanently protected through the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP). The FPP began in 1979 when voters approved an initiative to preserve rapidly diminishing farmland by authorizing the County to purchase development rights, which it is still doing today. By voluntarily selling development rights, property owners agree to covenants, which restrict their land use to agriculture or open space uses and limit housing density. This program permanently preserves agricultural lands that could otherwise be susceptible to sprawl and other types of urban development.

http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/lands/farmpp.htm

Livestock Program
206-296-1471 or 206-263-6566

The Livestock Program supports the raising and keeping of livestock in the County in an environmentally sound manner. Technical assistance on compliance with the King County Livestock Management Ordinance: manure management; stream and wetland setbacks; livestock densities; and clean water diversion is provided through phone calls, farm visits, presentations and flyers. The program also includes cost-share assistance for implementing best management practices through a farm management plan. Information for cost sharing on practices such as fencing, manure management and pasture management are also available online.

http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/lands/livestoc.htm

Puget Sound Fresh
206-296-7824

Puget Sound Fresh encourages consumers, wholesalers, retailers and restaurant owners to seek out and purchase locally grown products. Originally created by the King County Agriculture Commission, Puget Sound Fresh led the effort to keep farmers farming and that has now expanded to Snohomish, Pierce, Kitsap and other counties. Purchasing locally grown products directly supports King County farms, helping to maintain the agricultural economy and the conservation of farmland. Find out how to add your farm, crops or products to a searchable database or where to buy Puget Sound Fresh products today.

www.pugetsoundfresh.org

Horticulture Program
206-296-7824 or 206-296-1926

King County also offers expanded technical and cost-share assistance to horticulture operations.

“Let us never forget that the cultivation of the earth is the most important labor of man. When tillage begins other arts follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of civilization.” ~Daniel Webster