Large Animal Benefits
A helpful guide for large animal owners and property owners living next to large animals in Jefferson County

Jefferson County’s population continues to grow within the Denver Metropolitan Area. In the past the county was home to many farms and ranches. While the county has become more suburban, many properties continue to allow domesticated large animals, such as horses, cattle, and llamas. The ability to keep animals and its proximity to Denver, attracts many people to Jefferson County. The presence of large animals benefits the county economically, socially, physically and psychologically.

Economic Benefits
- In 2012, the market value of agricultural products sold in Jefferson County totaled $9 million.¹
- The horse industry has an economic impact on the U.S. economy of $122 billion.²
- The economic impact of Colorado’s Equine Industry on the state is $2.6 billion each year.³
- Each horse requires the support of three or more professionals, including a veterinarian and a farrier.³
- The value of horse manure as fertilizer is estimated to be $10 million per year in Colorado.⁵
- In a study by Iowa State University, 14% fewer ewes were lost to predators when llamas were introduced to guard the sheep. This equates to an average annual savings of $1,253.⁴

Social Benefits
- The Jefferson County Fairgrounds are located in Golden. On site is a 10,400 square foot exhibition hall, small conference rooms, an indoor riding arena, three outdoor riding arenas, and a large picnic area with pavilion. Events include horse shows, National Western events, 4-H events, and Westernaires events. More than 250,000 people enjoy activities at the fairgrounds each year.
- The Westernaires facilities adjoin the fairgrounds on the south. This organization works with young people who want to learn about caring for horses and honing their skill at precision mounted drills. Westernaires members develop intangible qualities such as discipline, teamwork, leadership skills, personal responsibility, and community pride. The organization provides a constructive alternative for today’s youth - no drugs, no alcohol, no tobacco.
- 4-H began a century ago as an educational program for the nation’s rural youth. Today, 4-H is America’s largest out-of-school education program for boys and girls. Youth who participate in 4-H get confidence, compassion and connections with caring adults to make contributions to their communities. Youth learn practical skills through hundreds of projects like cooking, livestock, nutrition, sewing, archery and shooting sports, electricity, science, and many more. 4-H is conducted by the Cooperative Extension System of the nation’s Land-Grant Universities through a partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments.

Physical Benefits
- Research shows that owners of companion animals have lower blood pressure and lower heart rates than non-companion animal owners.⁶
- Care of large animals, including feeding, grooming and riding, provide physical activity.
- Jefferson County’s Open Space program has many trails that accommodate mountain bikers, hikers, and equestrians.
- Recreational riding is Colorado’s largest equine industry.⁷
- Llamas have been used for centuries as pack animals. They are especially effective in rugged mountainous terrain and can help hikers and hunters carry heavy loads.
- Therapeutic horseback riding teaches children and adults with disabilities to ride a horse. It is a recreational program that has a therapeutic benefit and teaches riding skills. Horses are used because their walk is very similar to ours.
When a person balances on a moving horse they feel what a “normal” walk is like. Their muscles begin to learn to balance and work, and sensory pathways in the brain are stimulated that may be neglected or underused because of disabilities or special needs.

- Hippotherapy, from the Greek word “hippos” which means horse, is provided by licensed physical or occupational therapists, as well as speech language pathologists. This is a medical treatment provided by the therapist under a doctor’s prescription and is not the same treatment as therapeutic horsemanship. Hippotherapy does not teach riding skills, but rather focuses on the detailed clinical needs of the client. It is the therapist’s job in using hippotherapy to match horse and rider as well as the position of the rider, and the movement of the horse, to maximize the benefit.

**Psychological Benefits**

- Therapeutic riding benefits individuals who face cognitive challenges, such as autism, Down syndrome and brain damage. Learning to ride a horse is a complex process and requires concentration and attention. The activities that many instructors include in therapeutic riding lessons are meant to challenge and aid in cognitive improvement as well as physical improvement.

- Therapeutic riding encourages a sense of independence. For example, an individual confined to a wheelchair may eventually learn to ride a horse independently and compete in equestrian sports.

- The practice of using large animals for emotional therapy is a relatively new and growing field. Horses and llamas are being used in therapeutic intervention. Nursing homes, juvenile detention facilities, and individual therapists are using horses and llamas to strengthen patient’s emotional health and relationships.

- In Jefferson County many people keep large animals as companion animals and feel a deep bond with their animals. Studies have shown that this interaction can encourage positive attitudes, decrease stress levels and facilitate social interaction.

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**For more information about Animal Therapy contact:**

**North American Riding for the Handicapped Association**
PO Box 33150
Denver, Colorado 80233
800-369-RIDE (7433)
Email: narha@narha.org
http://www.narha.org

**Pegasus Program, Inc.**
P.O. Box 622033
Littleton, CO 80162
303-972-3598
email: pegasusprogram@aol.com
http://www.pegasusprogram.org

**Acknowledgments**


**For more information about this document contact:**
Jefferson County Planning and Zoning
100 Jefferson County Parkway, Suite 3550
Golden, CO 80419
303-271-8700
email: pzweb@jeffco.us
http://planning.jeffco.us

(Endnotes)

1 USDA National Agricultural Statistical Services
2 The 2017 Economic Impact Study of the U.S. Horse Industry
3 American Horse Council
4 Colorado Horse Power
5 CSU Cooperative Extension
6 The Delta Society
Large Animal Regulations
A helpful guide for large animal owners and property owners living next to large animals in Jefferson County

Jefferson County’s population continues to grow within the Denver Metropolitan Area. In the past the county was home to many farms and ranches. While the county has become more suburban, many properties continue to allow domesticated large animals, such as horses, cattle, and llamas. The ability to keep animals and its proximity to Denver, attracts many people to Jefferson County. The presence of large animals benefits the county economically, socially, physically and psychologically. It is important to educate property owners on current Jefferson County, state and federal regulations and best management practices, so that people can continue to keep animals into the future.

Current Regulations
The following represent the current regulations in place for large animal ownership in unincorporated Jefferson County. If you live within a city, please contact that city for their regulations on large animals. Additionally, there may be private covenants that also apply to your property.

Jefferson County Regulations
The zone districts in Jefferson County that allow for the keeping of large animals are:

- Residential One (R-1)
- Mountain Residential One (MR-1)
- Mountain Residential Two (MR-2)
- Suburban Residential One (SR-1)
- Suburban Residential Two (SR-2)
- Suburban Residential Five (SR-5)
- Agricultural One (A-1)
- Agricultural Two (A-2)
- Agricultural 35 (A-35)
- Planned Development (PD) in some instances¹

¹To determine the zoning on your property, go to https://jcgis.jeffco.us/webmaps/pz/index.html or call Jefferson County Planning & Zoning at 303-271-8700.

The following regulations apply to all standard zone districts that allow large animals. PD zoning is specialized zoning and may or may not have the following standards.

- Manure shall not be allowed to accumulate so as to cause a hazard to the health, safety or welfare of humans and/or animals. The outside storage of manure in piles shall not be permitted within 100 feet of the front lot line and varies for the side and rear setbacks depending in the zone district.
- Stallions and bulls shall be kept in a pen, corral or run area enclosed by a 6-foot chain link fence, or material equal or greater in strength, except when it is necessary to remove them for training, breeding or other similar purposes.

If a property is zoned R-1, MR-1, MR-2, SR-1, SR-2, or SR-5, the following regulations apply:

- The minimum square footage of open lot area available to the animals, shall be 9,000 square feet for the first animal and 6,000 square feet for each additional animal. The total number of such animals that may be kept shall not exceed 4 per 1 acre; except that offspring of animals on the property may be kept until weaned.
- The front setback for accessory buildings housing horses, cattle, sheep, goats, rabbits, chinchillas, poultry, and pigeons shall be set back at least 100 feet from the front lot line. All other accessory buildings shall be set back at least 50 feet from the front lot line.

If the property is zoned A-1, A-2, or A-35, the following regulations apply:

- If the lot is larger than 1 acre there is no limit on the number of large animals.
- If the lot is 1 acre or less, the minimum square footage of open lot area, available to the animals, shall be 9,000 square feet for the first animal and 6,000 square feet for each additional animal. The total number of such animals that may be kept shall not exceed 4 per 1 acre, except that offspring of animals on the property may be kept until weaned.
- The front setback for accessory buildings housing livestock shall be set back at least 75 feet from the front lot line. Fur farms, poultry farms, kennels and catteries, including all pens, runs, or structures used or occupied in conjunction with these activities, shall be set back at least 100 feet from the front lot line.
- The side setbacks for accessory buildings housing livestock shall be set back at least 75 feet from the side lot line. Fur farms, poultry farms, kennels and catteries, including all pens, runs or structures used or occupied in conjunction with these activities, shall be set back at least 100 feet from the side lot line.

The Planned Development (PD) zone district may allow for large animals. This zone district has standards that are specific to a certain property. For the standards for a specific PD, please contact Jefferson County Planning and Zoning.

In addition to regulations, if a property owner is requesting that the allowed uses change on their property, then the recommendations in Jefferson County’s Comprehensive Master Plan are reviewed. Recommendations may include lot sizes, setbacks and other management practices for property owners who wish to keep large animals.
State Regulations

Livestock Regulations

The State of Colorado has many animal and livestock regulations. The following are some of the key animal and livestock regulations. For more information contact the Brand Inspection Division, Colorado Department of Agriculture at 303-869-9160.

Definitions of equine, llama, and livestock for the purposes of state regulations can be found in the Colorado Revised Statute.

- Confined animals must always be provided with adequate food and water.
- No animal is allowed to be mistreated or neglected so that the animal's life is endangered.
- Equine and llama professionals in Colorado are required to post and maintain signs warning people that they are not liable for injury to or death of a participant in equine or llama activities.
- Owners of trespassing livestock are not liable for damages caused by their livestock unless a lawful fence is in place. This means that landowners must fence neighbors’ livestock out if they do not want the livestock on their property. If livestock trespass through a legal fence on a property, damages may be collected.
- Livestock operators should not knowingly allow livestock to graze or run at large in any incorporated or unincorporated municipality, lane, road, or public highway. This does not apply to livestock being driven on or through these areas.
- A brand inspection conducted by a state livestock inspector is required:
  Every time an animal is sold or purchased (horses, cattle, mules and donkeys) or when any change of ownership occurs, regardless of whether or not the animal is transported after or prior to the sale.
  When livestock is to be transported over 75 miles totally within the boundaries of Colorado (some exceptions).
  Every time livestock leave the state, regardless of circumstances.
  Any time livestock is to be transported on a public road, proof of ownership of the stock being transported must be available for inspection by the Colorado State Patrol, local law enforcement or a livestock inspector.
  Animals being transported by anyone other than the legal owner should have a letter or note from the owner authorizing that transport in conjunction with the inspection certificate (if required).
  Any livestock crossing a state line must be accompanied by a current health certificate. Contact your local veterinarian or the Colorado State Animal Health Division (303-869-9130) for specific information.
  A Farm Products (Livestock) Dealer’s License is required to purchase or broker livestock from Colorado producers, owners and dealers for resale and processing.

Failure to comply with Colorado Livestock Law is at least a Class I misdemeanor with a $250.00 minimum fine and/or up to 90 days jail time for the first offense.

Water Quality Regulations

In addition to animal and livestock regulations, there are also regulations regarding water quality and quantity that may apply.

If a well supplies a property with water and the owner wishes to keep large animals, an appropriate well permit that allows for the watering of large animals is required. If the permit does not allow the watering of animals, water will need to be obtained through a different source. To determine what the well allows, contact the Colorado Division of Water Resources at 303-866-3587.

To reduce impacts to water quality, the State’s Environmental Agriculture Program regulates Animal Feeding Operations (AFO).

An operation is an AFO if:
- Animals have been, are, or will be stabled or confined and fed or maintained for a total of 45 days or more in a 12-month period, and
- Crops, vegetation, forage growth, or post-harvest residues are not sustained in the normal growing season over any portion of the lot or facility.

Depending upon the number of animals confined at the AFO, the operation may meet the definition of a concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO). CAFOs are required to apply through the State for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit or register with the Environmental Agriculture Program.

In addition, regardless of size, the state may designate any AFO as a CAFO upon performing an on-site inspection and determining that it reasonably could be a significant contributor of pollutants to surface water.

Best management practice requirements for AFOs and the groundwater protection requirements for CAFOs can be found in the State’s Animal Feeding Operations Control Regulation (Regulation No. 81). Permit requirements for CAFOs can be found in subsection 61.17 of Colorado Discharge Permit System Regulation (Regulation No. 61).

For additional information, contact the Environmental Agriculture Program, at 303-692-3520 or visit the State's web site at www.cdphe.state.co.us.

Acknowledgements

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For more information about this document contact:
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Large Animal Resources

A helpful guide for large animal owners and property owners living next to large animals in Jefferson County

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Management Practices

There are many different management practices that help to create a healthy and safe environment for residents and large animals. Management practices range from simple practices like ensuring that animals have access to fresh water, to more complicated practices such as parasite control. There are many different ways to manage manure, pastures, and the health and safety of the animal. It is up to the owner to determine which management practices are best for their property. Guides containing management practices may be obtained from the organizations on the “Resources” list.

Living Near Large Animals

Colorado is a “Right-to-Farm” State. This means that residents and visitors should be prepared to accept the activities, sights, sounds, and smells of agricultural operations as a normal and functional aspect of living in an area with a strong rural character and a healthy agricultural sector. Colorado statute recognizes that when nonagricultural land uses extend into agricultural areas, agricultural operations often become the subject of nuisance suits. As a result, a number of agricultural operations are forced to cease operations, and many others are discouraged from making investments in farm improvements. The statute provides that ranching, farming, or other agricultural activities and operations shall not be considered to be nuisances as long as they are operated in conformance with the law and in a non-negligent manner.

Many people are attracted to areas with animals because they represent the “western” lifestyle. As people move next to large animals, conflicts can occur when their perception of rural living clashes with reality. People with urban expectations may perceive agricultural activities, sights, sounds, and smells as inconvenient, an eyesore, or unpleasant.

Residents and visitors should be prepared to encounter machinery and livestock on public roads, noises, odors, lights, mud, dust, smoke, chemicals, storage and disposal of manure, and the application of chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides, by spraying and other mechanisms. Colorado law requires property owners to control noxious weeds. With larger pastures, the most effective way to do this may be through the spraying of herbicides.

People should always talk to the owner of large animals before approaching the animals. Not all animals are friendly and may injure children or adults. Even animals that are typically friendly can cause injuries if they are frightened or feel that their territory is being invaded.

Dogs or other animals should not be allowed to roam free near large animals. Dogs have been known to attack and injure or kill a domestic animal. Also, owners of livestock have the right to protect their animals from dogs that are running loose and harassing their animals, if these animals trespass onto private property.

Jefferson County also has an excellent open space program that has trails to accommodate mountain bikers, hikers, and equestrians. Trail etiquette asks that mountain bikers and hikers yield to equestrians. Equestrians should let you know when it is safe to pass them.
Resources

General Information
Colorado State University
Extension & 4-H - Jefferson County
15200 West Sixth Avenue, Suite C
Golden, CO 80401-5018
303-271-6620
http://jeffco.extension.colostate.edu

Colorado State Veterinarian's Office
Animal Health Division
305 Interlocken Pkwy
Broomfield, CO 80021
303-869-9130
http://www.colorado.gov/aganimals

Jefferson County Animal Control
700 Jefferson County Parkway
Golden, CO 80401
303-271-5070

Foothills Animal Shelter
580 McIntyre St
Golden, CO 80401
303-278-7575
Email: info@fas4pets.org

Soils/Grazing info
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resource Conservation Service - Colorado
655 Parfet St, #E200
Lakewood, CO 80215
720-544-2810
http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov

Jefferson Conservation District
Denver Federal Center
Building 56, Room 2604
P.O. Box 25426
Denver, CO 80225-0426
720-544-2870
http://www.jeffersonconservationdistrict.org

Horses
Colorado State University
Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories
2450 Gillette Drive
Fort Collins, CO 80526
Phone: 970-297-1281
Fax: 970-297-0320
http://csu-cvmbs.colostate.edu/vdl/Pages/default.aspx
dlab@colostate.edu

Jefferson County Horse Council
P.O. Box 1177
Golden, CO 80402
Email: info@jeffcohorse.com
http://www.jeffcohorse.com/

Westernaires- Jefferson County
15200 W. 6th Avenue
Golden, Colorado 80401
303-279-3767
http://www.westernaires.org

Colorado Horse Council
22 S. 4th Ave., Ste. 106
Brighton, CO 80601
http://www.coloradohorsecouncil.com
303-292-4981

Colorado Horse Rescue
10386 North 65th Street
Longmont, CO 80503
720-494-1414
Email: info@chr.org
http://www.chr.org

Llamas and Alpacas
Rocky Mountain Llama & Alpaca Assn.
www.RMLA.com

Livestock Laws
Brand Inspection Division
Colorado Department of Agriculture
305 Interlocken Pkwy
Broomfield, CO 80021
303-869-9160
http://www.colorado.gov/agbrands

Water Quality and Quantity
Colorado Division of Water Resources
1313 Sherman Street, Ste. 821
Denver, CO 80203
303-866-3581
http://www.water.state.co.us

Colo. Dept. of Public Health and Environment
Water Quality Control Division
Animal Feeding Operations Program
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South
Denver, CO 80246
303-692-3520
http://www.cdphe.state.co.us
Email: cdphe.cafo@state.co.us

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