

DEAF SMITH COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT

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BEEKEEPING PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES AND POLICIES.



State Law: The Texas Property Tax Code Sec. 23.51 (2) states: “Agricultural use” includes ... the use of land to raise or keep bees for pollination or for the production of human food or other tangible products having a commercial value, provided that the land used is not less than 5 or more than 20 acres.

History: Texas laws changed in 2011 to include Beekeeping as qualifying for an agricultural tax exemption. Effective January 1, 2012.

Criteria: Those seeking an ag exemption will have to establish a history of 5 years of bee keeping on their property before the exemption applies. To help establish a history register your apiary with the Texas Apiary Inspection Service TAIS (free), keep record and receipts. If you are transporting bee hives between counties you should also obtain from TAIS an Intra-state Permit. This Permit is \$35 per year and will also help establish “history”.

Some Appraisal Districts (mainly in the southern and central parts of the state) have set a standard of 6 hives for the first 5 acres and then 1 more hive for each 2.5 acres. At 20 acres that's 12 hives. While the Deaf Smith CAD may look at what other CAD's are doing we cannot expect the same standard here because:

- we have a much colder winter and
- less flowering plants; for example in 2011 the county only had 62 acres of irrigated Sunflowers and 377 acres of dryland Sunflowers;
- and a much shorter growing season.

Therefore Deaf Smith CAD will have significantly lower requirements. Requirements are:

- Hives must be active, maintained and kept alive.
- The hives must be located on the property long enough to pollinate a crop or to produce honey or products
- The owner must show proof of history for beekeeping for any five of seven preceding years.

Number of Hives - The number of recommended hives per acre depends on the attractiveness of the crop to bees, number of wild bees, number of competing weeds, strength and location of bee hives, weather, and the grower's experience. As a starting point, we will expect one hive per acre, and may move up or down according to the advice of experienced beekeepers and our county Extension agent.

Contact the Appraisal District for more information and for any forms.