

May 18, 2020

Brian K. Veerkamp
Chair, Board of Supervisors

Brian,

I will be going before our AG Commission in July about cattle grazing for fuel load reduction. Rather than talking in generalities, it would be better to make specific recommendations on behalf of our local Cattlemen.

Our current Vegetation Management Ordinance #5101 (Page 6, Item 9) reads, "Cultivated and useful grasses and pastures shall not be considered a public nuisance. However, if the County's enforcement official determines it necessary to protect adjacent improved property from fire exposure, an adequate firebreak may be required".

I would make the recommendation that it should be separated to read "historically grazed and actively managed pasture only". These should be afforded the protection of not being considered a public nuisance, as opposed to abandoned pastures not actively managed. Abandoned pastures allow fuel loads to build-up causing wildfire risk.

These pastures have been taken out of agricultural production causing the loss of the commodity of annual feed and its income. These pastures should be considered a public nuisance and enforced by the ordinance.

I would also recommend adding pasture to Section 8:09.030: Definitions – Clearing. Pasture actively managed and grazed by some form of livestock. All livestock grazing for fire control should be encouraged. Our AG Department should take any positive steps to educate people on the benefits of grazing.

In contemplating the natural law of action-reaction or un-intended consequences, I would expect to see some resistance from both the Environmentalist and the Real Estate and Development Community. They have been happily making parcel splits and selling parcels, leaving somebody else to worry about the fire hazard, which is exactly how our County got in the condition we are in today.

Considering the implications and seriousness of these recommendations, I would expect a review by the County Counsel.

I would appreciate your comments.

Thank you

Ed Borba