

Property Tax Programs

Table 1. Comparison of Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) and Ohio Forest Tax Law (OFTL) Programs.

	Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV)	Ohio Forest Tax Law (OFTL)
Statute	ORC 5713.30 -- 5713.38	ORC 5713.22 -- 5713.26 and OAC 1501: 3-10-01 -- 3-10-07
Administered by	County Auditor	Ohio Division of Forestry
Purpose	Commercial timber production*	Timber production* and allied fields
Minimum acreage for forest land	10 acres**	10 acres***
Property boundary lines must be marked	Not necessarily; check with your county auditor	Yes
Forest management plan required	Not necessarily; check with your county auditor	Yes
Forest management plan can be prepared by a service forester	Not if the plan is exclusively for a CAUV application	Yes
Woods must be managed	Not necessarily inasmuch as some counties do not have the personnel for verifying that the woods are indeed managed	Yes
Regular inspections after approval or certification	Subject to inspection, but no regular schedule	Yes, every five years
Other requirements	Completion of an annual renewal form; check with your county auditor for other requirements	At least eight hours of forestry education in the first five years; filing of a timber harvest plan and use of a master logger when harvesting timber; recertification every five years
Tax reduction	Varies based on the productivity of the land	Fifty percent reduction in the local tax rate on forest land
Application fee	\$25	\$50
Application deadline	After the first Monday in January and before the first Monday in March	Year around, but an application by July 1 obligates the Division of Forestry to certify your land by Oct. 1 of the same year

	Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV)	Ohio Forest Tax Law (OFTL)
Application	One-page form available from the auditor's office	One-page form available from the Division of Forestry, plus maps, aerial photographs, and property tax bills
Waiting period before approval or certification	In some counties, three years under a forest management plan or under OFTL before application is approved	None, unless the woods under your ownership have been high-graded within the previous three years****
Form for continuing in the program required	Yes, a form completed annually by the landowner is required	Yes, a form completed every five years by the landowner and the inspecting forester is required
Penalty for withdrawal from the program	Yes, a tax recoupment equal to up to three years of tax savings	No
Withdrawal imposed in the case of	Conversion to non-agricultural use; deed change in most cases; failure to complete a renewal form	Conversion of any part of the certified acreage to non-forest; failure to follow the management plan; failure to maintain boundary line markings; any deed change except for the death of a spouse

*"Commercial timber production" and "timber production" do not necessarily mean harvesting timber at a particular time or by a particular schedule. The completion of prescribed management activities designed to promote the growth, health, and reproduction of commercial species (oak, hickory, maple, beech, poplar, ash, cherry, pine, etc.) demonstrate the landowner's intent to produce timber.

**Or, if forest land is less than 10 acres, average gross yearly income for the three years prior to application must be at least \$2,500, or the anticipated gross income for the year of application must be \$2,500. Forest land may also be eligible for CAUV as incidental woods if it is part of and adjacent to a larger farm under CAUV.

***Forest land must at least 10 contiguous acres and at least 120 feet wide in order to qualify. Any breaks in forest land can be no wider than 120 feet, or, if they are, the tracts of forest land separated by a break must be at least 10 acres each. Ponds can qualify as long as they are no more than one acre.

*****High-grading* is used here as a shorthand term for a non-silvicultural cutting of timber. Most non-silvicultural cutting is high-grading in one form or another. High-grading is the removal of high quality and high value timber from the woods without any treatment of low quality or low value timber. This type of cutting results in mismanaged woods, and because OFTL is a program for managing the woods, high-grading is not permitted at any time. *Silviculture* is the art and science of tending a forest. In short, silviculture is what foresters do.

