

## Managed Growth Tier System History

### Agricultural Reserve Tier

The **Agricultural Reserve Tier** occupies southern Palm Beach County and acts as a buffer between the suburbs and the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. It includes areas critical to Everglades restoration. Farms in this area are a significant source of the nation's winter vegetables. The objective is to enhance agricultural, environmental, and water resources while accommodating some of the County's growth pressure.

The County promotes agriculture and open space by relaxing standards to facilitate farming activities and allowing uses such as packing houses and food processing plants. The County is also actively seeking to locate a university-sponsored agricultural education center in this area. As a method to preserve agricultural and environmentally sensitive land, development rights may be transferred to more desirable urbanizing locations. Additionally, to foster economic development, increase rural lifestyle choices, and preserve open space, the County promotes equestrian-oriented development in this Tier.

With \$150 million in bond funds, the County is able to buy and protect environmentally sensitive lands and farmland. To optimize use of these funds, the County is promoting use of a lease-back program for farmers. To protect the Everglades, the County is cooperating with water management agencies to develop an integrated water management system.

To promote the perpetuation of agriculture, a master plan is being developed to designate where agriculture should remain and where conventional and clustered residential development should locate to form livable communities.