

Handbook of Florida Fence and Property Law: Adjoining Landowners¹

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Foreword

With approximately 19,000 livestock farms in the state, along with horse farms, orange groves, soybeans, sugarcane, cotton, peanuts, and many other agricultural and livestock facilities, livestock and farming have a significant impact on Florida's economy. Florida's agricultural economy has been required to co-exist with rapid population and commercial growth in the state over the last twenty-five years. Conflicts between these interests bring to prominence issues such as the rights and responsibilities of adjoining landowners, farmers, and property owners in general. Due to the added importance placed on these areas of real property, the legal aspects of fences in the state of Florida have taken on significant importance.

This handbook is designed to inform property owners of their rights and responsibilities in terms of their duty to fence. Discussed areas include a property owner's responsibility to fence when livestock is kept on the property, the rights of adjoining landowners to fence, the placement of fences, encroachments, boundary lines, easements, contracts, nuisances, and a

landowner's responsibilities towards persons who enter his property.

This handbook should provide a basic overview of many rights and responsibilities that farmers and farmland owners have under Florida's fencing and property law. Readers may value this handbook because it informs them about these rights and responsibilities. However, the reader should be aware that because the laws, administrative rulings, and court decisions on which this booklet is based are subject to constant revision, portions of this booklet could become outdated at any time. This handbook should not be viewed as a comprehensive guide to fencing and property laws. Additionally, many details of cited laws are left out due to space limitations. This handbook should not be seen as a statement of legal opinion or advice by the authors on any of the legal issues discussed within. This handbook is not a replacement for personal legal advice, but is only a guide to inform the public on issues relating to fencing and property laws in Florida. For these reasons, the use of these materials by any person constitutes an agreement to hold the authors, the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, the

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How does the law define an adjoining landowner?

Adjoining landowners are legally defined as individuals whose lands are separated by a common boundary line152391305 (see Fla. Jur. 2d, Adjoining Landowners section 1).

As an adjoining landowner, when am I required to raise a fence? If I raise a fence, am I entitled to some contribution from the other landowner?

Owners of adjoining land are under no legal responsibility to fence their land. However, an owner who does decide to fence his land has no legal claim of contribution by the adjoining landowner unless there is an agreement to contribute or the adjoining landowner notifies the owner that he will pay his proportionate share. In the case where two adjoining landowners purchase land in which a fence already exists, the adjoining landowners are considered joint owners of the fence and have a joint obligation to repair and maintain the fence (see Fla. Jur 2d Adjoining Landowners section 60).

Summary

Owners of adjoining land are not required to raise a fence. If they do decide to raise a fence, they do so at their own cost and are not entitled to any contribution from the adjoining landowner, unless they have an agreement that says otherwise.

Further Information

Circular 1242, Handbook of Florida Fence and Property Law
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/TOPIC_BOOK_Florida_Fence_and_Property_Law