



# The National Agricultural Law Center

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## States' Differential Tax Assessment of Agricultural Land Statutes

*North Dakota*



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# A National Agricultural Law Center Research Publication

## States' Differential Tax Assessment of Agricultural Land Statutes State of North Dakota

[N.D. Cent. Code § 57-02-27](#)  
[N.D. Cent. Code § 57-02-27.1](#)  
[N.D. Cent. Code § 57-02-27.2](#)

*Current through the 2017 Regular Session of the 65th Legislative Assembly and results of the Nov. 6, 2018, election.*

### **§ 57-02-27. Property to be valued at a percentage of assessed value--Classification of property--Limitation on valuation of annexed agricultural lands**

All property subject to taxation based on the value thereof must be valued as follows:

1. All residential property to be valued at nine percent of assessed value. If any property is used for both residential and nonresidential purposes, the valuation must be prorated accordingly.
2. All agricultural property to be valued at ten percent of assessed value as determined pursuant to section 57-02-27.2.
3. All commercial property to be valued at ten percent of assessed value.
4. All centrally assessed property to be valued at ten percent of assessed value except as provided in section 57-06-14.1.

The resulting amounts must be known as the taxable valuation. In determining the assessed value of real and personal property, except agricultural property, the assessor may not adopt a lower or different standard of value because the same is to serve as a basis of taxation, nor may the assessor adopt as a criterion of value the price at which said property would sell at auction, or at forced sale, or in the aggregate with all the property in the town or district, but the assessor shall value each article or description by itself, and at such sum or price as the assessor believes the same to be fairly worth in money. In assessing any tract or lot of real property, there must be determined the value of the land, exclusive of improvements, and the value of all taxable improvements and structures thereon, and the aggregate value of the property, including all taxable structures and other improvements, excluding the value of crops growing upon cultivated lands. In valuing any real property upon which there is a coal or other mine, or stone or other quarry, the same must be valued at such a price as such property, including the mine or quarry, would sell for at a fair voluntary sale for cash. Agricultural lands within the corporate limits of a city which are not platted constitute agricultural property and must be so classified and valued for ad valorem property tax purposes until such lands are put to another use. Agricultural lands, whether within the corporate limits of a city or not, which were platted and assessed as agricultural



property prior to March 30, 1981, must be assessed as agricultural property for ad valorem property tax purposes until put to another use. Such valuation must be uniform with the valuation of adjoining unannexed agricultural land.

### **§ 57-02-27.1. Property to be valued at true and full value**

All assessors and boards of equalization shall place the values of all items of taxable property at the true and full value of the property except as otherwise specifically provided by law, and the amount of taxes that may be levied on such property must be limited as provided in this chapter. For the purposes of sections 57-02-27, 57-02-27.1, 57-02-27.2, and 57-55-04, the term “true and full value” has the same meaning as provided in subsection 15 of section 57-02-01, except that “true and full value” of agricultural lands must be as determined pursuant to section 57-02-27.2.

### **§ 57-02-27.2. Valuation and assessment of agricultural lands**

1. “True and full value” of agricultural lands must be their agricultural value for the purposes of sections 57-02-27, 57-02-27.1, 57-02-27.2, and 57-55-04. Agricultural value is defined as the “capitalized average annual gross return”, except for inundated agricultural land. The “annual gross return” must be determined from crop share rent, cash rent, or a combination thereof reduced by estimated property taxes and crop marketing expenses incurred by farmland owners renting their lands on a cash or crop share basis.
2. For purposes of this section, “annual gross return” for cropland used for growing crops other than sugar beets and potatoes means thirty percent of annual gross income produced, “annual gross return” for cropland used for growing sugar beets and potatoes means twenty percent of annual gross income produced, and “annual gross return” for land used for grazing farm animals means twenty-five percent of an amount determined by the department of agribusiness and applied economics of North Dakota state university to represent the annual gross income potential of the land based upon the animal unit carrying capacity of the land.
3. The “average annual gross return” for each county must be determined as follows:
  - a. Total the annual gross returns for the ten years immediately preceding the current year for which data is available and discard the highest and lowest annual gross returns of the ten.
  - b. The department of agribusiness and applied economics of North Dakota state university shall establish a base year index of prices paid by farmers using annual statistics on that topic compiled by the national agricultural statistics service for the seven-year period ending in 1995, discarding the highest and lowest years' indexes, and averaging the remaining five years' indexes. The department of agribusiness and applied economics shall gather the national agricultural statistics service annual index of prices paid by farmers for the ten years ending with the most recent year used under subdivision a, discard the highest and lowest years' indexes, average the remaining eight years' indexes, and divide the resulting amount by the base year index of prices paid by farmers. This amount must be divided into the amount determined under subdivision a.
  - c. Divide the figure arrived at in subdivision b by eight.



4. To find the “capitalized average annual gross return”, the average annual gross return must be capitalized by a rate that is a ten-year average of the gross agribank mortgage rate of interest for North Dakota. The ten-year average must be computed from the twelve years ending with the most recent year used under subdivision a of subsection 3, discarding the highest and lowest years, and the gross agribank mortgage rate of interest for each year must be determined in the manner provided in section 20.2032A-4(e)(1) of the United States treasury department regulations for valuing farm real property for federal estate tax purposes, except that the interest rate may not be adjusted as provided in section 20.2032A-4(e)(2).
5. The department of agribusiness and applied economics of North Dakota state university shall compute annually an estimate of the average agricultural value per acre [.40 hectare] of agricultural lands on a statewide and on a countywide basis; shall compute the average agricultural value per acre [.40 hectare] for cropland, noncropland, and inundated agricultural land for each county; and shall provide the tax commissioner with this information by December first of each year. Fifty percent of the annual gross income from irrigated cropland must be considered additional expense of production and may not be included in computation of the average agricultural value per acre [.40 hectare] for cropland for the county as determined by the department of agribusiness and applied economics. Before January first of each year, the tax commissioner shall provide to each county director of tax equalization these estimates of agricultural value for each county.
6. For purposes of this section, “inundated agricultural land” means property classified as agricultural property containing a minimum of ten contiguous acres if the value of the inundated land exceeds ten percent of the average agricultural value of noncropland for the county, which is inundated to an extent making it unsuitable for growing crops or grazing farm animals for two consecutive growing seasons or more, and which produced revenue from any source in the most recent prior year which is less than the county average revenue per acre for noncropland calculated by the department of agribusiness and applied economics of North Dakota state university. Application for classification as inundated agricultural land must be made in writing to the township assessor or county director of tax equalization by March thirty-first of each year. Before all or part of a parcel of property may be classified as inundated agricultural land, the board of county commissioners must approve that classification for that property for the taxable year. The agricultural value of inundated agricultural lands for purposes of this section must be determined by the department of agribusiness and applied economics of North Dakota state university to be ten percent of the average agricultural value of noncropland for the county as determined under this section. Valuation of individual parcels of inundated agricultural land may recognize the probability that the property will be suitable for agricultural production as cropland or for grazing farm animals in the future. Determinations made under this subsection may be appealed through the informal equalization process and formal abatement process provided for in this title.
7. Before February first of each year, the county director of tax equalization in each county shall provide to all assessors within the county an estimate of the average agricultural value of agricultural lands within each assessment district. The estimate must be based upon the average agricultural value for the county adjusted by the relative values of lands within each assessment district compared to the county average. In determining the relative value of lands for each assessment district compared to the county



average, the county director of tax equalization shall use soil type and soil classification data from detailed and general soil surveys.

8. Each local assessor shall determine the relative value of each assessment parcel within the assessor's jurisdiction and shall determine the agricultural value of each assessment parcel by adjusting the agricultural value estimate for the assessment district by the relative value of the parcel. Each parcel must then be assessed according to section 57-02-27. If either a local assessor or a township board of equalization develops an agricultural value for the lands in its assessment district differing substantially from the estimate provided by the county director of tax equalization, written evidence to support the change must be provided to the county director of tax equalization. In determining the relative value of each assessment parcel, the local assessor shall apply the following considerations, which are listed in descending order of significance to the assessment determination:
  - a. Soil type and soil classification data from detailed or general soil surveys.
  - b. The schedule of modifiers that must be used to adjust agricultural property assessments within the county as approved by the state supervisor of assessments under subsection 9.
  - c. Actual use of the property for cropland or noncropland purposes by the owner of the parcel.
9. Before February first of each year, the county director of tax equalization in each county shall provide to all assessors of agricultural property within the county a schedule of modifiers that must be used to adjust agricultural property assessments within the county and directions regarding how those modifiers must be applied by assessors. Before the schedule of modifiers is provided to assessors within the county, the county director of tax equalization shall obtain the approval of the state supervisor of assessments for use of the schedule within the county.
10. For any county that has not fully implemented use of soil type and soil classification data from detailed or general soil surveys by February first of any taxable year after 2011, the tax commissioner shall direct the state treasurer to withhold five percent of that county's allocation each quarter from the state aid distribution fund under section 57-39.2-26.1 beginning with the first quarter of 2013, and continuing until the tax commissioner certifies to the state treasurer that that county has fully implemented use of soil type or soil classification data. The amount withheld from the allocation must be deposited into the agricultural land valuation fund. The amount withheld from the allocation must be withheld entirely from the portion of the allocation which may be retained by the county and may not reduce allocations to any political subdivisions within the county.

