

6A.21 Condemnation of agricultural land — definitions.

1. Except as otherwise provided, for purposes of [this chapter](#) and [chapter 6B](#):

a. “Aboveground merchant line” means “merchant line” as defined in [section 478.6A, subsection 1](#), excluding those merchant lines that are underground.

b. (1) “Agricultural land” means real property owned by a person in tracts of ten acres or more and not laid off into lots of less than ten acres or divided by streets and alleys into parcels of less than ten acres, and that has been used for the production of agricultural commodities during three out of the past five years. Such use of property includes but is not limited to the raising, harvesting, handling, drying, or storage of crops used for feed, food, seed, or fiber; the care or feeding of livestock; the handling or transportation of crops or livestock; the storage, treatment, or disposal of livestock manure; and the application of fertilizers, beneficial substances, pesticides, and herbicides on crops.

(2) “Agricultural land” includes land on which is located farm residences or outbuildings used for agricultural purposes and land on which is located facilities, structures, or equipment for agricultural purposes.

(3) “Agricultural land” includes land taken out of agricultural production for purposes of environmental protection or preservation.

c. “Private development purposes” means the construction of, or improvement related to, recreational trails, recreational development paid for primarily with private funds, aboveground merchant lines, housing and residential development, or commercial or industrial enterprise development.

d. “Public use” or “public purpose” or “public improvement” does not include the authority to condemn agricultural land for private development purposes unless the owner of the agricultural land consents to the condemnation.

2. The limitation on the definition of public use, public purpose, or public improvement does not apply to the establishment, relocation, or improvement of a road pursuant to [chapter 306](#), or to the establishment of a railway under the supervision of the department of transportation as provided in [section 327C.2](#), or to an airport as defined in [section 328.1](#), or to land acquired in order to replace or mitigate land used in a road project when federal law requires replacement or mitigation. This limitation also does not apply to utilities, persons, companies, or corporations under the jurisdiction of the Iowa utilities commission or to any other utility conferred the right by statute to condemn private property or to otherwise exercise the power of eminent domain, except to the extent such purpose includes construction of aboveground merchant lines.

99 Acts, ch 171, §1, 41, 42; 2006 Acts, 1st Ex, ch 1001, §2, 49; 2017 Acts, ch 170, §55 – 57, 59, 60; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §2653; 2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369; 2025 Acts, ch 134, §1

Referred to in [§6A.22](#)

Subsection 1, paragraph b amended