

91.3 Restriction on agricultural land holdings.

1. A nonresident alien, foreign business or foreign government, or an agent, trustee or fiduciary thereof, shall not purchase or otherwise acquire agricultural land in this state. A nonresident alien, foreign business or foreign government, or an agent, trustee or fiduciary thereof, which owns or holds agricultural land in this state on January 1, 1980, may continue to own or hold the land, but shall not purchase or otherwise acquire additional agricultural land in this state.

2. A person who acquires agricultural land in violation of [this chapter](#) or who fails to convert the land to the purpose other than farming within five years, as provided for in [this chapter](#), remains in violation of [this chapter](#) for as long as the person holds an interest in the land.

3. The restriction set forth in [subsection 1](#) of [this section](#) does not apply to the following:

a. Agricultural land acquired by devise or descent.

b. A bona fide encumbrance on agricultural land taken for purposes of security.

c. Agricultural land acquired by a process of law in the collection of debts, by a deed in lieu of foreclosure, pursuant to a forfeiture of a contract for deed, or by any procedure for the enforcement of a lien or claim on the land, whether created by mortgage or otherwise. However, agricultural land so acquired shall be sold or otherwise disposed of within two years after title is transferred. Pending the sale or disposition, the land shall not be used for any purpose other than farming, and the land shall not be used for farming except under lease to an individual, trust, corporation, partnership or other business entity not subject to the restriction on the increase in agricultural land holdings imposed by [section 9H.4](#). Agricultural land which has been acquired pursuant to this paragraph shall not be acquired or utilized by the nonresident alien, foreign business, or foreign government, or an agent, trustee, or fiduciary thereof, under either paragraph “d” or paragraph “e”.

d. Agricultural land acquired for research or experimental purposes. Agricultural land is used for research or experimental purposes if any of the following apply:

(1) Research and experimental activities are undertaken on the agricultural land and commercial sales of products produced from farming the agricultural land do not occur or are incidental to the research or experimental purposes of the corporation. Commercial sales are incidental to the research or experimental purposes of the corporation when such sales are less than twenty-five percent of the gross sales of the primary product of the research.

(2) The agricultural land is used for the primary purpose of testing, developing, or producing seeds or plants for sale or resale to farmers as seed stock. Grain which is not sold as seed stock is an incidental sale and must be less than twenty-five percent of the gross sales of the primary product of the research and experimental activities.

(3) Until July 1, 2001, the agricultural land is used for the primary purpose of testing, developing, or producing animals for sale or resale to farmers as breeding stock. However, after July 1, 1989, to qualify under this paragraph, the following conditions must be satisfied:

(a) The nonresident alien, foreign business, or foreign government or an agent, trustee, or fiduciary of the alien, business, or government must not hold the agricultural land other than as a lessee. The term of the lease must be for not more than twelve years. A lessee shall not renew a lease entered into under this subparagraph (3). The lessee shall not enter into a lease under this paragraph, if another lease under this paragraph has been entered into by the lessee.

(b) A term or condition of sale, including resale, of seed stock or breeding stock must not relate to the direct or indirect control by the lessee of the breeding stock or breeding stock progeny subsequent to the sale.

(c) The number of acres of agricultural land held by the lessee must not exceed six hundred forty acres.

(d) The lessee must deliver a copy of the lease to the secretary of state. The secretary of state shall notify the lessee of receipt of the copy of the lease.

(4) Culls and test animals may be sold under subparagraph (3). For a three-year period beginning on the date that the lease takes effect, the gross sales for any year shall not be greater than five hundred thousand dollars. After the three-year period ends, the gross sales

for any year shall not be greater than twenty-five percent of the gross sales for that year of the breeding stock, or five hundred thousand dollars, whichever is less. As used in subparagraph (3), “*lessee*” means a nonresident alien, foreign business, or foreign government, or an agent, trustee, or fiduciary acting on behalf of the nonresident alien, foreign business, or foreign government, or any other trade or business which is under the lessee’s common control as provided in 26 U.S.C. §414.

(5) Effective July 1, 2001, a nonresident alien, foreign business, or foreign government or an agent, trustee, or fiduciary of the alien, business, or government shall not acquire or hold agricultural land used for the primary purpose of testing, developing, or producing animals.

e. An interest in agricultural land, not to exceed three hundred twenty acres, acquired for an immediate or pending use other than farming. However, a nonresident alien, foreign business or foreign government, or an agent, trustee or fiduciary thereof, who lawfully owns over three hundred twenty acres on January 1, 1980, may continue to own or hold the land, but shall not purchase or otherwise acquire additional agricultural land in this state except by devise or descent from a nonresident alien. Pending the development of the agricultural land for purpose other than farming, the land shall not be used for farming except under lease to an individual, trust, corporation, partnership or other business entity not subject to the restriction on the increase in agricultural land holdings imposed by [section 9H.4](#).

f. An interest in agricultural land acquired by a foreign business for an immediate use other than farming if all of the requirements of [section 15.498](#) are met.

4. A nonresident alien, foreign business or foreign government, or an agent, trustee or fiduciary thereof shall not transfer title to or interest in agricultural land to a nonresident alien, foreign business or foreign government, or an agent, trustee or fiduciary thereof except by devise or descent.

[C73, §1908; C97, §2889; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §10214; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, §567.1; C81, §567.3]

[86 Acts, ch 1214, §9](#); [89 Acts, ch 311, §31, 33](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1095, §10](#)
C2003, §9I.3

[2014 Acts, ch 1092, §6](#); [2024 Acts, ch 1090, §1, 15](#)

Referred to in [§9I.4](#), [9I.9](#), [10.3](#), [10.5](#), [10.7](#), [10.10](#)