



MARION COUNTY

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

To: Chairman Kathy Bryant

From: Investigator Justin McClure

Subject: Special Use Permit 251004SU

Date: October 20, 2025

Dear Chairman Bryant,

The Marion County Sheriff's Office Agriculture Investigations Unit has been requested to review a Special Use Permit application that will appear before the Commission on October 20th, 2025. The Agriculture Investigations Unit specializes in conducting investigations that involve livestock animals in Marion County.

I have reviewed the proposed application, case number 251004SU in its entirety. Additionally, I responded to applicants' location on September 8, 2025, along with Growth Services staff. Based upon the documents and attachments provided, the Unit concurs with County Staff's recommendation of approval along with the conditions that are being proposed.

Marion County Land Development Code (LDC), Section 4.2.6(f) provides that the minimum square footage for keeping 1 horse shall be 9,000 square feet and each additional horse shall require an additional 6,000 square feet. The proposed application provides that the paddock(s) where the livestock are to be housed is approximately 140,000 square feet (3.24 acres). There are multiple factors that a horse owner must keep in mind whenever choosing to have a horse on their property, such as pasture size, availability of natural forage, shade/shelter, and manure buildup. Based upon my analysis when conducting a site visit, the area where the livestock are to be housed is currently in good condition and appears to have been properly managed. The applicant advised that upon approval, they will be erecting several bouts of fencing and shade structures in the livestock paddocks. Although the LDC allows 22 hooved animals to be placed on a lot of this size, it is not my recommendation that this number be allotted. The University of Florida IFAS Extension recommends at minimum 1.5 to 2 acres per horse on a properly maintained pasture/paddock. Given that the applicant will only be utilizing the area (3.24 acres) previously mentioned, the allowance of 22 horses or large livestock would be detrimental to the land.

Based upon the condition of the property and applicants plan to manage the land, it is my recommendation that the Board allow up to three (3) large livestock (e.g., horses, cattle) or six (6) small livestock (e.g., sheep, goats). The number proposed would allow the applicant to properly establish a pasture/paddock management plan to include rotational grazing to protect the integrity of the land.

Sincerely,

Billy Woods, Sheriff

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin McClure", is written over a horizontal line.

By: Investigator Justin McClure
Agriculture Investigator

Billy Woods, Sheriff