

# PROCLAMATION

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA

**WHEREAS**, according to the last Census of Agriculture, over 331,000 acres of land in Marion County are home to nearly 4,000 farms, including 1,200 horse farms; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that Marion County has more horses and ponies than any other county in the United States; with nearly 400,000 residents, it is estimated that there is one horse for every four residents in Marion County; and

**WHEREAS**, since 2001, Ocala/Marion County has been known as the “Horse Capital of the World®”, due to the abundance of sprawling green pastures rich with limestone and calcium, and as a testament to the County's unique involvement in all things equestrian and its record of producing some of the finest champions in the sport; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2005, the Marion County Commission designated approximately 200,000 acres in the northwest portion of the County as the Farmland Preservation Area, to provide a buffer for farmland against increasing growth, and to protect the valuable soils, water quality and spring sheds; and

**WHEREAS**, since 2008 Save Our Rural Areas has hosted the Farmland Preservation Festival to raise awareness about the importance of preserving farms in Marion County for future generations; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2022 and 2023, Horse Farms Forever, Inc.® worked in partnership with Marion County to amend its Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code to further preserve, protect, support, and enhance the rural, equestrian, and farmland character of the Farmland Preservation Area;

**NOW THEREFORE**, the Board of County Commissioners of Marion County, Florida, by virtue of the authority vested in us do hereby proclaim that the month of **April 2024** be known as

**“FARMLAND PRESERVATION MONTH”**

**DULY PROCLAIMED** this **2nd** day of **April, 2024**.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA**

\_\_\_\_\_  
MICHELLE STONE, CHAIR

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KATHY BRYANT, VICE CHAIR

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CRAIG CURRY, COMMISSIONER

**ATTEST:**

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CARL ZALAK, III, COMMISSIONER

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GREGORY C. HARRELL, CLERK

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MATT MCCLAIN, COMMISSIONER