The Land Code of the Russian Federation

Principles for the Use of Land
The basic principles of rational land use in the Russian Federation are stated in the Land Code and other legal acts of the Federation (see Table 24.1). These principles provide for the following:

• Prioritisation of land protection as the most important component of environmental and production facilities in agriculture and forestry before the land is used as immovable estate.
• Prioritisation of human life and health protection.
• Prioritisation of preserving the most valuable lands and lands of specially protected territories.

• Land mapping into categories in accordance with its target purpose.
• Fee-paying basis for land use.
• Identification of the future use of land parcels and objects connected with them.

Agricultural Land
According to article 77 of the Land Code agricultural lands are lands outside the limits of settlements providing for the various needs of agriculture.

Arable lands include tilled land, hayfields, pastures, land under orchards, vineyards and other perennial plantations. Arable land makes up the most valuable part of agricultural land, and has a high level of protection as expressed in article 79 of the Land Code.

Figure 24.1. Composition of agricultural lands.
Table 24.1. Laws regulating land use in Russia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Legal document</th>
<th>Year of enactment</th>
<th>Purposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Law of the Russian Federation on Land Charge</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Establishes the methods of payment for land and the order of payments for different categories of land users, based on the target purpose of the land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Law of the Russian Federation on the State Land Cadastre</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Regulates relations arising in the course of activities in maintaining the state land cadastre. Establishes obligatory cadastral land inventory and open access to data contained in the land cadastre. Determines the order of making entries in the land cadastre and composition of the documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Law of the Russian Federation on Peasant (Farm) Holding</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>System of standards, connected with use and protection of lands in peasant (farm) management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agricultural land is used for the production of agricultural products, for planting shelter forests, for research, learning and other purposes connected with agriculture (article 77 of the Land Code).

**Duty to Preserve Soil**

Land users are obliged to implement a number of measures to preserve the soil (Figure 24.2). These include the protection of land from water and wind erosion, flooding, swamp formation, salinisation, drying and other negative factors. Land users are also obliged to prevent weed invasion, to maintain the achieved reclamation level, to restore disturbed lands and use the soil for agriculture in due time to maintain soil fertility.

Failure to fulfil these conditions is counted as ‘soil damage’ and implies administrative action.

### Land Planning

**Legal Regulation of Land Planning**

Land planning in compliance with the Law on Land Planning is the foundation for land use. It includes mapping of land status, planning and organisation of the harmonious exploitation of land and the protection and maintenance of soil fertility (Figure 24.3).

According to articles 9 and 42 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, ‘every person has the right to an enabling environment’. The land is considered to be the foundation for life and the activities of the people of the country.
Threats to Land and Soil
In spite of these stated objectives, there is a real threat of soil exhaustion and deterioration of the ecological situation in general. This situation depends on the poor economic development of rural society and the lack of readiness of the community to understand the significance of these problems. In Russia this threat is especially serious as many agricultural properties are not economically competitive. Thus, for business reasons, Russian farmers preferably produce oilseed rape, soybean and forage crops. This deteriorates the soil status and damage ecosystems, in particular those dependent on pollination by bees and thus bee-keeping.

Unfortunately the situation reflects the low ecological culture of rural communities. It remains uncorrected as the systems for monitoring and calling to account those responsible for environmental offences remain undeveloped.

Land Monitoring
According to article 67 of the Land Code of the Russian Federation, a system must be established for observation, assessment and monitoring of the condition of lands in the territory of Russia. The basic objectives of monitoring include:
• Timely identification of changes in the soil status, assessment of such changes, forecasts and recommendations concerning prevention and elimination of the results of negative processes.
• Provision of information concerning maintenance of the State Land Cadastre, official supervision of land use and protection, other functions of governmental and municipal management of land resources, and land planning.
• Providing citizens with information about the condition of land.

State Land Cadastre
The State Land Cadastre is a systematic summary of documentary data, obtained as a result of registration of land parcels, their location, target destination and legal status (Figure 24.4).

The Land Cadastre is maintained for the purpose of information support concerning:
• Public and municipal management of land resources.
• Public control of land use and protection.
• Activities directed at soil preservation and enrichment.
• Land planning.
• State registration of the rights to immovable estate and associated transactions.
• Economic appraisal of lands and consideration of their cost.
• Fixing of a reasonable land fee (Figure 24.5);
• Other activities connected with the possession, use and disposal of land parcels.

Persons found to be in violation of the land laws are called to account for disciplinary, financial, administrative, criminal and civil responsibility.