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**Proof of Average Gross Sales Value in connection with
Applications for Agricultural Assessment**

We have been asked whether persons applying for agricultural assessment *must* provide a copy of their Farm Profit or Loss Schedule from their Federal Income Tax Return (i.e., Form 1040, Schedule F) with their Form RP-305. The answer is no, not if they submit other evidence with their application that demonstrates to the assessor's satisfaction that the average gross sales value of the farm operation is at least \$10,000 (or \$50,000 if less than seven acres).

The law does not require any particular documentation to be submitted with an application for agricultural assessment. Since the burden of establishing eligibility for the exemption rests with the applicant, the applicant may choose what information to supply to the assessor. Such substantiation may include Schedule F, bookkeeping records, bills of sale, receipts, other financial records, or any combination of the above. The failure to submit a Schedule F is not, in and of itself, grounds to deny the application. If the information provided substantiates that the land satisfies the gross sales value requirement, and all other qualifications are met, then the agricultural assessment should be granted.

On the other hand, the assessor must be satisfied that the eligibility requirements are satisfied before he or she may grant the exemption. If the assessor finds the documentation submitted with the application to be inconclusive, he or she may make reasonable demands for additional information, including the Schedule F. Ultimately, if after reviewing the information provided, the assessor reasonably finds that the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the land meets the average gross sales value requirement, he or she would be obliged to deny the application.

We would remind all assessors that when they do receive a Schedule F or any other income tax return information, they must treat it as confidential material and do their utmost to protect it from unauthorized disclosure.