

**Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Field Office Technical Guide  
Pacific Islands Area**

## **Section II-A-4. Prime and Other Important Farmlands**

### **Use of “Agricultural Lands of Importance to the State of Hawaii” (ALISH)**

On the islands of Hawaii, Kauai, Oahu, Maui, Molokai, and Lanai the ALISH will be used to determine “Important Farmlands” in the state of Hawaii. The ALISH will be the source for “Official Soils Information” for Prime and other Important Farmland interpretations. The Soil Data Mart report for “Prime and Other Important Farmlands” contains the prime farmland soil map units but does not contain the other important farmland soil map units. For consistency use the ALISH when determining “Prime and other Important Farmlands” in Hawaii. Click on the following web link to obtain meta data and shape files for the ALISH:  
<http://hawaii.gov/dbedt/gis/alish.htm>.

A synopsis of the ALISH is as follows:

The Agricultural Lands of Importance to the State of Hawaii (ALISH) Classification System was developed and compiled in 1977 by the State Department of Agriculture with assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) and the College of Tropical Agriculture, University of Hawaii. This classification system was developed to identify three classes of agriculturally important lands for the State of Hawaii as part of a national effort to inventory important farmlands. Lands not considered for classification within this system are developed urban lands over ten acres, natural or artificial bodies of water over ten acres, public use lands, forest reserves, lands with slopes in excess of thirty five percent, and military installations except undeveloped areas over ten acres.

The Hawaii Classification System identifies three categories of land (equivalent NRCS categories in Parentheses): Prime Agricultural Lands (Prime Farmlands), Unique Agricultural Lands (Unique Farmlands), and Other Important Lands (Additional Farmland of Statewide and Local Importance). The criteria for classification of Prime Agricultural Land are identical to the criteria established by the NRCS for national application. The criteria for Unique Agricultural land, and Other Important Agricultural Land were established cooperatively by the NRCS, Department of Agriculture, and the College of Tropical Agriculture.

A general description of each land type classification is as follows:

**Prime Agricultural Lands** – Land which has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops economically when treated and managed according to modern farming methods.

**Unique Agricultural Lands** – Land that has a special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, moisture supply, and is used to produce sustained high quality and of high quality yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to modern farming methods.

**Other Important Agricultural Land** – Land other than Prime or Unique Agricultural Land that is also of statewide or local importance to agricultural use.

For a detailed description of the criteria used to classify lands in each category refer to the Cooperative Extension Service, College of Tropical Agriculture, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Circular 495, or go to the following website for information and geospatial data files:

<http://hawaii.gov/dbedt/gis/alish.htm>.