

Prime and other Important Farmlands

This table lists the map units in the survey area that are considered important farmlands. Important farmlands consist of prime farmland, unique farmland, and farmland of statewide or local importance. This list does not constitute a recommendation for a particular land use.

In an effort to identify the extent and location of important farmlands, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, in cooperation with other interested Federal, State, and local government organizations, has inventoried land that can be used for the production of the Nation's food supply.

Prime farmland is of major importance in meeting the Nation's short- and long-range needs for food and fiber. Because the supply of high-quality farmland is limited, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recognizes that responsible levels of government, as well as individuals, should encourage and facilitate the wise use of our Nation's prime farmland.

Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but it is not urban or built-up land or water areas. The soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply are those needed for the soil to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when proper management, including water management, and acceptable farming methods are applied. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable supply of moisture from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. The water supply is dependable and of adequate quality. Prime farmland is permeable to water and air. It is not excessively erodible or saturated with water for long periods, and it either is not frequently flooded during the growing season or is protected from flooding. Slope ranges mainly from 0 to 6 percent. More detailed information about the criteria for prime farmland is available at the local office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

For some of the soils identified in the table as prime farmland, measures that overcome a hazard or limitation, such as flooding, wetness, and droughtiness, are needed. Onsite evaluation is needed to determine whether or not the hazard or limitation has been overcome by corrective measures.

A recent trend in land use in some areas has been the loss of some prime farmland to industrial and urban uses. The loss of prime farmland to other uses puts pressure on marginal lands, which generally are more erodible, droughty, and less productive and cannot be easily cultivated.

Unique farmland is land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high-value food and fiber crops, such as citrus, tree nuts, olives, cranberries, and other fruits and vegetables. It has the special combination of soil quality, growing season, moisture supply, temperature, humidity, air drainage, elevation, and aspect needed for the soil to economically produce sustainable high yields of these crops when properly managed. The water supply is dependable and of adequate quality. Nearness to markets is an additional consideration. Unique farmland is not based on national criteria. It commonly is in areas where there is a special microclimate, such as the wine country in California.

In some areas, land that does not meet the criteria for prime or unique farmland is considered to be *farmland of statewide importance* for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. The criteria for defining and delineating farmland of statewide importance are determined by the appropriate State agencies.

Generally, this land includes areas of soils that nearly meet the requirements for prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some areas may produce as high a yield as prime farmland if conditions are favorable. Farmland of statewide importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by State law.

In some areas that are not identified as having national or statewide importance, land is considered to be *farmland of local importance* for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. This farmland is identified by the appropriate local agencies. Farmland of local importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by local ordinance.

Report—Prime and other Important Farmlands

Prime and other Important Farmlands—Orange County, Vermont		
Map Symbol	Map Unit Name	Farmland Classification
AgA	Agawam fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
AgB	Agawam fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
AgC	Agawam fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
AgD	Agawam fine sandy loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
AgE	Agawam fine sandy loam, 25 to 50 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
BeB	Belgrade silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
BeC	Belgrade silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
BeD	Belgrade silt loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
Bp	Pits, borrow	Not prime farmland
BuB	Buckland loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
BuC	Buckland loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
BuD	Buckland loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
BvC	Buckland loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes, very stony	Not prime farmland
BwE	Buckland loam, 25 to 50 percent slopes, very stony	Not prime farmland
CaB	Cabot silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if drained
CaC	Cabot silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if drained
CaD	Cabot silt loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
CbB	Cabot silt loam, 3 to 15 percent slopes, very stony	Not prime farmland
CbD	Cabot silt loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes, very stony	Not prime farmland
Cm	Pits, copper mine-Dumps, mine complex	Not prime farmland
CoB	Colrain stony fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
CoC	Colrain stony fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
CoD	Colrain stony fine sandy loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland

Prime and other Important Farmlands--Orange County, Vermont		
Map Symbol	Map Unit Name	Farmland Classification
CsD	Colrain very stony fine sandy loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
CsE	Colrain very stony fine sandy loam, 25 to 50 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
CxD	Colrain extremely stony fine sandy loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
CxE	Colrain extremely stony fine sandy loam, 25 to 50 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
Gp	Gravel pits	Not prime farmland
Ha	Hadley very fine sandy loam	All areas are prime farmland
HdB	Hartland silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
HdC	Hartland silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
HdD	Hartland silt loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
HdE	Hartland silt loam, 25 to 50 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
Le	Charles silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded	Farmland of statewide importance, if drained
MeA	Merrimac fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
MeB	Merrimac fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
MeC	Merrimac fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
MeD	Merrimac fine sandy loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
MeE	Merrimac fine sandy loam, 25 to 50 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
MI	Udorthents	Not prime farmland
Mu	Muck	Not prime farmland
NnB	Ninigret fine sandy loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
NnC	Ninigret fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
Pc	Peacham mucky peat, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
PoC	Pomfret stony loamy fine sand, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
PoD	Pomfret stony loamy fine sand, 15 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
PsD	Pomfret very stony loamy fine sand, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
PtE	Pomfret soils, 25 to 50 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
Qu	Pits, quarry-Dumps, mine complex	Not prime farmland
Ra	Raynham variant silt loam	Prime farmland if drained
Ro	Rock outcrop	Not prime farmland
Sa	Saco mucky silt loam	Not prime farmland
SLF	Dumps, sanitary landfill	Not prime farmland
SoB	Stowe stony fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
SoC	Stowe stony fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
SoD	Stowe stony fine sandy loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
StD	Stowe very stony fine sandy loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
SwE	Stowe soils, 25 to 50 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
TbB	Tunbridge-Woodstock rocky fine sandy loams, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
TbC	Tunbridge-Woodstock rocky fine sandy loams, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance

Prime and other Important Farmlands--Orange County, Vermont		
Map Symbol	Map Unit Name	Farmland Classification
TbD	Tunbridge-Woodstock rocky fine sandy loams, 15 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
TrD	Tunbridge-Woodstock very rocky fine sandy loams, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
TwE	Tunbridge-Woodstock complex, 25 to 50 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
VeB	Vershire-Glover rocky loams, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
VeC	Vershire-Glover rocky loams, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
VeD	Vershire-Glover rocky loams, 15 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
VgD	Vershire-Glover-Rock outcrop complex, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
VhE	Vershire-Glover complex, 25 to 50 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
W	Water	Not prime farmland
Wa	Walpole fine sandy loam	Prime farmland if drained
WnB	Windsor loamy sand, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
WnD	Windsor loamy sand, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
WnE	Windsor loamy sand, 25 to 60 percent slopes	Not prime farmland
Wo	Winooski very fine sandy loam	Prime farmland if protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season

Data Source Information

Soil Survey Area: Orange County, Vermont
 Survey Area Data: Version 18, Sep 25, 2015