

IMPORTANT FARMLANDS OF NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

The Department of Agriculture and the Soil Conservation Service are concerned about any action that tends to impair the productive capacity of American agriculture. The Nation needs to know the extent and location of the best land for producing food, feed, fiber, forage and oilseed crops; the land that has special qualities for growing specific high value crops; and other important land for producing crops.

It is SCS policy to make and keep current an inventory of prime farmland and unique farmland of the Nation. This inventory is being carried out in cooperation with other interested agencies at the national, state and local levels of government. The objective of the inventory is to identify the extent and location of the important rural lands needed to produce food, feed, fiber, forage and oilseed crops.

The Important Farmlands Map of Northampton County, Pennsylvania, has been published by the SCS. The map displays two of the categories recognized in the national inventory. Definitions of types of important farmlands are as follows:

Definitions

Prime Farmland

Prime farmland is land best suited for producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops, and also available for these uses (the land could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, or other land, but not built-up land or water). It has the soil quality, growing season and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops economically when treated and managed, including water management, according to modern farming methods.

Prime farmland meets the following criteria:

1. The soils have an adequate moisture supply.
2. The soils have a suitable soil temperature regime. These are soils that, at a depth of 20 inches (50 cm), have a mean annual temperature higher than 32° F (0° C).
3. The soils have a pH between 4.5 and 8.4 in all horizons within a depth of 40 inches (1 meter) or in the root zone if the root zone is less than 40 inches deep. This range of pH is favorable for growing a wide variety of crops without adding large amounts of amendments.
4. The soils have no water table or a water table that is maintained at a sufficient depth during the cropping season to allow food, feed, fiber, forage and oilseed crops common to the area to be grown.
5. The soils lack excessive soluble salts that inhibit plant growth.
6. The soils are not flooded frequently during the growing season (less often than once in two years).

7. The soils do not have a serious erosion hazard.
8. The soils have a permeability rate of at least 0.06 inches (0.15 cm) per hour in the upper 20 inches (50 cm).
9. Less than 10 percent of the surface layer in these soils consists of rock fragments coarser than three inches (7.6 cm). These soils present no particular difficulty in cultivating with large equipment.

A list of soils that qualify as Prime Farmland in Northampton County is enclosed with this report.

Unique Farmland

Unique farmland is land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high-value food and fiber crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high quality and/or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to modern farming methods. Examples of such crops are citrus, olives, cranberries, fruit and vegetables.

Unique farmland has the following characteristics:

1. It is used for specific high-value food or fiber crop.
2. It has a moisture supply that is adequate for the specific crop. The supply is from stored moisture, precipitation or a developed irrigation system.
3. It combines favorable factors of soil quality, growing season, temperature, humidity, air drainage, elevation, aspect or other conditions such as nearness to market that favor the growth of a specific food or fiber crop.

No unique farmland is recognized in Northampton County.

Additional Farmland of State Importance

This land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage and oilseed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land is determined by the appropriate State agency or agencies. In Pennsylvania, Capability Class II land and Capability Class III land that does not qualify as prime farmland has been designated as additional farmland of statewide importance.

Agriculture Handbook No. 210, "Land Capability Classification", issued in September 1961 by the U.S. Government Printing Office, defines the eight capability classes. A capability class is assigned to each soil.

A list of soils that qualify as additional farmland of statewide importance in Northampton County is enclosed with this report.

Additional Farmland of Local Importance

In some local areas, there is concern for certain additional farmlands for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage and oilseed crops even though these lands are not identified as having national or statewide importance. Where appropriate, these lands are to be identified by the local agency or agencies concerned.

Northampton County chose not to recognize any land in this category.

General

A legend on the front of the Important Farmlands Map identifies different kinds of land and their acreage in the county. Areas not colored are other land. These areas do not fit any of the categories listed in the definitions and are not water or urban areas more than 10 acres in size.

The criteria for identification of prime farmland and additional farmland of statewide importance are entirely related to soil pH characteristics. They were set up to facilitate the identification and inventory of the state's most productive farmland in a reasonable time by using existing soil surveys.

Most of the prime farmland and much of the additional farmland of statewide importance is now used for crops; however, it could be in pasture, range, forest or other land uses and still qualify as prime farmland. **Urban and built-up land and water are excluded.** The rationale for this approach is that land not committed to irreversible uses may be available for cropping. Decisionmakers must be aware of the long term implications of various land use options for the production of food, feed, etc. and the trade-offs involved. Actions that put high quality farmland in irreversible uses should be initiated only if these actions are clearly in the public interest.

This inventory does not constitute a designation of any land area to a specific land use. Such designations are the prerogative of responsible state and local officials.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that prime farmland is one of the most important resources for the Nation. This exceptional land can be farmed continuously or nearly continuously without degrading the environment. It will produce the most food, feed, etc., with the least amount of energy used. It responds exceptionally well to fertilizer and other chemical applications with limited loss of residues by leaching or erosion. This land has the highest percentage of soils that can be conservation tilled. It is the most responsive to management and requires the least investment for maintaining productivity.

The inventories of prime and unique farmlands and other important farmlands are dynamic. New areas may be developed and others will be converted to irreversible use. Thus, the inventories must be updated periodically to reflect any significant changes.

LIST OF SOIL MAPPING UNITS THAT QUALIFY AS PRIME FARMLAND

Northampton County, Pennsylvania

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Mapping Unit Name</u>
Bg	Barbour soils
Bm	Barbour and Middlebury soils, high bottom
BnA	Bedington silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
BoB	Bedington shaly silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
BuB	Buchanan gravelly loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
ClA	Clarksburg silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
ClB	Clarksburg silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
CmA	Comly silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
CmB	Comly silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
CoB	Conestoga silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes
CtA	Conotton gravelly silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
CtB	Conotton gravelly silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
DuA	Duffield silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
DuB	Duffield silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
HnB	Hollinger gravelly silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
Mb	Middlebury soils
PhB	Phelps gravelly silt loam, thick solum variant, 2 to 8 percent slopes
RyB	Ryder silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes
SvB	Swartswood gravelly loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes
WaA	Washington silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
WaB	Washington silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
WuB	Wurtsboro gravelly silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes

LIST OF SOIL MAPPING UNITS THAT QUALIFY AS ADDITIONAL FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE

Northampton County, Pennsylvania

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Mapping Unit Name</u>
BoC	Bedington shaly silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes
BrA	Berks shaly silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
BrB	Berks shaly silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
BrC	Berks shaly silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes
CoC	Conestoga silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes
CtC	Conotton gravelly silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes
HnC	Hollinger gravelly silt loam, 3 to 15 percent slopes
Rh	Red Hook gravelly silt loam
RyC	Ryder silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes
SvC	Swartswood gravelly loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes
UtB	Urbana silt loam, 2 to 10 percent slopes
VoB	Volusia gravelly silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes
WaC	Washington silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes
WuC	Wurtsboro gravelly silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes

HYDRIC SOILS OF NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Map units with major components hydric:

<u>MAP SYMBOL</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>HYDRIC COMPONENT</u>	<u>LOCATION NOTES</u>
AnA	Andover gravelly loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Andover (PA0093)	
AnB	Andover gravelly loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Andover (PA0093)	
AoB	Andover extremely stony loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Andover (PA0093)	
BaB	Baile silt loam, neutral variant, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Baile variant (MD0023)	
BeB	Baile extremely stony silt loam, neutral variant, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Baile variant (MD0028)	
BtA	Brinkerton silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Brinkerton (PA0090)	
BtB	Brinkerton silt loam, 3 to 10 percent slopes	Brinkerton (PA0090)	
ChA	Chippewa silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Chippewa (NY0068)	
ChB	Chippewa silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Chippewa (NY0068)	
CkB	Chippewa extremely stony silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Chippewa (NY0069)	
Ha	Halsey silt loam	Halsey (NJ0039)	
Ho	Holly silt loam	Holly (OH0032)	
Mu	Muck	Muck	Depressions

Map units with inclusions of hydric components:

<u>MAP SYMBOL</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>HYDRIC COMPONENT</u>	<u>LOCATION NOTES</u>
Ad	Alluvial land, coal overwash	Holly	Bottom lands
Bg	Barbour soils	Holly	Bottom lands
Bm	Barbour and Middlebury soils, high bottom	Holly	Bottom lands
BuB	Buchanan gravelly loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Andover	Depressions
BvB	Buchanan extremely stony loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Andover	Depressions
CmA	Comly silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Brinkerton	Depressions
CmB	Comly silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Brinkerton	Depressions
CnB	Comly extremely stony silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Brinkerton	Depressions
LaB	Laidig extremely stony silt loam, 0 to 28 percent slopes	Wet areas	Depressions, potholes
LaD	Laidig extremely stony silt loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Wet areas	Depressions, potholes
Mb	Middlebury soils	Holly	
PhB	Phelps gravelly silt loam, thick solum variant, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Halsey	Flats, depressions
Rh	Red Hook gravelly silt loam	Halsey	Flats, depressions
UrA	Urban land, nearly level	Wet spots	Depressions
UrC	Urban land, sloping	Wet spots	Depressions
Us	Urban land, occasionally flooded	Wet spots	Depressions
UtB	Urbana silt loam, 2 to 10 percent slopes	Baile	Low flats, bottom lands
VoB	Volusia gravelly silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Chippewa	Depressions
VuB	Volusia extremely stony silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	Chippewa	Depressions
WkB	Weikert channery silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Seep spots	Seedy areas
WkC	Weikert channery silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Seep spots	Seedy areas
WuB	Wurtsboro gravelly silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Chippewa	Depressions
WuC	Wurtsboro gravelly silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Chippewa	Depressions