

Prime and Other Important Farmlands

Plymouth County, Massachusetts

Map symbol	Map unit name	Farmland classification
98A	Winooski silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
221A	Eldridge fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
221B	Eldridge fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
223A	Scio very fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
223B	Scio very fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
226A	Hinesburg fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
226B	Hinesburg fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
227A	Wapanucket loamy sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
227B	Wapanucket loamy sand, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
251A	Haven very fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
251B	Haven very fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
254A	Merrimac fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
254B	Merrimac fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
260A	Sudbury fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
260B	Sudbury fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
266A	Warwick fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
266B	Warwick fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
276A	Ninigret fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
276B	Ninigret fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
300B	Montauk fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
305B	Paxton fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
310A	Woodbridge fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
310B	Woodbridge fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
315A	Scituate gravelly sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
315B	Scituate gravelly sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
320A	Birchwood sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
320B	Birchwood sand, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
322A	Poquonock sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
322B	Poquonock sand, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
325B	Newport loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
340A	Broadbrook very fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
340B	Broadbrook very fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
345A	Pittstown loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
345B	Pittstown loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
420A	Canton very fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
420B	Canton very fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
426A	Newfields fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
426B	Newfields fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	All areas are prime farmland
226C	Hinesburg fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
227C	Wapanucket loamy sand, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
253A	Hinckley loamy sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
253B	Hinckley loamy sand, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
254C	Merrimac fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
255A	Windsor loamy sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
255B	Windsor loamy sand, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
256A	Deerfield fine sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
256B	Deerfield fine sand, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
262A	Quonset sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
262B	Quonset sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
300C	Montauk fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance

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Map symbol	Map unit name	Farmland classification
301B	Montauk fine sandy loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
301C	Montauk fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
305C	Paxton fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
306B	Paxton fine sandy loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
306C	Paxton fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
309B	Moshup loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
309C	Moshup loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
310C	Woodbridge fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
311A	Woodbridge fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
311B	Woodbridge fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
311C	Woodbridge fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
315C	Scituate gravelly sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
316A	Scituate gravelly sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
316B	Scituate gravelly sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
316C	Scituate gravelly sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
320C	Birchwood sand, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
321A	Birchwood sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
321B	Birchwood sand, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
321C	Birchwood sand, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
322C	Poquonock sand, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
323B	Poquonock sand, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
323C	Poquonock sand, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
325C	Newport loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
326B	Newport loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
326C	Newport loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
340C	Broadbrook very fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
341B	Broadbrook very fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
341C	Broadbrook very fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
346A	Pittstown loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
346B	Pittstown loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
420C	Canton very fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
421B	Canton very fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
421C	Canton very fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
427A	Newfields fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, extremely stony	Farmland of statewide importance
427B	Newfields fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, extremely stony	Farmland of statewide importance
430A	Barnstable loamy sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
430B	Barnstable loamy sand, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
430C	Barnstable loamy sand, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
431B	Barnstable loamy sand, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
431C	Barnstable loamy sand, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony	Farmland of statewide importance
439B	Gloucester - Canton complex, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
439C	Gloucester - Canton complex, 8 to 15 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance
7A	Rainberry coarse sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes, sanded surface	Farmland of unique importance
23A	Tihonet coarse sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of unique importance
55A	Freetown coarse sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes, sanded surface	Farmland of unique importance
60A	Swansea coarse sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Farmland of unique importance
658A	Endoaquents, 0 to 3 percent slopes, sanded surface	Farmland of unique importance
701A	Rainberry coarse sand, 0 to 3 percent slope, sanded surface, inactive	Farmland of unique importance
704A	Freetown and Swansea coarse sands, 0 to 3 percent slopes, sanded surface and inactive	Farmland of unique importance

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.