

The Farmland Policy Protection Act (FPPA) is intended to minimize the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. It assures that—to the extent possible—Federal programs and funded activities are administered to be compatible with state, local government units, and private programs and policies to protect farmland.

For the purpose of the FPPA, farmland includes prime farmland (prime soil characteristics), unique farmland (high value specialty crops), and land of statewide or local importance. Farmland subject to FPPA requirements does not have to be currently used for cropland. It can be forest land, pastureland, cropland, or other land, but not water or urban built-up land.

If your project is located outside incorporated city limits on land that is currently farmed or on land that could be farmed, then you will need to determine if prime or unique farmland is present.

G.-1 Determining if there is prime or unique farmland in your project area

To determine if there is prime or unique farmland at the project site, reference a soil survey for your area published by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) (http://oip.usda.gov/scripts/ndisapi.dll/oip_agency/statemap) or contact NRCS directly for assistance. Locate the project site on the soil survey maps and note which soil types are present, and, with the assistance of the local NRCS office, identify and obtain a list of the prime and unique farmlands in your county. NRCS will also have a list of those specialty crops that qualify for unique farmland. If the soil types at your project area are not on the list and if the project does not affect land containing specialty crops or crops that have a special state significance, then answer “no” to Section G, Question 1 of the PDM Environmental and Historic Preservation Questions.

G.-2 How to provide relevant and helpful support documentation

Whether you answered “yes” or “no” to the Section G, Question 1 in the PDM Environmental and Historic Preservation Questions, it is important to provide a short narrative summarizing your determination. If the project is located outside of incorporated city limits, indicate on a 1:24,000 scale USGS topographic map the footprint of the project area (or note the Section of the application where this information is located), and if the land at the site is currently used for agriculture or could be used for agriculture. If the project site is regulated under the FPPA, also indicate the soil type and whether or not prime or unique farmland is present.

Topographic maps can be ordered from the USGS directly (<http://topomaps.usgs.gov/>), or can be obtained free of charge online from the United States Department of Agriculture (<http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov/>).