

USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Unique Farmland Guidance

June 12, 2010

Authorities, policies, and responsibilities for the identification of Unique Farmland are described in the Federal Register: [7 CFR Part 657](#), which provides the primary guidance for identification of Unique Farmlands in Wisconsin. This memo provides additional guidance and clarification:

This Guidance may be amended with the approval of DATCP and NRCS. Questions concerning this Guidance, or requests for amendment, should be directed to Carl Wacker, NRCS: carl.wacker@wi.usda.gov 608-662-4422 ext 275, or to Jim Vanden Brook, DATCP: jim.vandenbrook@wisconsin.gov 608-224-4501.

Guidance for 7 CFR 657.4(a)(2) – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is the primary agency of state government responsible for collaborating with NRCS to develop criteria for the identification of Unique Farmland in Wisconsin.

Because of the need to assess many site-specific factors for various programs, completion of a comprehensive inventory of Unique Farmlands in Wisconsin is not considered practical. Instead, specific areas of Unique Farmland in Wisconsin will be identified by qualified individuals on an as-needed basis, following this Guidance.

Guidance for 7 CFR 657.4(a)(3)(iii) – High value food or fiber crops must have been grown on the land for at least 3 of the last 5 cropping seasons, including the most current season, in order to be considered a qualifying crop for the identification of land as Unique Farmland.

The USDA-Agricultural Marketing Service definition and list of [Specialty Crops](#) is adopted for use in identifying “specific high value food and fiber crops” in Wisconsin, except as amended by this Guidance. This list is not all-inclusive. Crops may be added or removed with the approval of DATCP and NRCS.

The following crops are not considered high value food or fiber crops in Wisconsin:

Ineligible Commodities on the [USDA-AMS list](#)
Crops grown primarily in hoop-houses or green houses
Flowers, honey, Christmas trees, sod, nursery plants

Guidance for 7 CFR 657.5(b)(1) and 7 CFR 657.5(b)(2)(iii) – Qualified individuals will determine on an as-needed basis, whether specific areas meet the requirements of “*location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high quality and/or high yields . . .*” and the additional factors of “*temperature, humidity, air drainage, elevation, aspect, or other conditions, such as nearness to market*”. If it is determined that all of the above conditions are met, the “*favorable factor of soil quality*” is considered to be met.