

**EAST MONTPELIER LAND EVALUATION  
AND SITE ASSESSMENT (LESA) PROGRAM**

**Site Assessment Criteria**

**Final draft 9/1/90**

**(1) AGRICULTURAL USE - 50 POINTS**

Agricultural land currently or recently used is more valuable for agriculture. The type and intensity of use (measured by frequency of crop or pasture use within the last 5 years) determine which parcels are more valuable for agriculture. Voison pasture is considered crop use, so that farmers using voison methods on crop land will not be penalized.

Agricultural land on parcel has been used as:

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| A. Crop land within 5 of the last 5 years.  | (50 pts.) |
| B. Crop land within 4 of the last 5 years<br>or pasture within 5 of the last 5 years.   | (40 pts.) |
| C. Crop land within 3 of the last 5 years<br>or pasture within 4 of the last 5 years.   | (30 pts.) |
| D. Crop land within 1-2 of the last 5 years<br>or pasture within 3 of the last 5 years. | (20 pts.) |
| E. Pasture within 1-2 of the last 5 years.  | (10 pts.) |
| F. Agricultural land is idle.   | (0 pts.)  |

**(2) LOCATION - 40 POINTS**

Nearly two-thirds of Vermont's working farms operate on parcels not connected to the main farm. This fragmentation means more time travelling between fields, increased deterioration of farm machinery, and additional fuel and labor costs related to travel. Therefore, parcels which are located closer to one another are more valuable.

- A. Public road access bordering parcel: (8 pts.)

excellent=8, good=6, moderate=4, poor=2, none=0

- B. Driving distance from parcel center to user's barn: (8 pts.)

<1/4 mi.=8, 1/4-1/2 mi.=6, >1/2-1 mi.=4,  
>1-3 mi.=2, >3 mi.=0

C. Number of farms within a 1 mile radius of the parcel center (measure to the nearest edge of a farm and include farm the parcel is on, if applicable):  
(8 pts.)

>4 farms=8, 4 farms=6, 3 farms=4, 2 farms=2, 1 farm=0

D. Percentage of land in agriculture within a 1/2 mi. radius of parcel center:  
(8 pts.)

100-76%=8, 75-51%=6, 50-26%=4, 25-10%=2, <10%=0

E. Total contiguous acreage agricultural land, including parcel:  
(8 pts.)

>100 acres=8, >100-76 acres=6, >75-51 acres=4,  
50-25 acres=2, <25 acres=0

**(3) SIZE - 40 POINTS**

While large farms are not necessarily more productive than small farms, larger parcels may offer more available land for agricultural use.

Size of parcel being evaluated:

21 acres and over	(40 pts.)
20 - 11 acres	(20 pts.)
10 - 3 acres	(10 pts.)
<3 acres	(0 pts.)

**(4) ADJACENT LAND USE - 20 POINTS**

Land bordering agricultural parcels may affect the viability of a farm. Undeveloped land is more compatible with agriculture, while residential, commercial, and industrial uses of adjacent land may negatively impact farming operations.

Percent of parcel's perimeter adjacent to land in undeveloped uses:

100 - 91%	(20 pts.)
90 - 76%	(15 pts.)
75 - 51%	(10 pts.)
50 - 26%	(5 pts.)
25 - 0%	(0 pts.)

(5) **WORKABILITY - 40 POINTS**

The physical characteristics of a parcel may inhibit or enhance its workability. The following land characteristics restrict the movement of farm vehicles on a parcel:

- a. open drainage ditch or stream
- b. exposed ledge outcropping
- c. year-round wet area
- d. uneven or steep topography
- e. other \_\_\_\_\_

- None of the above are present on parcel. (40 pts.)
- If 1 of the above are present on parcel. (30 pts.)
- If 2 of the above are present on parcel. (20 pts.)
- If 3 of the above are present on parcel. (10 pts.)
- If 4 or more of the above are present. (0 pts.)

**IMPORTANT:** For parcels 15 acres or less, count each occurrence of a barrier individually (i.e. a 10 acre parcel with three ledge outcroppings scores 10 points).

For parcels larger than 15 acres, count the number of barrier categories that are represented (i.e. a 20 acre parcel with three ledge outcroppings scores 30 points).

(6) **SCENIC ATTRIBUTES - 10 POINTS**

While scenic attributes do not affect the economic viability of a farm, this information is of interest and useful to organizations engaged in land conservation, such as land trusts. Scenic views and recreation are also how many non-farming residents enjoy and experience farmland.

A. Number of miles of road within a 1 mile radius of parcel center from which parcel is visible:

- > 1/2 mi. (3 pts.)
- 1/2 - 1/10 mi. (2 pts.)
- < 1/10 mi. (1 pt.)
- None (0 pts.)

B. The following can be seen from any point on the parcel on a clear day:

- distant hills/mountains (4 pts.)
- historic structures (1 pt.)
- water (1 pt.)
- distinct row evenly spaced mature trees along roadside (1 pt.)