California Department of Conservation
Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

2006 FIELD REPORT

COUNTY: Tulare

FIELD MAPPER(S): Michael Kisko

IMAGERY:

source: National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP)
date: summer 2005
scale: 2 meter resolution
film type: true color mosaic
coverage gaps: none
additional imagery: Landsat 7 infrared imagery from summer 2005, 30-meter resolution

WRITTEN, DIGITAL & ORAL INFORMATION SOURCES: *Please list which local governments, interest groups, or individuals submitted comments on the 2004 maps. Also list all phone and in-person contacts made or related GIS data referenced while conducting the 2006 update.*

- *local review comments*
  cities: Visalia and Porterville
  county:
  others:

- *personal contacts:* none

- *GIS data referenced:* Federal and State public land layers and SWIS landfill reference file

2004-2006 CHANGES*: *Please summarize the most common changes to the maps. List representative locations (quad or city) of each type of change encountered. Make sure to list and describe particularly large, unusual or notable changes and give estimates of the acreage involved.*

- **Irrigated Farmland to Urban Land: 30 changes**

Conversions of Irrigated Farmland to Urban Land were primarily due to the construction of new homes and buildings in the Visalia, Tulare, Exeter, Porterville, and Earlimart areas.

In Visalia, new home construction occurred on all sides of the city except the south side with half of the new development occurring in northern Visalia. These new homes and buildings accounted for the conversion of approximately 480 acres of Irrigated Farmland

around Visalia. Approximately 290 acres of new homes were added in northern Visalia including portions of the "Shannon Ranch" (~100 acres) and "Ashley Grove" (~30 acres) housing developments. In western Visalia, approximately 120 acres of new homes and buildings were added, including the "Traditions" and "Pinnacles" housing developments (~100 acres). Finally, eastern Visalia saw the addition of approximately 70 acres of new homes.

Meanwhile, a lesser amount of Irrigated Farmland to Urban Land conversion occurred in other cities throughout Tulare County. Approximately 70 acres of new homes were added in the City of Tulare with the largest addition occurring in northern Tulare (~50 acres) including the "Vista Del Sol, Courtyards, and Bella Vista" developments. In Exeter, approximately 70 acres of new homes were also added. In Porterville, the "Summit Charter Academy" (~10 acres) was a new addition along with the expansion of sports fields for the Porterville Sports Complex (~30 acres). Finally, new homes in Earlimart accounted for the conversion of 15 acres of Irrigated Farmland.

- **Local, Grazing or Other Land to Urban Land: 48 changes**

Conversions of Local, Grazing or Other Land to Urban Land were primarily due to new home and building construction, increased density of existing housing areas due to infill construction, and improved digital imagery.

In Visalia, approximately 120 acres of new homes and buildings were added this update, including the "Willow Creek" (~30 acres) home development in eastern Visalia. Meanwhile, the "Cottonwood Creek Elementary School" (~10 acres) was a new addition to southern Visalia. On the other hand, new homes along with the addition of commercial and industrial buildings accounted for the urbanization of approximately 40 acres in Tulare. Meanwhile, Porterville saw approximately 70 acres of urbanization due to new homes and a new "All American Storage" facility. Finally, smaller additions of new homes and buildings were made in the Cities of Dinuba (~50 acres), Exeter (~20 acres), Farmersville (~15 acres), Orosi (~15 acres), Lindsay (~10 acres), and Springville (~10 acres).

The remaining conversions in this category were due either to the increased density of existing housing areas due to infill construction or improved digital imagery allowing us to more accurately quantify the number of homes in a given area. This accounted for the urbanization of approximately 450 acres of Local, Grazing or Other Land with approximately 250 of those acres due to an increased density of homes in the Springville area.

- **Irrigated Farmland to Local or Grazing Land: 243 changes**

This category of change primarily included Irrigated Farmland that had been fallow for three or more update cycles, areas of nonirrigated crop production on formerly irrigated farmland, the addition of new dairies, and the expansion of existing dairies.

First, there were many conversions of Irrigated Farmland to Grazing Land due to fields having been fallow for three or more update cycles. The vast majority of these conversions were for less than 30 acres. However, conversions of 50 acres or more were seen on the Monson (1), Visalia (1), Rocky Hill (1), Waukena (1), Tulare (2), Lindsay (1), Woodville (1), Success Dam (1), Alpaugh (3), Ducor (1), Allensworth (6), Delano West (1), and Fountain Springs (1) quads. The largest conversions were seen in the southern part of Tulare County on the Success Dam (~225 acres), Alpaugh (~220, 130, and 790 acres),

Allensworth (~470, 350, 160 acres), and Delano West (~330 acres) quads.

Secondly, the conversion of Irrigated Farmland to Farmland of Local Importance was another type of change made in this category. This type of conversion was brought about by the discontinuance of the irrigation of farmland and the subsequent production of nonirrigated crops, such as dryland grains, in place of the irrigated crops. These areas had shown no evidence of irrigation in the last three or more update cycles, only nonirrigated crop production. Large conversions of this type occurred on the Success Dam (~110 acres), Ducor (~630 acres), Richgrove (~150 acres), and Fountain Springs (~290 acres) quads.

Third, the addition of new dairies and the expansion of existing dairies was cause for the conversion of Irrigated Farmland to Farmland of Local Importance. The two significant additions of new dairies this update included the "Dairyland Farms" dairy (~60 acres) on the Woodville quad and the "South Lakes Dairy" (290 acres) on the Alpaugh quad. Finally, the expansion of dairies throughout the county accounted for the conversion of approximately 350 acres of Irrigated Farmland. Some of this expansion is simply due to improved digital imagery that allows us to more accurately delineate these dairies.

- **Irrigated Farmland to Other Land: 156 changes**

The delineation of farmsteads and ranchettes accounted for most of the conversions of this type with most changes encompassing 20 acres or less. These types of land use conversions were made throughout the county with many of the changes attributable to improved, high-resolution imagery that allowed for the delineation of these land use types.

On the other hand, three large plots on the Alpaugh quad (~640, 310, and 670 acres) were converted to Other Land after being fallow for three update cycles. These areas were shown to have wetland reserve program easements after consulting ancillary GIS data layers and looked like habitat or wetland areas in the imagery and field check.

- **Local, Grazing or Other Land to Irrigated Farmland: 71 changes**

The conversion of Local, Grazing or Other Land to Irrigated Farmland involved the addition of small plots of newly irrigated agriculture, including many additions of orchards and some irrigated pasture, thoughout the county. The majority of these plots were less than 20 acres in size. Larger, conversions occurred on the Orange Cove South (~80 acres), Traver (150 acres), Monson (80 acres), and Ducor (~130 acres) quads.

- **UNUSUAL**: *Category changes, complications with the Farmland of Local Importance definition, or any other special circumstances in 2006.*

Irrigated Farmland to irrigated pasture and vice versa: Conversions of this type were due to improved, high-resolution imagery and site visits to confirm land use. These changes in land use will not result in any discernible map category change on our Important Farmland Maps unless the area undergoing the change is on lesser quality soils.

Grazing Land to Other Land: These conversions were primarily due to the delineation of farmsteads and ranchettes throughout the county.

Urban Land to Grazing or Other Land: These conversions were primarily the result of the use of detailed digital imagery to delineate more distinct urban boundaries.

Grazing Land to nonirrigated cropland: These were additions of nonirrigated crops on the Quincy School quad (~1,300 acres).

PROBLEM AREAS: *What locations and map categories need careful checking in 2008? Why?*

Monitor the southern part of Tulare County, particularly the Allensworth, Hacienda Ranch, and Alpaugh quads for land being retired from irrigated crop production

LABOR ESTIMATE: *Please estimate the amount of time spent on the following tasks.*

photo interpretation, start date: 1/5/07
photo interpretation, number of days: 12
ground truthing dates: 2/5/07-2/9/07
 # days for map compilation and clean up: 9

*** *Note*: Irrigated Farmland** = Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance or Unique Farmland; **Local** = Farmland of Local Importance

Further information on the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program can be found at:

www.consrv.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp