

**California Department of Conservation
FARMLAND MAPPING AND MONITORING PROGRAM**

2012 FIELD REPORT

COUNTY: Merced

FIELD MAPPER(S): Michael Kisko

IMAGE DATA USED:

Source	National Agriculture Imagery Program, USDA
Acquisition date	Summer 2012
Data description	True color mosaic, 1 meter resolution
Coverage gaps	None
Additional imagery used	Google Maps

WRITTEN, DIGITAL & ORAL INFORMATION SOURCES:

The following entities and individuals provided information used to conduct 2012 mapping.

Local Review Comments (submitted by cities, counties, & others on 2010 maps)
None
Personal Contacts
None
Websites Used for Reference
Google Maps: http://maps.google.com
GIS Data Used for Reference
California City Boundary Layer Merced County Base Map

2010-2012 CHANGE SUMMARY:

Changes made during the map update are summarized by type and location. Particular attention is paid to large or unusual changes and their estimated acreages. Please note that land use type, size of land use unit, soil quality, and Farmland of Local Importance definition (if any) determines the final Important Farmland (IFL) category. [See definitions](#) at bottom of table.

Conversions to Urban Land	
Irrigated Farmland to Urban Land	6 changes
Half of the conversions of irrigated farmland to Urban Land occurred around the vicinity of Livingston. Tanks and production infrastructure (~10 acres) were added at the E&J Gallo Winery located west of Livingston along with solar panels and a water control pond (~20 acres). A water control pond (~10 acres) was also identified at the Foster Farms facility in Livingston. Last, new baseball and soccer fields (~15 acres) were added across the street from Livingston High School.	

Other notable conversions of irrigated farmland included a new Walmart Supercenter (~5 acres) on the southern fringe of Atwater and the Felix Torres Farm Worker Housing Center near Planada (~20 acres).

Nonirrigated Land Uses and Other Land to Urban Land	9 changes
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Three conversions of nonirrigated land to Urban Land were made in the vicinity of Atwater. These conversions included the Bert Crane Wastewater Treatment Plant (~20 acres), new homes (~20 acres) south of Atwater and a new "Valley Community School" campus (~10 acres).

In Santa Nella, new homes (~20 acres) were also in evidence along with a new In-N-Out restaurant (~5 acres).

Meanwhile, in Los Banos, a couple of new baseball diamonds (~10 acres) were added at Pacheco High School.

In Livingston, the Joseph Gallo Park (~10 acres) was identified this update.

Finally, a water control pond (~20 acres) was added north of Winton and the urban footprint of a packing facility was updated (~40 acres) on the Volta quad.

**Conversions from Irrigated Farmland
aside from urbanization**

Irrigated Farmland to Nonirrigated Land Uses	48 changes
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Conversion of irrigated farmland to nonirrigated land uses was primarily due to either irrigated farmland having been fallow for three or more update cycles or the production of nonirrigated hay crops on formerly irrigated land. Much of this acreage converted to nonirrigated land uses will end up in the Farmland of Local Importance category due to the presence of high quality soils or nonirrigated hay production. The remainder will be converted to Grazing Land.

Large, single conversions from irrigated farmland due to fallowing occurred on the Ingomar (~130 acres) and Le Grand (~200 acres) quads.

One large, single conversion from irrigated farmland due to nonirrigated hay production occurred on the Planada quad (~240 acres).

Irrigated Farmland to Other Land	18 changes
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Conversions from irrigated farmland to Other Land were primarily due to the delineation of ranchettes, farmsteads and rural commercial land uses. Small expansions of existing dairies were another cause of conversion. The majority of these changes were in the 10 to 20-acre range.

Conversions to Irrigated Farmland

Nonirrigated Land Uses and Other Land to Irrigated Farmland	168 changes
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Conversions to irrigated farmland were due to newly irrigated row crops, field crops, orchards and irrigated pasture. The most common type of newly irrigated farmland was almonds, alfalfa and corn with lesser additions of walnuts, pistachios, rice, melons, squash, yams and irrigated pasture. Large, single additions of 100 acres or more of irrigated farmland or pastureland were made on the Atwater (1), Charleston School (1), El Nido (3), Ingomar (1), Merced (1), Sandy Mush (1), Santa Rita Bridge (1), Volta (2) and Winton (2) quads.

Finally, a notable type of conversion to irrigated farmland this update was the conversion

of defunct dairies or poultry farms into irrigated farmland. There were six conversions of this type involving one poultry farm and four dairies, totaling approximately 140 acres. These dairies or poultry farm were replaced by irrigated crops, primarily almonds.

Unusual Changes

(Types of change not already described or special circumstances during the 2012 update.)

Water to Grazing Land: Water was converted to Grazing Land due to the use of high resolution imagery to more accurately delineate the boundary of Los Banos Creek Reservoir.

Irrigated Pasture: There was a lot of shifting between the irrigated farmland and irrigated pasture land use category this update due to the use of high resolution imagery, Google Streetview and site visits to more accurately delineate the extent of irrigated pasture in the county. These changes will only cause a conversion on areas of lesser quality soils since irrigated pasture cannot be mapped as Unique Farmland.

Areas of Concern for Future Updates

(Locations or map categories noted as needing careful checking during 2014 update, and reasons.)

Watch for the conversion of dairies to irrigated farmland in future updates.

Definitions:

Irrigated Farmland includes most irrigated crops grown in California. When combined with soil data, these farmed areas become the Important Farmland (IFL) categories of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance & Unique Farmland. Because of the nature of the IFL definitions, some irrigated uses, such as irrigated pastures or nurseries, may not be eligible for all three IFL categories.

Nonirrigated land uses include grazing areas, land used for dryland crop farming, and formerly irrigated land that has been left idle for three or more update cycles. These uses are frequently incorporated into county Farmland of Local Importance definitions.

Other Land includes a variety of miscellaneous uses, such as low density rural residential development, mining areas, vacant areas and nonagricultural vegetation. Confined animal agriculture facilities are mapped as Other Land unless incorporated into a county Farmland of Local Importance definition.

Urban Land includes residential, industrial, recreational, infrastructure and institutional uses.

For more on map categories, including Farmland of Local Importance definitions, visit the [FMMP web site](#).

LABOR ESTIMATE:

Time estimates for conducting the 2012 update.

Image interpretation, start date	August 22, 1013
Image interpretation, number of days	19
Ground truth dates	October 14-18, 2013
Number of days for post-ground truth clean up	5

Further information on the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program can be found at:
<http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Index.aspx>