

California Farmland Conversion Report 2002 - 2004

*California Department of Conservation
Division of Land Resource Protection*

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

December 2006

Acknowledgements

MANY INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT AND THE GIS DATA FROM WHICH IT WAS DERIVED.

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program Staff
Molly Penberth, Manager
Larelle Burkham-Greydanus
Janet Carey
Diane Golling
Patrick Hennessy
Dr. MD Murshidul Hoque
Kerri Kisko
Michael Kisko
Judith Santillan

With the assistance of Rain Ananael, Joel Bonilla, and Chee Vue.
Thanks also to all past FMMP staff members for their cumulative contributions.

Division of Land Resource Protection
Brian Leahy, Assistant Director
Emily Kishi, Administrative Liaison

With office support from Deanna Dobrinen and Jacquelyn Ramsey.

Principal Data Sources include soil surveys produced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service and aerial imagery acquired by the High Altitude Missions Branch of NASA. Current and historic satellite data by permission of SPOT Data Corporation and EROS Data Center. Additional photography sources included AirPhotoUSA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Imagery Program.

Cultural base information for the Important Farmland Maps was derived from the U.S. Geological Survey, with updates generated by digitizing over current imagery.

Additional data on land management and land use conversion activity was made available from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Forest Service, California Department of Fish and Game, the California Integrated Waste Management Board, and various local government agencies.

Map reviewer comments contribute substantially to improving the quality of the information. These reviewers include county and city planning offices, county agricultural commissioners, resource conservation districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service district conservationists, California Farm Bureau Federation, University of California Cooperative Extension, California Cattlemen's Association, local water and irrigation districts, public interest groups, and building industry representatives. Many of these groups also participated in development of the Farmland of Local Importance definitions for their respective counties.



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

801 K STREET • MS 24-01 • SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814

PHONE 916 / 322-1080 • FAX 916 / 445-0732 • TDD 916 / 324-2555 • WEB SITE conservation.ca.gov

April 2007

Dear Land Conservation Partner:

On behalf of the Department of Conservation I am pleased to present the **California Farmland Conversion Report 2002-2004**. This analysis of agricultural land use conversion trends, based on detailed geographic information system mapping, is the tenth biennial report of the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP).

The FMMP was established more than 20 years ago to document the location and extent of California's important farmlands, and to report on how they change over time. The Important Farmland Maps are used in the planning process to gauge the impact of planning decisions on agricultural land throughout the state. Population projections and today's environmental challenges make this information more important than ever.

Farm and grazing lands in California decreased by nearly 267 square miles (170,982 acres) between 2002 and 2004. The highest-quality agricultural soils, known as Prime Farmland, comprised 46 percent of the loss (78,575 acres). Urban land increased by 101,825 acres, a ten percent increase relative to the 2000-2002 reporting period. Other types of conversion were substantial as well: land idling, conversion to wildlife areas, low-density residential uses, and confined animal agriculture facilities. The report contains county and regional summaries of the dynamics that occurred beyond the urban edge, providing context for larger planning issues.

Identifying strategic farmland resources is an important first step in maintaining California's agricultural vitality. The Department of Conservation thanks the agricultural organizations and local governments that work with us to produce these useful tools for conservation planning.

Sincerely,

Bridgett Luther
Director

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY		1
1	The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program	3
	Important Farmland Map Categories.....	5
2	2002-2004 Improvements	7
3	Understanding the Data	9
4	Land Use Conversion, 2002-2004	11
	Urbanization.....	12
	Other Changes Affecting Agriculture	17
	Net Land Use Change	22
 APPENDIX A 2002-2004 County Conversion Tables		25
APPENDIX B 2002 and 2004 County Acreage Tallies		73
APPENDIX C County and Regional Conversion Summaries		77
APPENDIX D Rural Land Mapping County Tables		81
APPENDIX E Farmland of Local Importance Definitions		86
 FIGURES		
	Figure 1	FMMP Survey Area..... 4
	Figure 2	Conversion Table Structure
	Figure 3	FMMP Regions..... 10
	Figure 4	Statewide Acreage Change
	Figure 5	Sources of Urban Land 2002-2004..... 15
	Figure 6	Air Photo Examples..... 16
	Figure 7	Land Removed from Irrigated Agriculture 2002-2004 ... 17
	Figure 8	Rural Land Mapping Data 2002 and 2004..... 19
	Figure 9	Conversions to Irrigated Farmland 2002-2004..... 21
	Figure 10	Distribution of Prime Farmland 2004..... 23
 TABLES		
	Table 1	Butte County Important Farmland 2004
	Table 2	Top Overall Urban Ranks
	Table 3	Regional Urbanization Ranks
	Table 4	California Farmland Conversion Summary 2002-2004 .. 13
	Table 5	Top Irrigated to Urban Ranks
	Table 6	Changes and Improvements to Rural Residential Data.. 20
	Table 7	Largest Net Decreases in Irrigated Farmland
	Table 8	Largest Net Increases in Irrigated Farmland..... 22
	Table 9	Urban and Low-Density Development Increases 2002-2004

Appendix A: 2002-2004 County Conversion Tables

Table A-1	Alameda	26
Table A-2	Amador	27
Table A-3	Colusa.....	28
Table A-4	Contra Costa	29
Table A-5	El Dorado.....	30
Table A-6	Fresno	31
Table A-7	Glenn.....	32
Table A-8	Imperial.....	33
Table A-9	Kings	34
Table A-10	Lake	35
	Lassen (see Sierra Valley)	59
Table A-11	Los Angeles	36
Table A-12	Madera.....	37
Table A-13	Marin	38
Table A-14	Mariposa	38
Table A-15	Merced	40
Table A-16	Modoc.....	41
Table A-17	Monterey.....	42
Table A-18	Napa	43
Table A-19	Nevada	44
Table A-20	Orange.....	45
Table A-21	Placer.....	46
	Plumas (see Sierra Valley).....	59
Table A-22	Riverside	47
Table A-23	Sacramento	48
Table A-24	San Benito.....	49
Table A-25	San Bernardino	50
Table A-26	San Diego	51
Table A-27	San Joaquin.....	52
Table A-28	San Luis Obispo	53
Table A-29	San Mateo	54
Table A-30	Santa Barbara	55
Table A-31	Santa Clara.....	56
Table A-32	Santa Cruz.....	57
Table A-33	Shasta.....	58
Table A-34	Sierra Valley (Lassen/Plumas/Sierra).....	59
Table A-35	Siskiyou	60
Table A-36	Solano.....	61
Table A-37	Sonoma	62
Table A-38	Stanislaus.....	63
Table A-39	Sutter	64
Table A-40	Tehama.....	65
Table A-41	Tulare	66
Table A-42	Ventura.....	67
Table A-43	Yolo	68
Table A-44	Yuba	69
Table A-45	Butte - Interim Farmland Area.....	70

Table A-46	Kern - Important Farmland Area	71
Table A-47	Kern - Interim Farmland Area	72

Appendix B: 2002 and 2004 County Acreage Tallies

Table B-1	Important Farmland Acreage Summary 2002	74
Table B-2	Important Farmland Acreage Summary 2004.....	75
Table B-3	Important Farmland Acreage Summary, By Region, 2004.....	76

Appendix C: County and Regional Conversion Summaries

Table C-1	Sources of Urban Land 2002-2004 and Land Committed to Nonagricultural Use.....	78
Table C-2	Irrigated Farmland Changes 2002-2004.....	79
Table C-3	Net Change in Irrigated Land 2002-2004	80

Appendix D: Rural Land Mapping County Tables

Table D-1	Fresno	82
Table D-2	Madera.....	83
Table D-3	Merced	84
Table D-4	Stanislaus.....	85