California Department of Conservation
Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

2006 FIELD REPORT

COUNTY: Santa Barbara

FIELD MAPPER(S): Patrick Hennessy

IMAGERY:
source: National Agriculture Imagery Program
date: 2005
resolution: 2 meter
color type: true color
coverage gaps: none

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:
  county:
  others:

- *personal contacts:* none

- *websites:* City of Santa Maria
  http://www.ci.santa-maria.ca.us/3083.html#RiverOaksPark
  Santa Barbara Agricultural Commisioner
  http://www.countyofsb.org/agcomm/data.asp

- *GIS data referenced:* ag commissioner's 2006 crop data downloaded from website.

2004-2006 CHANGES*: *Please summarize the most common changes to the maps. List representative locations (quads) 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**

The conversion of irrigated farmland to urban land was not very common. There were only nine total changes, and seven of them were less than 10 acres. The other two

were 10 and 23 acres of new homes in the Santa Maria area. The 10 acres was converted next to US highway 101 just south of the Betteravia Exit. The larger 23 acres was converted near Blosser Road on the southwest area of the city.

- **Local, Grazing or Other Land to Urban Land**

There wasn't much urban development in Santa Barbara County during this update. The conversion of Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing or Other Land to Urban Land was mild, only responsible for 17 changes. Most of the changes were small additions of new homes adjacent to existing urban land primarily in Santa Maria and Lompoc. The Santa Maria changes also include the change next to US highway 101 south of the Betteravia exit, also mentioned in the section above, changing 22 acres of Other Land to Urban Land. Also next to 101, but on the north side of the city near the county line, the River Oaks Park with lakes was site checked and changed to Urban. In Lompoc, 15 acres of Grazing Land south of Olive Avenue had new homes and was changed to Urban. Lastly, 42 acres of Other Land was identified as the damn and spillway for Lake Cachuma.

- **Irrigated Farmland to Local or Grazing Land**

This type of reclassification accounted for the majority of the land use changes—a total of 106 changes to Local or Grazing Land. The surprising aspect of this number is that 102 of the 106 are less than 40 acres and 80 of the total 106 are less than 20 acres. Virtually every change was due to irrigated farmland going fallow for 3 or more update cycles. So, while the number of changes may seem high, the acreage may not be that shocking. The large number of these changes may also be due to the fact that imagery has been improving over time, leading to more accurate and careful fallow notations in more recent updates. The location of these changes also varies throughout the county. Many changes occurred in the Santa Maria Valley, a few on the periphery of Lompoc Valley and a few more upriver near the Santa Rosa Hills. The Santa Ynez Valley has more irrigated pasture for horse breeding and therefore, pasture generally went fallow in that area. In Foxen Canyon near the intersection of Foxen Canyon Road and Alisos Canyon Road, one change in particular converted almost 70 acres of irrigated farmland to dry grains, and thus to Farmland of Local Importance. This 70 acre change was also the largest.

- **Irrigated Farmland to Other Land**

Irrigated farmland was changed to Other Land just over 50 times, and 45 of these were less than 25 acres each. Most of the changes went fallow for three or more updates and they were adjacent to Other Land. This occurred in every part of the county, including the orchards on the coastal side of the Santa Ynez Mountains. Many of the changes involved farmsteads, low density housing, or sometimes corrals and pens for horses.

- **Local, Grazing or Other Land to Irrigated Farmland**

This update had a total of 37 changes from Local, Grazing or Other to irrigated farmland. Most were very small, 33 were less than 25 acres. Many of the changes are additions to existing irrigated farmland. There were four notables, however. In the Cuyama Valley, there were two very large changes. Both changes are near each other and adjacent to Highway 166 on the western edge of the actively farmed part of the valley. One field was growing carrots and the other was growing alfalfa during the site check.

The other two notables were changes to sudan grass. Almost 50 acres was site checked in Drum canyon south of the city of Los Alamos and just over 100 acres was site checked in the valley that Figueroa Mountain Road travels north of Los Olivos.

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

There were two types of unusual changes this update. The first is the conversion of Urban Land to something else. Although this is not typical, almost 75 acres of Urban Land was changed. Most of it went to Other Land as a refinement to the urban boundary. The second unusual type of change was the removal of a water polygon that represented a permanent lagoon where the Santa Ynez River meets the Pacific Ocean, near Surf. The course of the river has changed substantially over time and the permanent water changed area and shape. The current lagoon is more appropriately classified in the Other Land category. This is the source of the 73 acres of Water to Other conversion.

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

Land use in the Santa Ynez Valley is complicated and needs careful attention. The rotation of dry grains with irrigated pasture seems to be a possibility there. It should also be noted that there are a lot of Farmland of Local Importance polygons representing dry beans that are currently marked as fallow three update cycles. The next update may see a large amount of Local acreage going to Grazing, assuming that the dry bean fields remain fallow a fourth update. This seems to be in keeping with Agriculture Commissioner reports, which have shown a steady decline in this crop type in recent years.

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

photo interpretation, start date: 2/16/2007
photo interpretation, number of days: 15
ground truthing dates: 4/24 – 4/27/2007
 # days for map compilation and clean up: 5

*** *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