

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

2008 FIELD REPORT

COUNTY: Merced

FIELD MAPPER(S): Troy Dick

IMAGE DATA USED:

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Source | Digital Globe Inc. |
| Acquisition date | February 2007 |
| Data description | 1 foot resolution, true mosaic |
| Coverage gaps | None |
| Additional imagery used | None |

WRITTEN, DIGITAL & ORAL INFORMATION SOURCES:

The following entities and individuals provided information used to conduct 2008 mapping.

Local Review Comments

(submitted by cities, counties, & others on 2006 maps)

Jake Raper Jr. AICP
Community Development Director
City of Gustine
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Personal Contacts

Websites Used for Reference

Google Maps, Street View
<http://maps.google.com/>

K. Hovnanian's Homes
<http://www.khov.com/Home/Ca/20128/ Properties Auth.htm>

Los Banos Community Forums
<http://ourlosbanos.com/parks.html>

GIS Data Used for Reference

2006-2008 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 | 21 changes |
| <p>The majority of these changes occurred in or adjacent to the cities of Atwater, Merced, and Los Banos. The largest changes took place in or adjacent to the city of Atwater where a total of ~50 acres were delineated for homes and Joan Faul Park. Meanwhile, in the city of Merced, a total of approximately 50 acres were delineated for Sunny View Apartments, new homes, new park, and the expansion to an electrical substation. Finally, in the city of Los Banos, a total of approximately 30 acres were developed for a new Lowe's, Meadow Glen home community, and other new homes.</p> | |
| Nonirrigated Land Uses and Other Land to Urban Land | 13 changes |
| <p>The majority of the urbanization this update was due to the expansion of urban development on the Winton, Atwater, and Merced quads. The largest changes took place on the Winton quad where a total of ~220 acres was added for the Merced County Landfill and new homes. Meanwhile, on the Atwater quad, a total of approximately 40 acres was added for the Atwater Market Place, Savemart, Bank of American, Sonic, and homes. Lastly, on the Merced quad, a total of approximately 40 acres were developed for Farmdale Elementary School, new homes, and businesses.</p> | |
| Conversions from Irrigated Farmland aside from urbanization | |
| Irrigated Farmland to Nonirrigated Land Uses | 266 changes |
| <p>There were two primary reasons for the conversion of irrigated farmland:</p> <p>First, the majority of these changes were due to plots of irrigated and having been fallow for three or more update cycles. County wide approximately 8,090 acres went out of production. The majority of the changes in this category occurred on the Merced quad with a total of ~1,360 acres going out of production. This was followed by the Volta and Atwater quads with a total of ~1,010 and 654 acres, respectively, going out of production.</p> <p>Second, areas of irrigated farmland were identified that are no longer being irrigated but, instead, are being used for the cultivation of nonirrigated grain crops. These areas had not been irrigated for multiple update cycles. The largest changes occurred on the Volta and Merced quads with approximately 1,750 acres and 310 acres, respectively, going to nonirrigated grain crops.</p> | |
| Irrigated Farmland to Other Land | 55 changes |
| <p>A majority of these changes were due to irrigated farmland having been fallow for three or more update and has been graded for development. The majority of these changes happened on the Merced quad with a total of approximately 500 acres going to Vacant or Disturbed Land. This was followed by the San Luis Dam quad with a total of ~490 acres now classified as Vacant or Disturbed Land.</p> | |

Conversions to Irrigated Farmland

Nonirrigated Land Uses and Other Land to Irrigated Farmland | 38 changes

The most notable addition of irrigated farmland this update occurred on the Turlock Lake quad with a total of approximately 570 acres. This was followed by the Yosemite Lake and Le Grand quads with a total of ~540 and 490 acres, respectively, now irrigated. Most of the irrigated land additions were new orchard plantings.

Unusual Changes

(Types of change not already described or special circumstances during the 2008 update.)

A legal boundary change in which land was transferred from Fresno to Merced counties was effective in January 2008. This change led to a 4,198 acre increase in Merced County acreage during the 2008 Important Farmland update.

Grazing land to nonirrigated grain: 27 changes

The most notable addition of nonirrigated grain this update occurred on the Volta quad with a total of approximately 440 acres. This was followed by the Winton quad with a total of ~190 acres going to nonirrigated grain.

Areas of Concern for Future Updates

(Locations or map categories noted as needing careful checking during 2010 update, and reasons.)

Investigate possible areas of Natural Vegetation (nv) for example ponds in the Stevinson, Gustine, Ingomar, San Luis Ranch, Sandy Mush, and Turner Ranch quad areas.

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 2008 update.

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|---|----------------------|
| Image interpretation, start date | 3/20/2009 |
| Image interpretation, number of days | 12 |
| Ground truth dates | 6/1/2009 to 6/5/2009 |
| Number of days for post-ground truth clean up | 7 |

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