

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

**2016 FIELD REPORT**

**COUNTY:** Butte

**FIELD MAPPER(S):** Andrew McLeod

**IMAGE DATA USED:**

Source: National Agriculture Imagery Program, USDA
Acquisition date: Summer 2016
Data description: True color mosaic, 1 meter resolution
Coverage gaps: None
Additional imagery used: None

**WRITTEN, DIGITAL & ORAL INFORMATION SOURCES:**

*The following entities and individuals provided information used to conduct 2016 mapping.*

Local Review Comments (submitted by cities, counties, & others on 2014 maps)
Scott Friend, City of Biggs
Personal Contacts
Anastacia Allen, Butte County Agriculture Office
Websites Used for Reference
Google Maps and Streetview: <a href="http://www.google.com/maps">www.google.com/maps</a>
GIS Data Used for Reference
California City Boundary Layer (2016) California Protected Areas Database (2015)

**2014-2016 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.*

<b>Conversions to Urban Land</b>	
Irrigated Farmland to Urban Land	2 changes
<p>Most notably, new buildings were added to the Farmers' International plant on the west side of Chico off Highway 32. This resulted in the complex's growth to nearly 10 acres.</p>	
Nonirrigated Land Uses and Other Land to Urban Land	14 changes
<p>New homes and apartments as well as an increased density of homes and the use of parcel data to identify dense clusters of homes were the primary causes of the urbanization of nonirrigated and Other Land.</p> <p>New homes and buildings were in evidence throughout the Chico area with more than 100 acres of nonirrigated and Other Land converted to Urban Land. The largest number of conversions took place in the North Chico area, including new homes in the Hancock Park subdivision (~40 acres), another development north of East Avenue near Wildwood Park (~20 acres), and the Creekside Landing development south of the Nord Highway (~10 acres). These changes also included continued construction in the Rocky Bluff subdivision on Skyway, southeast of Chico, which added approximately 10 acres of new homes.</p> <p>Other areas of the county also saw new development. Approximately 10 acres of new homes were added in Biggs. In addition, a new big box store was under construction on the south side of Oroville, adding approximately 20 acres including parking. Finally, an increased density of homes led to the mapping of Urban Land near Forest Ranch.</p>	
<b>Conversions from Irrigated Farmland aside from urbanization</b>	
Irrigated Farmland to Nonirrigated Land Uses	23 changes
<p>The three primary reasons for the conversion of irrigated farmland and pastureland to nonirrigated land uses were the lack of irrigation of fields for three update cycles, a switch from the cultivation of irrigated crops to nonirrigated grain crops over time, as well as the correction of a misidentification.</p> <p>The majority of these conversions were simply due to plots of irrigated farmland or pastureland having been fallow for three or more update cycles. The majority of these changes were for 30 acres or less, with six such small changes occurring in the southern end of the county on the Palermo quad. The largest change of this type occurred just south of Biggs, converting approximately 75 acres.</p> <p>Next, areas of former irrigated farmland or pastureland were identified as no longer being irrigated but, instead, were being used for the cultivation of nonirrigated grain crops. The Palermo quad again exhibited the most conversions (3), including one change three miles southwest of the town of Palermo of approximately 180 acres.</p> <p>Finally, an area on the Ord Ferry quad had been previously misidentified as an irrigated orchard but was actually restored riparian forest land. The misidentification was likely made due to the way the riparian forest had originally been planted in rows, resembling an orchard planting. This change was located in the Butte Sink Wildlife Management Area and accounted for the conversion of approximately 200 acres to nonirrigated land uses.</p>	

Irrigated Farmland to Other Land	4 changes
<p>These conversions were due to small plots of farmland that had been fallow for three update cycles and were observed to be either disturbed or natural vegetation. However, the largest change of approximately 15 acres, was due to construction of new agricultural buildings at a site roughly two miles northeast of Nelson.</p>	
<b>Conversions to Irrigated Farmland</b>	
Nonirrigated Land Uses and Other Land to Irrigated Farmland	47 changes
<p>Additions of irrigated farmland were primarily due to new orchards and row crops. The largest concentration of these conversions occurred on the Palermo quad, with 10 additions of irrigated farmland. Additions of irrigated farmland on the Palermo quad were primarily walnut and almond orchards, totaling approximately 350 acres. The adjacent Honcut quad was also active, with six changes. Meanwhile, some of the largest changes occurred on the Llano Seco quad with approximately 675 acres of irrigated row crops observed. The largest such site on the Llano Seco quad was approximately 300 acres of tomatoes. Other large additions of irrigated farmland included walnuts on the Ord Ferry quad (~200 acres), walnuts on the Shippee quad (~170 acres), rice on the West of Biggs quad (~120 acres) and irrigated pasture on the Pennington quad (~100 acres). A planting of approximately 50 acres of walnuts resulted in a change on the Nord quad, just northwest of Chico.</p>	
<b>Unusual Changes</b>	
<p>(Types of change not already described or special circumstances during the 2016 update.)</p>	
<p><u>Conversions between Other Land and Water:</u> There were eight changes including updates to the boundaries of the Sacramento River, Thermalito Afterbay and Concow Reservoir. Lake Wyandotte was removed from the Water category because it was determined that natural sedimentation has reduced its size below the minimal mappable area.</p>	
<b>Areas of Concern for Future Updates</b>	
<p>(Locations or map categories noted as needing careful checking during 2018 update, and reasons.)</p>	
None	
<b>Definitions:</b>	
<p><b>Irrigated Farmland</b> 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 &amp; 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.</p>	
<p><b>Nonirrigated land uses</b> include grazing areas, land used for dryland crop farming, and formerly irrigated land that has been left idle for three or more update cycles.</p>	

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 2016 update.*

Image interpretation, start date: 9/7/16
Image interpretation, number of days: 6
Ground truth dates: October 5, 2016
Number of days for post-ground truth clean-up: 4

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