

Important Farmland Categories

FMMP's study area is contiguous with modern soil surveys developed by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). A classification system that combines [technical soil ratings](/dlrp/fmmp/Documents/soil_criteria.pdf) (/dlrp/fmmp/Documents/soil_criteria.pdf) and current land use is the basis for the Important Farmland Maps of these lands. Most public land areas, such as National Forests and Bureau of Land Management holdings, are not mapped.

The minimum land use mapping unit is 10 acres unless specified. Smaller units of land are incorporated into the surrounding map classifications. In order to most accurately represent the NRCS digital soil survey, soil units of one acre or larger are depicted in Important Farmland Maps.

For environmental review purposes under CEQA, the categories of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, and Grazing Land constitute 'agricultural land' (Public Resources Code Section 21060.1). The remaining categories are used for reporting changes in land use as required for FMMP's biennial farmland conversion report.

Prime Farmland (P)

Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date. Download information on the [soils qualifying for Prime Farmland](/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/prime_soils.aspx) (/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/prime_soils.aspx). More general information on the [definition of Prime Farmland](/dlrp/fmmp/overview/Pages/prime_farmland_fmmp.aspx) (/dlrp/fmmp/overview/Pages/prime_farmland_fmmp.aspx) is also available.

Farmland of Statewide Importance (S)

Farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date. Download information on the [soils qualifying for Farmland of Statewide Importance](/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/prime_soils.aspx) (/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/prime_soils.aspx).

Unique Farmland (U)

Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include nonirrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Farmland of Local Importance (L)

Land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee. Download a complete set of the [Farmland of Local Importance definitions \(/dlrp/fmmp/Documents/local%20defs%200810.pdf\)](/dlrp/fmmp/Documents/local%20defs%200810.pdf) in PDF format.

In some counties, Confined Animal Agriculture facilities are part of Farmland of Local Importance, but they are shown separately. The [status of each county regarding Confined Animal Agriculture \(/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Documents/CAFO_FMMP_status.xls\)](/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Documents/CAFO_FMMP_status.xls) is available in this spreadsheet.

Grazing Land (G)

Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. This category was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen's Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, and other groups interested in the extent of grazing activities.

Urban and Built-up Land (D)

Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least 1 unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately 6 structures to a 10-acre parcel. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, construction, institutional, public administration, railroad and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures, and other developed purposes.

Other Land (X)

Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than forty acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.

The [Rural Land Mapping Project \(/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/rural_land_mapping.aspx\)](/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/rural_land_mapping.aspx) provides more detail on the distribution of various land uses within the Other Land category in nine FMMP counties, including all eight San Joaquin Valley counties. The project may be expanded to the entire FMMP survey area as funding becomes available. The Rural Land categories include:

- Rural Residential Land (R)
- Semi-Agricultural and Rural Commercial Land (sAC)
- Vacant or Disturbed Land (V)
- Confined Animal Agriculture (CI) -- [status of this land use relative to Farmland of Local Importance \(/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Documents/CAFO_FMMP_status.xls\)](/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Documents/CAFO_FMMP_status.xls).
- Nonagricultural or Natural Vegetation (nv)

Water (W)

Perennial water bodies with an extent of at least 40 acres.

OPTIONAL DESIGNATION Land Committed to Nonagricultural Use

This category was developed in cooperation with local government planning departments and county boards of supervisors during the public workshop phase of the FMMP's development in 1982. Land Committed to Nonagricultural Use information is available both statistically and as an overlay to the important farmland information. Land Committed to Nonagricultural Use is defined as existing farmland, grazing land, and vacant areas which have a permanent commitment for development.



[\(/dlrp/Pages/Index.aspx\)](/dlrp/Pages/Index.aspx)

FMMP - Map Categories, Criteria, & Uses

[Map Categories, Criteria, & Uses \(/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/Index.aspx\)](/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/Index.aspx)

[Data Uses & Users \(/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/data_use.aspx\)](/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/data_use.aspx)

[Map Review by Local Representatives \(/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/local_review_maps.aspx\)](/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/local_review_maps.aspx)

[Making a Map \(/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/making_map.aspx\)](/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/making_map.aspx)

[Map Categories](#)

[Prime Soils \(/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/prime_soils.aspx\)](/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/prime_soils.aspx)

[Sample Enlarged Map \(/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/sample_maps.aspx\)](/dlrp/fmmp/mccu/Pages/sample_maps.aspx)

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