

## 6.8 Fiesta City

The proposed Fiesta City facility has a capacity of 2.5 MW AC and is located in 9 of Sparta Township in Chippewa County. The site is located east of the city of Montevideo, northeast of the intersection of State Highway 7 and 24<sup>th</sup> Street. Aurora anticipates that access through the facility will be through a new access road off of 24<sup>th</sup> Street. Preliminary plans anticipate a development area encompassing all of the 25.6 acres of Aurora’s site control. Electricity from the facility will be delivered to Xcel Energy’s Fiesta City Substation, located approximately 0.6 miles west of the facility.

The facility is located within the North-Central Glaciated Plains Section of the Prairie Parkland Province. Land cover within the preliminary development area (Table 22) is entirely cultivated 100 percent. In comparison to the study area around the Fiesta City Substation, the facility location avoids the developed area around Montevideo and the wetland areas to the west (Figure 35).

**Table 22: Fiesta City Facility Land Cover**

Land Cover	Control Area		Development Area		Study Area	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Open Water	-	-	-	-	286.3	2.3%
Developed, Open Space	-	-	-	-	1,182.7	9.4%
Developed, Low Intensity	-	-	-	-	1,044.0	8.3%
Developed, Medium Intensity	-	-	-	-	419.5	3.3%
Developed, High Intensity	-	-	-	-	138.9	1.1%
Barren Land	-	-	-	-	27.4	0.2%
Deciduous Forest	-	-	-	-	314.9	2.5%
Evergreen Forest	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mixed Forest	-	-	-	-	3.0	-
Shrub/Scrub	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grassland Herbaceous	-	-	-	-	477.1	3.8%
Pasture/Hay	-	-	-	-	555.4	4.4%
Cultivated Crops	25.6	100.0%	25.6	100.0%	6,646.5	52.9%
Woody Wetlands	-	-	-	-	324.9	2.6%
Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands	-	-	-	-	1,145.8	9.1%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>25.63</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>12,566.3</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### 6.8.1 Effects on Human Settlement

The facility location is a cultivated parcel located just north of the commercial corridor along State Highway 7 in a rural area with scattered rural residences. The nearest home is located approximately 1,670 feet southeast of the preliminary development area. Construction of the facility will not result in displacement of any homes or businesses. The facility is located

in an area zoned as Agricultural Preservation by Chippewa County. Chippewa County does not have a solar ordinance. The proposed facility location has not been identified as part of any orderly annexation agreement.<sup>115</sup>

There is a snowmobile trail along State Highway 7; there are no other recreational trails, county, state or local parks located within one-half mile of the proposed facility. Construction and operation of the facility would not impact the use of nearby recreational resources.

The location of the facility is approximately one mile southeast of the Montevideo Airport. Following initial screening, the FAA requested that Aurora file a 7460-1 *Notice of Proposed Construction* for the Fiesta City facility. The results of a glare analysis performed according to the FAA's Solar Glare Hazard Analysis Tool methodology indicate that at various times throughout the year the facility will create a low potential for temporary after-image glare on three runways, and no potential for glare on a fourth runway. The FAA considers low potential for temporary after-image to be acceptable for pilots.<sup>116</sup> Aurora intends to file a Notice of Proposed Construction with the FAA for the Fiesta City facility.

Section 11.4.1 of the Site Permit Template requires compliance with FAA determinations.

No mitigation measures beyond those described in Section 5.2 are identified for the Eastwood facility.

## **6.8.2 Effects on Land Based Economies**

The proposed facility would remove approximately 26 acres from agricultural production for at least 25 years. EERA staff is not aware of other announced solar facilities in the area of the proposed facility, so there is no indication that the conversion of land from agricultural uses would be part of a cumulative reduction of available land for crops or pasture.

Approximately 17 acres (65 percent) of the developed area are considered to be prime farmland and 6 acres are considered to be prime farmland if drained (Table 13). Within the study area surrounding the Fiesta City Substation, approximately 46 percent is considered to be prime farmland and 14 percent is considered to be prime farmland if drained. In order to avoid the developed area around Montevideo, it is likely that any alternate locations would also be sited on prime farmland or prime farmland if drained (Figure 37).

The proposed project would not impact tourism, mining or mineral extraction activity, or forest resources of economic importance.

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<sup>115</sup> Chippewa County Comments, September 24, 2014

<sup>116</sup> Application, at pp. 53-54

No mitigation measures beyond those described in Section 5.3 are identified for the Fiesta City facility.

### **6.8.3 Effects on Archaeological and Historic Resources**

No archaeological sites were identified in a survey of the Fiesta City facility. No mitigation measures beyond those described in Section 5.4 are identified for the Fiesta City facility.

### **6.8.4 Effects on Natural Environment**

There are no rivers, streams or lakes within the area of facility site control. Field delineations performed in the summer of 2014 show approximately 0.19 acres of wetlands within the area of land control; 0.13 acres of Type 1 (seasonally flooded basins or floodplains and 0.06 acres of Type 2 (wet meadow).<sup>117</sup>

The preliminary design for the facility anticipates grading of approximately 11.6 acres of the site during construction.<sup>118</sup>

No mitigation measures beyond those described in Section 5.5 are identified for the Fiesta City facility.

### **6.8.5 Effects on Rare and Unique Natural Resources**

A review of the NHIS database did not identify any documented instances of state or federally listed endangered, threatened or special concern species within one mile of the area of site control for the Fiesta City facility.<sup>119</sup>

No mitigation measures beyond the field survey described in Section 5.6 are identified for the Fiesta City facility.

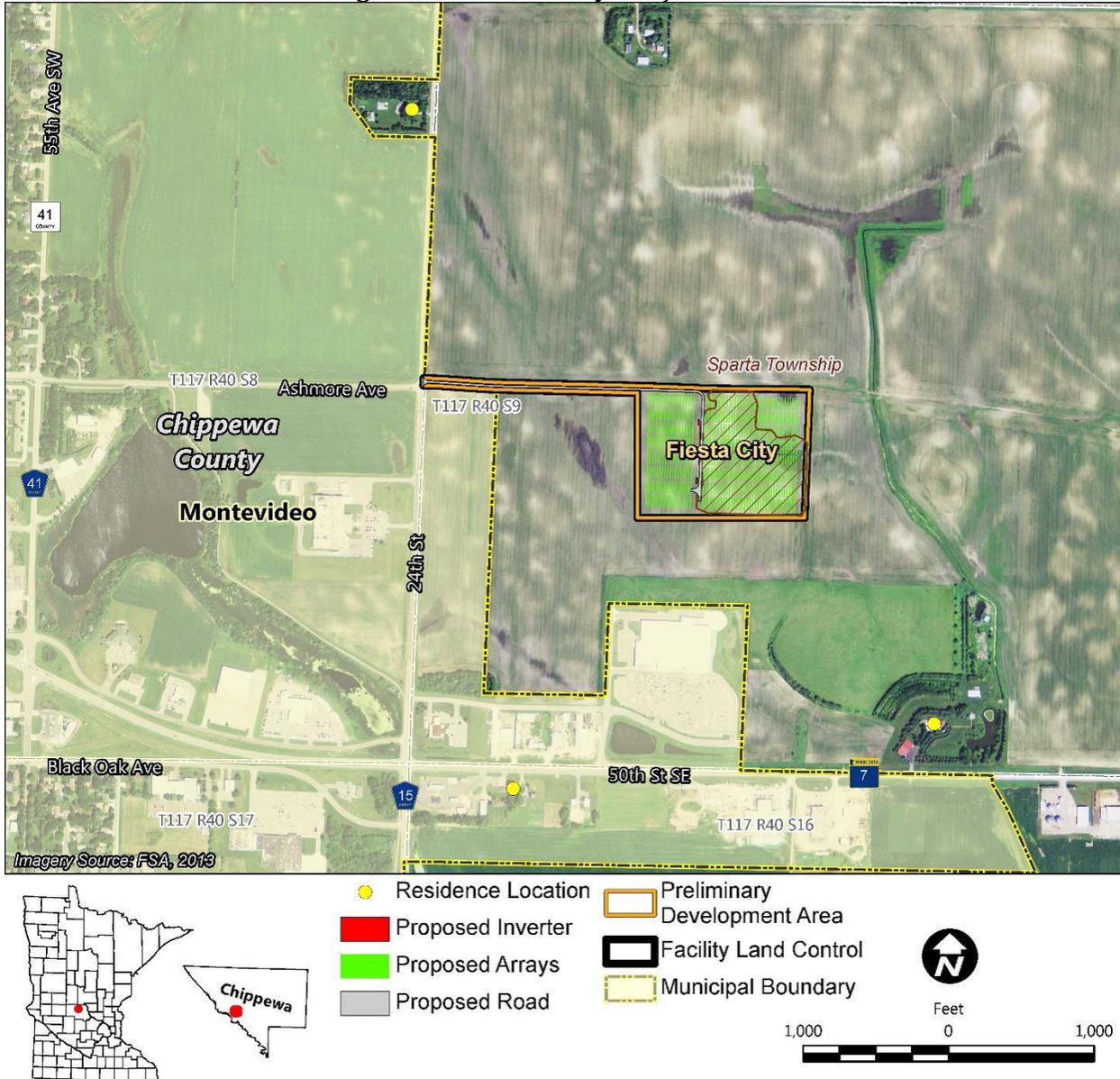
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<sup>117</sup> Appendix C

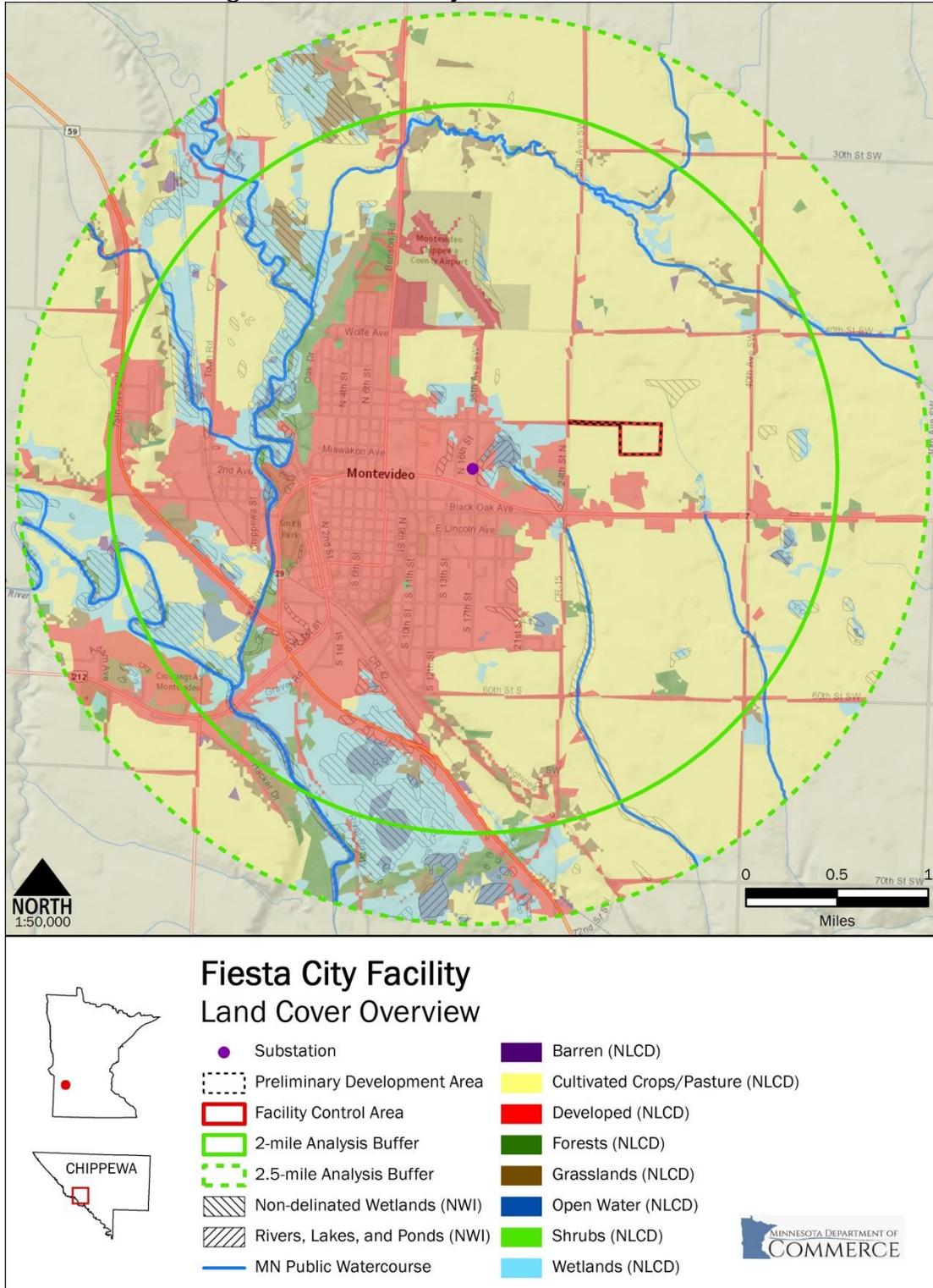
<sup>118</sup> Application, at Appendix F

<sup>119</sup> Application, at p. 81

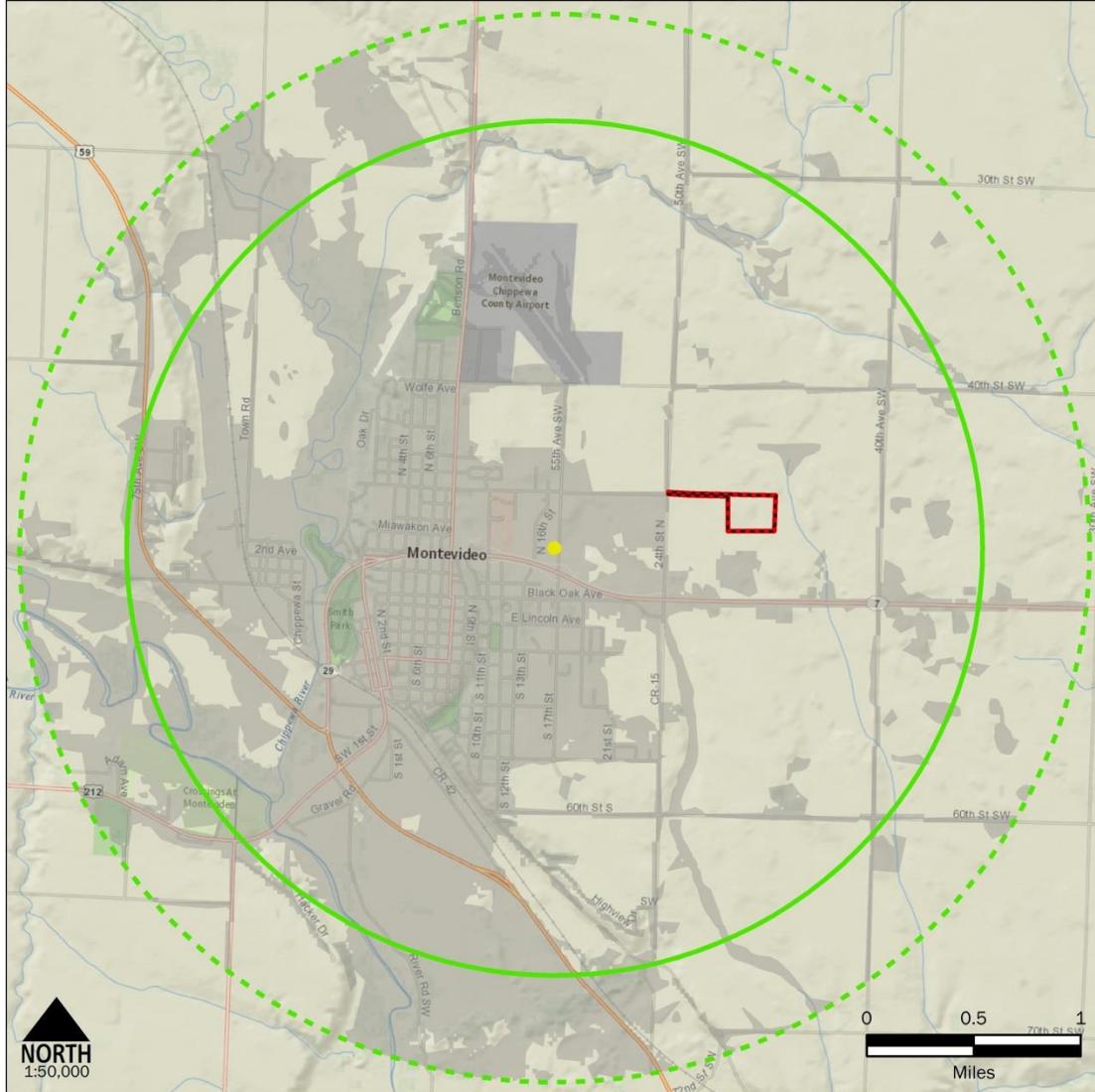
Figure 34: Fiesta City Project Detail



**Figure 35: Fiesta City Land Cover Overview**



**Figure 36: Fiesta City Generally Incompatible Areas**



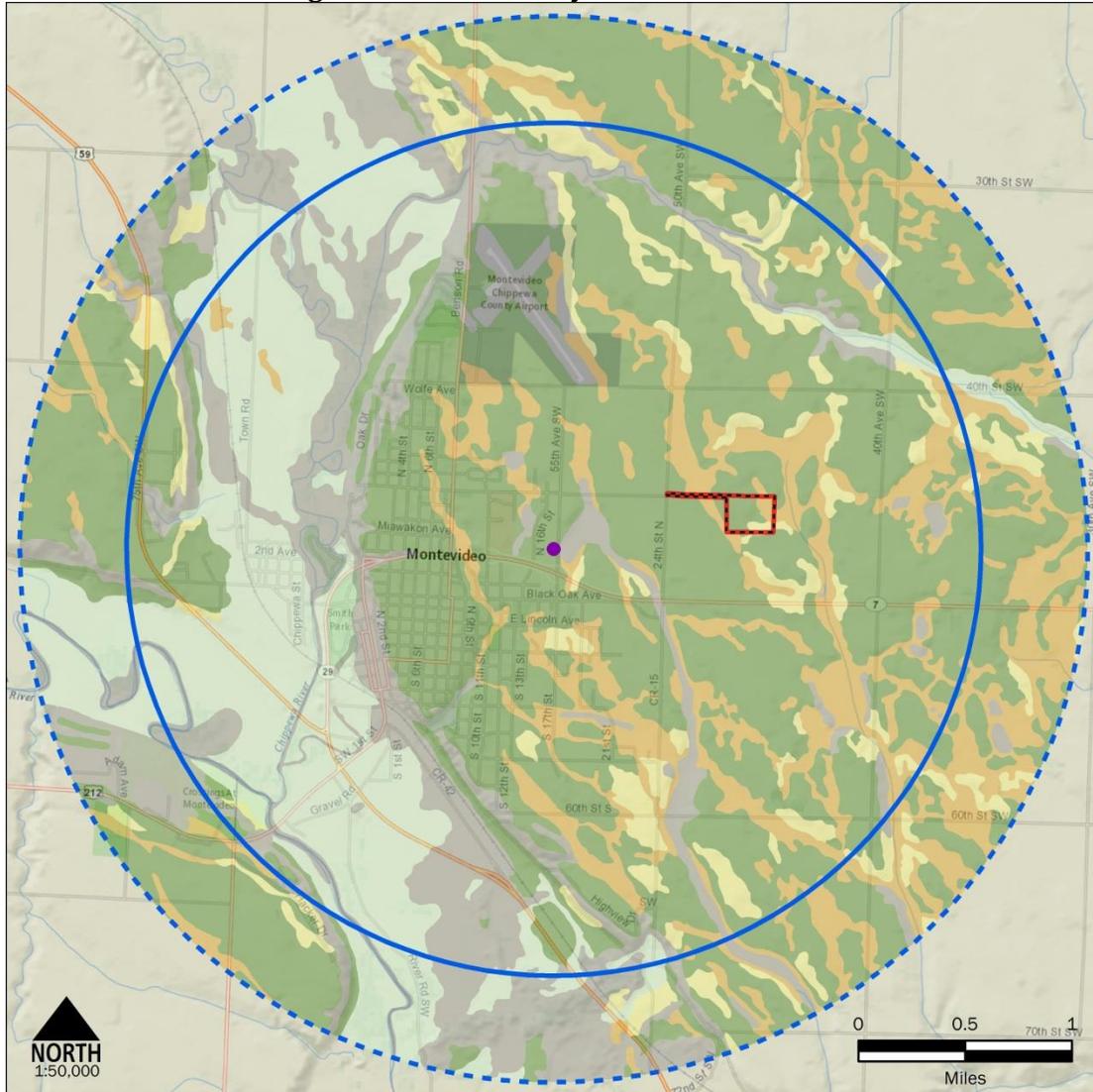
**Fiesta City Facility  
 Generally Incompatible Areas**

- Substation
- Preliminary Development Area
- Facility Control Area
- 2-mile Analysis Buffer
- 2.5-mile Analysis Buffer
- Generally Incompatible Areas

“Generally Incompatible Areas” include: Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas; Minnesota Wildlife Management Areas; US Fish and Wildlife Service Waterfowl Production Areas; the National Wetland Inventory; and areas classified as open water, developed, forest, and wetland in the National Land Cover Database.



**Figure 37: Fiesta City Prime Farmland**



**Fiesta City Facility  
 Prime Farmland**

- Substation
- Preliminary Development Area
- Facility Control Area
- 2-mile Analysis Buffer
- 2.5-mile Analysis Buffer
- Prime Farmland
- Prime Farmland if Drained
- Farmland of Statewide Importance
- Not Prime Farmland
- Other Farmland

