



## Urban and Agricultural Lands, 2019

This map shows where **urban** and **agricultural** areas exist throughout the state. New urban development replaces about 15,000 acres of California farmland each year. The best agricultural land is level, low elevation, and filled with fertile **alluvial soils** that washed down out of the mountains over thousands of years. The sunny and warm Mediterranean climate found in most of the state is ideal for growing crops. However, since most crops require irrigation during the dry summer, irrigation is also necessary. Most of the moisture that nourishes crops begins as rain or snow in the mountains; it is stored in reservoirs and then transported to the fields in natural streams, aqueducts, and canals (see page 34). Water is also pumped up where it has collected underground.

The green areas shown here are among the most productive agricultural lands on Earth. However, this same level **terrain** and relative location to Pacific shipping lanes and highways has encouraged urban development (red areas). Cities now replace the once-rich farmlands of Southern California and the greater Bay Area. Although the Central Valley is much larger, the cities of Sacramento, Stockton, Fresno, Bakersfield, and many smaller settlements in between -- now linked by highways -- are slowly replacing farmland.