



GLOSSARY OF SELECTED TERMS FROM THE
NATIONAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

Except as noted below, these terms and definitions were taken from the glossary of selected terms included in *Summary Report: 2007 National Resources Inventory* available at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/>.

Agricultural land. A group of land/cover use categories that includes cropland, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land, pastureland, and rangeland. Agricultural land does not appear in the National Resources Inventory (NRI). The term represents land cover/use categories that are readily available for agricultural production.

Conservation Reserve Program land. A land cover/use category that includes land under a CRP contract.

Cropland. A land cover/use category that includes areas used for the production of adapted crops for harvest. Two subcategories of cropland are recognized: cultivated and noncultivated. Cultivated cropland comprises land in row crops or close-grown crops and also other cultivated cropland, for example, hayland or pastureland that is in a rotation with row or close-grown crops. Noncultivated cropland includes permanent hayland and horticultural cropland.

Developed land. A combination of land cover/use categories, large urban and built-up areas, small built-up areas, and rural transportation land.

Forest land. A land cover/use category that is at least 10 percent stocked by single-stemmed woody species of any size that will be at least 4 meters (13 feet) tall at maturity. Also included is land bearing evidence of natural regeneration of tree cover (cut over forest or abandoned farmland) and not currently developed for nonforest use. Ten percent stocked, when viewed from a vertical direction, equates to an areal canopy cover of leaves and branches of 25 percent or greater. The minimum area for classification as forest land is 1 acre, and the area must be at least 100 feet wide.

Land cover/use. A term that includes categories of land cover and categories of land use. Land cover is the vegetation or other kind of material that covers the land surface. Land use is the purpose of human activity on the land; it is usually, but not always, related to land cover. The NRI uses the term land cover/use to identify categories that account for all the surface area of the United States.

Other rural land. A land cover/use category that includes farmsteads and other farm structures, field windbreaks, barren land, and marshland.



Pastureland. A land cover/use category of land managed primarily for the production of introduced forage plants for livestock grazing. Pastureland cover may consist of a single species in a pure stand, a grass mixture, or a grass-legume mixture. Management usually consists of cultural treatments: fertilization, weed control, reseeding or renovation, and control of grazing. For the NRI, pastureland includes land that has a vegetative cover of grasses, legumes, and/or forbs, regardless of whether or not it is being grazed by livestock.

Prime farmland. Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. Prime farmland can be identified on any of the following land cover/use categories: cropland, CRP land, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, and other rural land. This is not stated in the NRI summary report's glossary of selected terms but is evident from the table of prime farmland by land cover/use.

Rangeland. A land cover/use category on which the climax or potential plant cover is composed principally of native grasses, grass like plants, forbs or shrubs suitable for grazing and browsing, and introduced forage species that are managed like rangeland. This would include areas where introduced hardy and persistent grasses, such as crested wheatgrass, are planted and such practices as deferred grazing, burning, chaining, and rotational grazing are used, with little or no chemicals or fertilizer being applied. Grasslands, savannas, many wetlands, some deserts, and tundra are considered to be rangeland. Certain communities of low forbs and shrubs, such as mesquite, chaparral, mountain shrub, and pinyon-juniper, are also included as rangeland.

Rural land. A group of land/cover use categories that includes cropland, CRP land, pastureland, rangeland, forest land and other rural land. This term appears in the NRI tables but is not defined in the NRI summary report's glossary of selected terms.

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