This map displays the center pivot irrigation systems in use in Mason County, Illinois during the 2012 growing season. Mason County has the most irrigated acreage in the state, nearly double that of any other Illinois county. Sandy soils and annual precipitation of about 38 inches promote significant groundwater recharge. An extensive shallow aquifer provides an abundant source of water that, historically, has not led to any long-term lowering of water levels or depletion of the aquifer even as irrigation has significantly expanded. The Imperial Valley Water Authority, which is a local government entity that regulates non-agricultural high capacity wells in Mason County and parts of six townships in Tazewell County, estimated groundwater withdrawals for irrigation in Mason County in 2012 to be 951,790 MGD, which is 377 million gallons a day (MGD) over a 120-day growing season.

Center pivot irrigation is used in 50 acres of farmland in Mason County, suggesting that USDA (2007, NASS Census) reported 273,330 total acres of farmland. The NAIP images were examined for circular irrigation patterns on the landscape which can be visible in aerial images. The USDA collects aerial imagery during the crop growing season through the National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP) and makes them available through the USDA Geospatial Data Gateway. Images used for this research were collected by the USDA between June 1 and July 3, 2012, and accessed on January 15, 2013.

The technical content of the map is the responsibility of the authors. The user assumes all liability for the interpretation and use of the map. Map compiled by Karen Bridges. Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic. Funding was provided in part by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Sources:
- Imperial Valley Water Authority: http://www.imperialvalleywaterauthority.org

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