

CEQA INITIAL STUDY & NEGATIVE DECLARATION (ND)

Adapted from CEQA Guidelines APPENDIX G Environmental Checklist Form, Revised 2016

1. **Project title:** Administrative Permit No. AA19-002
2. **Lead agency name and address:** Merced County
Community & Economic Development Department
2222 S Street
Merced, CA 95340
3. **Contact person and phone number:** Tiffany Ho, Planner II
(209) 385-7654 ext. 4407
4. **Project location:** 11918 Youngstown Road, Turlock, CA. The project site is located on the east side of North Youngstown Road, 0.4 mile north of West Clausen Avenue in the Turlock area, identified as Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 041-030-039.
5. **Project sponsor's name and address:** Sergio Pereira
18455 Sycamore Avenue
Patterson, CA 95363
6. **General plan designation:** Agricultural
7. **Zoning:** A-1 (General Agricultural)
8. **Description of project: (Describe the whole action involved, including but not limited to later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or off-site features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)**

Administrative Application No. AA19-002 requests to establish a large animal veterinary hospital facility on a 12.1 acre parcel in an A-1 (General Agricultural) zone, located at 11918 Youngstown Road, Turlock, CA. The site is currently improved with a single-family home and a barn. A small portion of the parcel is farmed with row crops; however, a majority of the land is vacant. The site is currently served by an existing domestic well and septic system. The request includes the construction of an 8,250 square foot main hospital building, pens, parking area with gravel surfacing, and a temporary mucking holding area. The project also proposes to use the existing single-family home for employee housing (1-2 student interns). The facility will provide both field and in-house services, including 24/7 emergency services, and small retail sales of vet supplies and medication. Normal operations are proposed to operate between 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, and will include a fleet of 5 trucks and a staff of 5 employees. At peak hours, 10 persons (5 employees and 5 clients) are estimated to be on-site.

Additionally, the request includes future construction of a 2,800 square foot free stall barn and 6,500 insemination building to be built at a later phase. The barn structure will provide shelter for more animals, and the insemination building will consist of additional animal housing, insemination and embryo transfer laboratory services, and office space. At full build-out, the project will involve approximately 14,750 square feet of new construction (main hospital and insemination building).
9. **Surrounding land uses and setting: Briefly describe the project's surroundings:**

The proposed project site is surrounded by agricultural uses, a cluster of ranchettes, and Highway 99 which runs northeast and northwest of the property.

10. **Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.):**
 - Merced County Department of Public Works, Division of Building and Safety
 - Merced County Department of Public Works, Roads
 - Merced County Fire Department
 - Merced County Division of Environmental Health

11. **Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, has consultation begun?**

No consultation requested.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

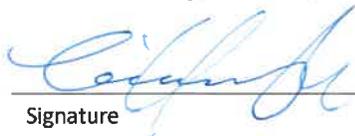
The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture Resources/Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.


Signature

7/2/19
Date

Signature

Date

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
6. Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
7. Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
8. Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
9. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
10. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
11. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
12. The explanation of each issue should identify:
 - a. the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and,
 - b. the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

I. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,2,11
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,2,11
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,2,11
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,18

a-b) No Impact. The project site is not considered a scenic vista/resource nor is the project site visible to or from any scenic vista/resources. The project site and vicinity maintains flat terrain and has been substantially modified and disturbed for agricultural production, rural residences, and major roadways (Highway 99). As such, the project site does not maintain any unique visual features. Additionally, no nearby roadways are designated scenic under any existing visual protection programs. Therefore, no impact would occur.

c) Less than Significant Impact. The project site zoned A-1 (General Agricultural), designated for the purposes of intensive farming operations and agricultural commercial and industrial uses. The project site is currently improved with an existing single-family home, a barn, and minor hobby farming. Agricultural uses and rural residences surround the project to the east, south, and west; Highway 99 runs northwest and northeast to the project site.

The proposed large animal hospital facility will be a new agricultural support service use; however, the facility will be located east of existing on-site development and away from the neighboring residence’s view. The project proposes to utilize the existing single-family home as employee housing for 1-2 interns, thereby maintaining the existing views of the single-family home and barn to neighboring rural residences. While the facility’s façade will be visible from Highway 99, all mechanical equipment has been oriented away from public view.

The proposed project will replace approximately 4.43 acres of open space; meanwhile, approximately 3.56 acres of existing open space will be maintained as open pasture. The proposed large animal hospital facility is considered an agricultural support service use and is consistent with the agricultural character and uses within the vicinity. The project will not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings, and as such, impacts are considered less than significant.

d) Less than Significant Impact. New sources of lighting may be introduced by the project in the form of exterior lighting. Lighting located at surrounding residences and Highway 99 already contribute to area’s nighttime lighting. The project is required to meet the requirements of Merced County Zoning Code Chapter 18.41 which require the use of directional lighting and minimization of glare and reflection. Compliance with County requirements would limit light trespass, keep lighting levels low, and ensure any light and glare effects are less than significant.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,2,12,18
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,2,12,18
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forestland (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2,18
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,12,18

a) **Less than Significant Impact.** Based on the Department of Conservation’s Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), the project site has two designations: “Rural Residential Land” and “Farmland of Statewide Importance”. The existing development, including the single-family home and barn, is designated as “Rural Residential Land”, whereas the remaining area is designated as “Farmland of Statewide Importance”. While the proposed large animal hospital facility would prevent farming on approximately 4.43 acres, the proposed project is considered an agricultural support service use and is consistent with the current land use and zoning classification. Moreover, the proposed project would be consistent with the 2030 Merced County General Plan, Land Use Element’s Goal LU-4 which encourages clustering rural residences and agricultural support services to minimize agricultural and environmental impacts and benefit the surrounding agricultural community. As such, the implementation of the project would be considered less than significant.

b) **No Impact.** The project site is located on 12.1 acre parcel designated as Agricultural land use and zoned A-1 (General Agricultural). The proposed large animal hospital facility is considered an agricultural support service and is consistent with the existing land use designation and zoning. The site is not under Williamson Act contract, nor is it within the Agricultural Preserve. The majority of lands under Williamson Act Contract are located east of the project site and

physically separated by Highway 99; therefore, the proposed project will not encourage the non-renewal or cancellation of surrounding contracted lands. As such, the project will not conflict with existing zoning or Williamson Act Contracts, and no impact will occur.

c-d) No Impact. The project site is not zoned as forestland or timberland, and there are no forest resources located on the project site. For this reason, the proposed project would not conflict with any forestland zoning or encourage conversion forest land, and no impact would occur.

e) Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project would not involve changes in the existing environment that could result in the conversion of existing agricultural or forest land. The project does not involve any off-site improvements or expansions of roadways or infrastructure. The proposed project is located within a cluster of rural residences and adjacent to a major roadway, minimizing impacts to the surrounding agricultural environment. The project does not involve additional residential development and proposed operations are consistent with the zoning and land use designation. Therefore, the proposed project would be less than significant.

III. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20,22
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20,22
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20,22
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2, 20,22

a-b) Less than Significant. Merced County is located in the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB). Under both the federal and state Clean Air Acts (CAAs), the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) regulates air quality in Merced County. The SJVAPCD has jurisdiction over all point and area sources of air emissions except for mobile sources (such as motor vehicles), consumer products, and pesticides. Furthermore, the SJVAPCD implements air quality management strategies and enforces its Rules and Regulation to improve the health and air quality for Valley residents. The SJVAPCD and the California Air Resources Board (ARB) have joint responsibility for attaining and maintaining the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and State Ambient Air Quality Standards (SAAQS) in the SJVAB.

To streamline the process of assessing significance of criteria pollutant emissions from commonly encountered projects, the SJVAPCD has developed the screening tool, Small Project Analysis Level (SPAL). Using project type and size, the SJVAPCD has pre-quantified emissions and determined a size below which it is reasonable to conclude that a project would not exceed applicable thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants. According to the SPAL requirements, no quantification of ozone precursor emissions is needed for projects less than or equal to the size thresholds, by vehicle trips and by project type. If other emission factors such as toxic air contaminants, hazardous materials, asbestos, or odors are apparent, these emissions must be addressed.

The proposed project would involve the construction of an 8,250 square foot large animal hospital building and a 6,500 insemination building for a total build-out of 14,750 square feet. The project would not involve the demolition or renovation of any existing facilities or buildings. The proposed project does not fit into any of the land use categories identified in the SPAL, but is most similar to the office category for medical office building. This land use category has a 52,000 square foot project size threshold, and the proposed project would not exceed the SPAL threshold.

Additionally, the project is estimated to generate approximately 15 average trips per day (ADT) which would not exceed the SPAL threshold for vehicles trips for an office project (1,628 ADT). Therefore, the project qualifies to complete the SPAL approach, and no quantification of ozone precursor emissions would be required. According to the SJVAPCD, project specific emissions of criteria pollutants are not expected to exceed SJVAPCD significance thresholds of 10 tons/year of NOX, 10 tons/year ROG, and 15 tons/year of PM10 (SJVAPCD 2015). As a result, the project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations and would not be likely to recreate objectionable odors that would affect a substantial number of people. Therefore, project impacts are considered less than significant.

- c) Less than Significant.** The SJVAPCD defines sensitive receptors as “facilities that house or attract children, the elderly, people with illness, or other who are especially sensitive to the effects of air pollutants.” Typical sensitive receptors include residences, hospitals, schools, and places of workshop.

The potential pollutants associated with the project would result from the construction period. Construction equipment generates diesel particulate matter (DPM), identified as a carcinogen by the ARB. The State of California has determined that DPM from diesel-fueled engines poses a chronic health risk with chronic inhalation exposure. The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) recommends using a 70 year exposure duration for determining residential cancer risks. Because of the project size and short duration of construction activities with potential to generate toxic air emissions, it is highly unlikely that the construction would pose a toxic risk to nearby residents. In addition, the proposed facilities would not utilize fumigants or other potential toxic air contaminants. As such, the project would not expose sensitive receptors to significant pollutant concentrations.

- e) Less than Significant.** The project proposed to construct a large animal hospital facility with field services and in-house services. On-site operations would include hospitalization and boarding of large animals, which in turn would generate large animal waste. Large animal waste is proposed to be removed off-site to be used as fertilizer for agricultural land and no permanent animal waste storage is proposed. Given this information, minimal odors will result from operations.

Additional, temporary, potential odor would be generated from diesel exhaust and paint application during the construction period. These odors, if perceptible, are common in the environment due to the proximity to Highway 99 and would dissipate rapidly as they mix with the surrounding air. Moreover, these odors would be of very limited duration. In these regards, impacts are considered less than significant.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2,8,9
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2,8,9
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2,8,9, 25
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2,8,9
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2

a-f) No Impact. The project site and the surrounding area is characterized by intense modification by agricultural uses and related infrastructure. The project site has been disturbed and developed with a single-family home and barn. The remaining acreage is maintained as fallow open space and has been regularly disked.

No special or sensitive species have been identified on-site or near the project site, based on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Threatened and Endangered Species Listing and the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). The project site is also not located on or near designated wetlands as designated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s Natural Wetlands Inventory Wetlands Mapper. Additionally, the project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources; or provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan; or, other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. Given this, no impact would occur.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,13

a-b) Less than Significant. The project site has been modified and disturbed by previous development, including the construction of the existing single-family home, barn, and regular disking of fallow land. No recorded significant historical resources or archaeological sites have been located on the property. Given the previously disturbed nature of the site from prior construction and farming operations, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact.

c) Less than Significant. No known human remains have been discovered from prior activities. Therefore, no impact is anticipated. In the likelihood that human remains or unrecorded resources could be exposed during future construction activities, Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code will be implemented. Section 7050.5 requires that all construction and excavation be stopped until the county coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner must contact the California Native American Heritage Commission. In this regard, impacts are considered less than significant.

VI. ENERGY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

a-b) Less than Significant. The project proposal does not involve any development that would result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during either construction or operation. The project proposes to construct an 8,250 square foot large animal hospital structure and a 6,500 insemination building for full buildout at approximately 14,750 square feet. The project will not conflict with any state or local plans for renewable or energy efficiency, and the project will be required to be in compliance with Title 24 of the California Energy Code, the California Green Building Code, and SPJVAPCD's Rules and Regulations for energy efficiency. As a result, impacts are considered to be less than significant.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:					
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map, issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,6
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,6
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,6
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,5
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,6,23
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct indirect risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,5,23
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,16
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

a.i-a.ii) **Less than Significant.** The project is not located near or within a mapped fault hazard, and no record of evidence of faulting has occurred on the project site. Faults within the County are generally located on the westside, near the San Luis Reservoir and the Los Banos area. Faults are the principal source of seismic activity and ground shaking, and there

have been no seismic activity originating from Merced County. Documented records of ground shaking have originated outside of the County with minor damage throughout the County on occasion; the only record of major damage to the County was the result of the 1906 earthquake which affected the Los Banos area. Furthermore, Merced County requires all new construction to comply with the California Building Code (CBC) seismic safety requirements to minimize risks associated with ground shaking. Given these reasons, impacts are considered less than significant.

- a.iii-a.iv) Less than Significant.** Based on the Department of Conservation California Earthquake Hazards Zones (EQ Zapp), the project site is not located within an Earthquake Fault Zone. Earthquake hazard zones are defined by three geological of expectable earthquake intensities for California. The proposed project is located within Zone III where damage of major severity may be expected in the in the event an earthquake occurs. There have been no records of seismic activity originating from Merced County, but there has been documented shaking originating from outside the County. In recent history, the 1906 earthquake caused major damage in the west side of the County in the Los Banos Area, and minor damaged elsewhere in the County. Merced County also requires that all new construction comply with the seismic safety requirements of the California Building Code (CBC). Compliance with the CBC would reduce risks on the project site from seismic ground shaking to levels considered acceptable for the state and region. Therefore, impacts related to groundshaking would be less than significant.
- b) Less than Significant.** The project site is relatively flat without substantial slopes, and has been previously modified and disturbed for the construction of existing development and farming practices. The proposed project could result in temporary soil erosion and loss of top soil due to temporary construction activity. For this reason, impacts are considered less than significant.
- c) Less than Significant.** Soils on the project site are typically categorized as sandy, with few building limitations. While the proposed project would not likely be exposed to the effects of liquefaction, building standards imposed by Merced County and compliance with the CBC requirements would further reduce this potential impact. Also, the project area is not noted for unstable geologic formations susceptible to ground failure, and the site is generally level. Given the existing topography and soil structure, and required compliance with seismic safety requirements according to the CBC, building failure or damage due to liquefaction or unstable geological features at this location are considered unlikely. Therefore, impacts from geologic hazards such as ground failure and liquefaction would be less than significant, and no mitigation would be necessary.
- d) Less than Significant.** According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey (USDA NRCS, 2017), the project site contains a mix of soils including 45.1 percent Hilmar sand (HoA), 33.5 percent Hilmar loamy sand (HgA), 18.5 percent Atwater loamy sand (AfA), 2.4 percent Hilmar sand, slightly saline-alkali (HpA), and 0.6 percent Hilmar loamy sand (HfA). These soil types are relatively poorly drained with a fluctuating water table that rises within a foot or so of the surface during the rainy season and during periods of heavy irrigation. Additionally, the shrink-swell potential of this soil is low (USDA NRCS, 2017).
- Expansive soils shrink/swell when subjected to moisture fluctuations, which could cause heaving and cracking of slabs-on-grade, pavements, and structures founded on shallow foundations. The soil types present at the project site have low potential for expansion; therefore, impacts could be considered less than significant.
- e) Less than Significant.** The statewide Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) policy provides the framework for determining appropriate soil conditions in which to operate an OWTS. The Division of Environmental Health regulates OWTSs for compliance with the County's standards for installation and operation of OWTS, based on the State framework. The applicant will be required to submit a soil evaluation, make adjustments based on the project site's soil types, and comply with the County's OTWS policies (Cronk, B., personal communication, February 7, 2019). In turn, impacts would be less than significant.
- f) Less than Significant.** The project site is improved with a single-family home, barn, and fallow land. No recorded paleontological resources and no unique geologic features are located on the property, and given the previously disturbed nature of the site from prior construction and farming operations, a less than significant impact is expected.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19, 21
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

a-b) Less Than Significant Impact. The proposed project will generate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions during both construction and operation. In 2009, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) adopted *the Guidance for Valley Land-Use Agencies in Addressing GHG Emissions Impacts for New Projects under CEQA* to assist Lead Agencies in assessing and reducing impacts of project specific. The guidance relies on performance based standards, known as Best Performance Standards (BPS), to assess significance of project specific GHG emission. As such, project implementing BPS would be determined to have a less than significant individual and cumulative impact. Projects exempt from CEQA or complying with an approved GHG emissions reduction plan or mitigation program are also determined to have a less than significant impact. At present, Merced County is developing a Climate Action Plan and has yet to adopt any other GHG emissions reduction plan or mitigation programs. Since the project is not consistent with an adopted reduction plan or mitigation program, is not exempt from CEQA, and does not implement BPS, the project would require quantification of project specific GHG emissions.

In the event that a local district’s guidance for addressing GHG impacts does not use numerical GHG emissions thresholds, the Lead Agency may use a neighboring air district’s GHG thresholds to determine impacts. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) uses a threshold of 1,100 metric tons of CO2 per year for the operational-related GHG emissions for land use development projects, and 10,000 metric tons of CO2 per year for stationary-source projects. If annual emission of operational GHGs exceed these levels, the project would result in a considerable cumulative contribution of GHG emissions and a cumulative significant impact.

Construction Related Emissions

The project proposes to construct an 8,250 square foot main hospital and a 6,500 insemination building for a total built-out of 14,750 square feet. In 2018, the County assessed the GHG emissions of a 13,400 square foot, one-story medical office and clinic and estimated 67.50 metric tons of CO2 per year would be generated from construction emissions (Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment for Castle Family Health Center, also identified as Plot Plan Review No. PPR17-042). Based on these estimates, the proposed 14,750 square foot animal hospital project would generate an estimated 74.30 metric tons of CO2 per year.

Operational Related Emissions

The Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment for the 13,400 square foot health clinic referenced above also estimated that operational GHG emissions would be 650.78 metric tons per year. Respectively, the operational emissions produced by the proposed animal hospital facility could be estimated to be approximately 716.34 metric tons of CO2 per year. This estimate is conservative approximation and may be higher than actual operational GHG emissions, because the clinic used as a case study estimated a higher ADT and anticipated greater activity and traffic due its location within the unincorporated community of Winton and on-site peak activity (approximately 60 persons, including both staff and clientele, during peak activity). Comparatively, the proposed animal hospital facility estimated an average of 10 persons on-site during peak hours and will serve a more regional rural community.

When the proposed project's construction related and operational related emissions are combined, the proposed project's GHG emissions (approximately 790.64 metric tons of CO2 per year) are less than BAAQMD's threshold of 1,100 metric tons of CO2 per year. As such, impacts are considered less than significant.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,18
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,18
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,18
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,2,10
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,4

a-b) Less than Significant. Hazardous waste will be generated from the proposed project during both construction and operation. Construction activities would involve the use, storage, and transport, and disposal of oil, gasoline, diesel fuel, paints, solvents, and other hazardous materials. Construction activity must be in compliance with the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. Compliance with these requirements would reduce the hazards related to routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials to a less than significant level. The Merced County Division of Environmental Health manages hazardous waste and medical waste, and the project will require the facility file as a “Small Quantity Medical Waste Generator” and submit both a Medical Waste Management Plan and a Hazardous Materials Business Plan (Cronk, B., personal communication, February 7, 2019). As such, the risk of hazards to the public or the environmental conditions related to accident conditions would be reduced to less than a significant level.

c) No Impact. There are no schools located within 0.25 miles of the project site. The closest school is Stanislaus Academy located 0.4 miles northwest of the project site. As a result, no impacts would occur.

- d) **No Impact.** The project site is not included in the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese List). Additionally, the Hazardous Waste and Substance Statement on file is not included on a list of hazardous materials site pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Therefore, no impacts would occur.
- e) **No Impact.** The project site is not located within an airport land use plan nor is it located nearby a public airport. The project site is located approximately 11 miles west of Turlock Municipal Airport and approximately 19 miles west of Castle Airport. Therefore, no impacts would occur.
- f) **Less than Significant.** The project site current has access from Youngstown Road to the existing single-family home. The project proposes to construct a new access way from Youngstown Road to serve the proposed large animal hospital. The access will be designed as an agricultural rural driveway approach with asphalt paving pursuant to the Department of Public Work's Improvement Standards and Specifications and subject to approval. The project would not add significant amounts of traffic that would interfere with an emergency response or evacuation. Therefore, the project would result in less than significant impact.
- g) **Less than Significant.** According to the General Plan, the project site is not located near any wildland and is within a Local Response Area (LRA) serviced by Merced County Fire Department. Based on fuel rank, fire rotation, and fire prevention measures, there is little to no threat of wildfire or fire hazard. Because the project would not expose people or structures to significant risks associated with wildland fire, impacts are considered less than significant.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3,14
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,17
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,17
i) result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,17
ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,17
iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,17
iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,17
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,17,24
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

a-c) **Less than Significant.** The proposed project will not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. The proposed project will increase the area of impervious surfaces and in turn, increase storm water run-off. The project proposes to utilize approximately 3.56 acres to the east of the facility as both open space/pasture and a storm water retention basin. Storm water collected from impermeable surfaces would be directed to the storm water retention basin, percolate into the ground, and inhibit any erosion or siltation from occurring on-off site. The Department of Public Works regulates storm water retention basin and requires the project complies with Merced County's MS4 Storm Water Permit (Order No. 2013-001-DWQ) and requirements set forth in the Storm Drainage Design Manual. The Department of Public Work has reviewed the project and determined the proposed storm water retention basin has sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed facility (Hespenheide, M., personal communication, March

19, 2019). As such, the proposed project will not substantially degrade surface or ground water quality; deplete ground water supplies; or impede flood flows, and impacts would be considered less than significant.

- d) **Less than Significant.** The project site is located within the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Zone X, an area that is determined to be outside the 100- and 500-year flood plains. Therefore, there would be no impact related to the 100-year flood hazard areas. In the event of flooding due to associated dam failure, all urban areas within the County would be inundated, including the project site. There is very low probability of such occurrence as analyzed by the 2030 Merced County Background Report. Dams are evaluated regularly to verify their structural integrity, including additional stresses that may result from local or regional earthquakes. Additionally, the Merced County Office of Emergency Services (OES), responsible for executing response measures and identifying evacuation routes, receives updated dam inundation information. Therefore, impacts would be considered less than significant.
- e) **Less than Significant.** Merced County is currently not under any sustainable groundwater management plan. Given the size of the project and storm water retention basin capacity, the proposed project will not impede groundwater supplies and recharge and is not expected to conflict or obstruct the implementation of any future water quality control or groundwater management plan. As such, impacts are considered less than significant.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,2,18
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,2,18

- a) **No Impact.** The project vicinity consists of agricultural uses, rural residences, and related infrastructure. There are no established communities within the project area; therefore, the proposed project will not divide any established communities and no impact would occur.
- b) **No Impact.** The proposed project would not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The proposed project is designated Agricultural land use in the General Plan and zoned A-1 (General Agricultural) in the zoning code. The proposed large animal hospital use is considered an agricultural support use and is consistent with the zoning code and the General Plan. As a result, no impact would occur.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2,7
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2,7

- a-b) **No Impact.** Sand and gravel are the most valuable mineral resource in Merced County. The project site is not located within any sand and gravel resource identified in the General Plan (Open Space and Conservation Element) or the State Mineral Resources Map. Further, no mineral extraction activities exist on the project site and mineral extraction is not included in project designs. As a result, no impacts would occur.

XIII. NOISE

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,18
b) Generation of excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,18
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,2,18

a-c) Less than Significant. The proposed project involves the construction of an 8,250 square foot main animal hospital building, 2,800 square foot free stall barn, and a 6,500 insemination building. The project site is not located near or within the vicinity of a private airstrip or airport land use plan. Construction is not expected to generate ground-borne vibration, but will be expected to temporarily increase noise levels during the construction period. The County limits construction activities to weekdays, between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., and requires all construction equipment to properly muffled and maintained (MCZC Section 18.41.070). These hours are so defined because they include a period of time where noise sensitivity is at its lowest. Compliance with the County's noise standards will result in less than significant impacts.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,2
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,2

a-b) Less than Significant. The proposed project does not include any new residential development. The existing single-family home will remain in residential use and be repurposed as employee housing for 1-2 student interns. New construction is limited to the proposed animal hospital facility which will not result in population growth. Therefore, the proposed project will not induce substantial population growth or displace existing people or housing, and impacts are considered less than significant.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:					
Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,2
Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,2
Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,2
Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,2
Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,2

- a) **Less than Significant.** The proposed project involves the construction of a large animal hospital facility including a main hospital building, a free stall barn, and an insemination building. Since no new residences would be constructed and employees would be drawn from the local labor pool, no substantial increase in population is expected to result from the proposed project. No feature of the project would result in the need for new or altered facilities for police protection, schools, parks, libraries, or health services. Additionally, the County has adopted Development Impact Fees that require new developments, including the proposed project, to pay its fair share of facilities fees and fund for capital improvements, maintenance, and on-going operations of publicly-owned and/or operated facilities. Since the project will not increase demand for public services; require the construction or modification of new and existing facilities; and, will be required to pay its fair share of Development Impact Fees, impacts are expected to be less than significant.

XVI. RECREATION

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,2
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,2

a-b) No Impact. There are no existing public recreational resources located on the site or within the vicinity. The project will not involve a substantial increase in population, and consequently demand for construction, the need modification, and the acceleration of physical deterioration of public recreational facilities will not expected to increase. As a result, no impact would occur.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,15
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	18
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,18

a-d) Less than Significant Impact. The project proposes normal operations from Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a maximum of five employees: a lab technician and receptionist will remain on-site and four field operatives will be off-site. Normal operations include visits from clients to the facility and field services off-site. Emergency operations are proposed to be 24/7 with a maximum of two employees to be on-call. One to two student interns will be residing at the existing single-family on-site.

The project is estimated to generate approximately 15 trips per day, including trips generated from clients, employees, and field visits. The existing single-family home can be accessed from an existing driveway on Youngstown Road and a new driveway entrance is being proposed on Youngtown Road to provide access to the new large animal hospital. The minor increase in traffic is not expected to significantly impact traffic or transportation. Additionally, the proposed project; does not conflict with any circulation plans, policies, programs, or policies; and, will not result in result in inadequate emergency access. The Department of Public Works has reviewed and determined the traffic associated with the proposed project would not be sufficient to result in significant impact and requires the new driveway entrance to be designed and paved to County Agricultural Driveway Approach standards (Hespenheide, M., personal communication, March 19, 2019). Given this information, the impacts are expected to be less than significant.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:					
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,13
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,13

a) Less than Significant. The project site has been modified and disturbed by previous construction and farming operations, and no known tribal, cultural, historical, or archeological resources have been located on-site. The project site does not appear to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources or in a local register, nor does it appear to be a resources to a California Native American tribe. An early referral has been mailed to the Native American Heritage Commission and no comments have been received. In the likelihood that human remains or unrecorded resources could be exposed during construction activities, Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code will be implemented. Section 7050.5 requires that all construction and excavation be stopped until the County Coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner must contact the California Native American Heritage Commission. With compliance with these standard procedures, the project impacts are expected to be less than significant.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Reference
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,16,17
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
c) Result in a determination by the waste water treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,16
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,16
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,16

a-e) Less than Significant. The project site will be served by an existing domestic well, proposed septic system, and existing on-site drainage. Approximately 3.56 acres of open space will be maintained and utilized as a storm water detention basin. The Department of Public Works has reviewed the project and determined the detention basin is adequate to serve as on-site drainage (Hespenheide, M., personal communication, March 19, 2019). The Division of Environmental Health regulates wells, on-site septic systems, and hazardous waste, and requires a Hazardous Materials Business Plan to be filed. Compliance with the On-site Waste Water Treatment System (OWTS) standards, Well Ordinances, and Hazardous Waste Materials policies will ensure impacts are considered less than significant.

XX. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2,4
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2,4
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2,4
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2,4

a-d) Less than Significant. As described in the Hazards and Hazardous Materials section, the project site is not located near any wildland and is within a Local Response Area (LRA) serviced by Merced County Fire Department. Based on fuel rank, fire rotation, and fire prevention measures, there is little to no threat of wildfire or fire hazard. As a result, impacts would not occur.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact	Ref
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,8,9
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,2,3
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,2,3

a-c) Less than Significant. Review of the project did not identify any features which might have potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, have impacts that are cumulative considerable, or have environmental effect which will cause substantial adverse direct or indirect effects on humans. Additionally, no project features have been identified which might significant impact the environmental quality of the site and vicinity.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21083.05, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 65088.4, Gov. Code; Sections 21080(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21083, 21083.05, 21083.3, 21093, 21094, 21095, and 21151, Public Resources Code; Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino,(1988) 202 Cal.App.3d 296; Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors, (1990) 222 Cal.App.3d 1337; Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357; Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109; San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656.

Revised

2016

Authority: Public Resources Code sections 21083 and 21083.09 Reference: Public Resources Code sections 21073, 21074, 21080.3.1, 21080.3.2, 21082.3/ 21084.2 and 21084.3

Appendix A: References

1. 2030 Merced County General Plan
2. 2030 Merced County General Plan Background Report
3. 2030 Merced County General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
4. Cal Fire – California Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map
5. California Building Code
6. California Department of Conservation – California Earthquake Hazards Zone Application (EQ Zapp)
7. California Department of Conservation – Mines and Mineral Resources Map
8. California Department of Fish and Wildlife – Threatened and Endangered Species Listing
9. California Department of Fish and Wildlife – California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB)
10. California Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) – List of Hazardous Waste and Substances Site
11. California Department of Transportation – California Scenic Highway Mapping System
12. California Division of Land Resource Protection – Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP)
13. California Health and Safety Code
14. California State Water Resources Control Board – Storm Water Program
15. Merced County Association of Governments – 2018 Regional Plan
16. Merced County - Regulation of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems Ordinance (Title 9, Chapter 9.54)
17. Merced County – Regulation of Stormwater (Title 9, Chapter 9.53)
18. Merced County - Zoning Ordinance (Title 18)
19. Plot Plan Review No. PPR17-042 Exhibit E (Appendix N: Infill Environmental Checklist Form and Attachments)
20. San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District – Guidance for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts (GAMAQI)
21. San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District – Guidance for Valley Land-use Agencies in Addressing GHG Emission Impacts for New Projects Under CEQA
22. San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District – Small Project Analysis Level (SPAL)
23. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service – Web Soil Survey
24. U.S. Department of Homeland Security – FEMA Flood Map Center
25. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – Natural Wetlands Inventory, Wetlands Mapper