

Image: Agricultural fires in Ecuador Dec. 3, 2013

December 3 2013



Credit: Jeff Schmaltz, MODIS Rapid Response Team.

The fires (outlined in red) in this image of Ecuador taken by the Aqua satellite are most likely agricultural in nature.

The location, widespread nature, and number of fires suggest that these

fires were deliberately set to manage land. Farmers often use fire to return nutrients to the soil and to clear the ground of unwanted plants. While [fire](#) helps enhance crops and grasses for pasture, the fires also produce smoke that degrades air quality.

This natural-color satellite image was collected by the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) aboard the Aqua satellite on Dec. 02, 2013. Actively burning areas, detected by MODIS's thermal bands, are outlined in red.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

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