



Cultivating a Border China and Kazakhstan

While people often say borders are not visible from space, this line between eastern Kazakhstan and northwestern China could not be clearer. The border is made visible due to land-use policies.

With limited arable land and a large human population to feed, China farms just about any land that can be sustained for agriculture. In this Landsat 8 image from September 2013, fields are dark green in contrast to the surrounding dry landscape, a sign that the farms are irrigated.

While agriculture is important in the Kazakh economy, eastern Kazakhstan is a minor growing area for that country. A few rectangular shapes show that farming does occur. Much of the agriculture on the Kazakh side is rain-fed, so fields are tan like the surrounding, natural landscape.