



Dairy CARES Report

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Need to balance jobs and environment has never been more important than now

As the Community Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship wraps up its eighth year, it's worth remembering why CARES was formed.

Most of it is right there in the name. As the name implies, this “community alliance” was formed to demonstrate the importance dairy communities play across the state, acting as a hub of economic activity and a stable part of longstanding multi-generationally owned small businesses. Sure, dairies provide our state and indeed the nation with high-quality, nutritious food. However, dairy communities also create jobs for milkers, veterinarians, farm equipment retailers, truck drivers, cheese factory workers and many more. The dairy economy, and the payrolls that come along with it, also creates jobs in places one might not think to look, such as local schools, grocery stores, construction companies and more. All told, this adds up to \$61 billion in economic benefit across the state and 432,000 jobs.

The name also means, literally, that “Dairy CARES.” Finding a balance of economic productivity and environmental sustainability has always been a part of successful farming. Dairy families are in it for the long term and know that protecting air and water resources is just as important as protecting their financial bottom line. This is because dairy families live and work in the same communities; they know the importance of being good neighbors and protecting the shared resources that are passed down from one generation to the next. For most dairy operators, dairying isn't just business, it's the family business and it has been going on for generations.

There has never been more environmental regulation than exists in California today, and dairy families here are shouldering their share of it – arguably a larger share than elsewhere in the United States and the rest of the world. Like other businesses, dairies face regulations for protection of air and water quality, proper land use, and now even regulation of greenhouse gases is being contemplated. We must be careful and vigilant as newly adopted regulations are implemented, or others are considered: More and more dairies are looking to places other than California for a home, taking jobs and economic stimulus with them.

In the coming year, as they have always done, California dairy families will continue to work closely with partners in the scientific community, educators and government to create the most efficient, environmentally sustainable dairies anywhere, producing the best dairy products in the world at prices that our nation's families can afford.

But for now, as a year of economic uncertainty draws to a close, it makes sense for all Californians to be aware of the critically important role dairy families play for all of us, by creating long-term community-based jobs, nutritious and affordable foods that improve our

economic and national security, and going the extra mile to protect the environment. In troubled economic times, dairies provide a “community base” we all can count on. Let’s work together to protect to preserve this important part of our state’s economy.

CARES is a statewide coalition supporting economic and environmental sustainability for California’s dairy industry. CARES members include the Alliance of Western Milk Producers, Bank of the West, Bar 20 Dairy Farms, California Dairies Inc., California Dairy Campaign, California Farm Bureau Federation, Dairy Farmers of America-California, Dairy Institute of California, Hilmar Cheese Co., HP Hood, Joseph Gallo Farms, Land O’ Lakes, Milk Producers Council, Turlock Dairy & Refrigeration, Western United Dairymen, and others. For information about CARES, visit our web site at www.dairycares.com, write dairycares@aol.com or call 916-441-3318.