



Dairy CARES Report

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Dairy families progressing on water quality, but need to stay on top of next stages

Reports and paperwork – especially new requirements – can pose a real challenge for any family business, including dairy farms. The new Central Valley water regulations adopted in 2007 have placed a significant number of new reporting requirements on dairies. By all accounts most dairies are responding with a solid effort to get the job done. Many are doing it with the help of professional crop advisers and engineers, along with laboratories that have begun testing well water. So far, so good.

“Many dairy producers and dairy professionals are working hard to comply with the water quality regulations,” Pamela Creedon, Executive Officer of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, said this month. “Because of this, your industry is making good progress to protect water quality and I congratulate you on that.”

The water board reports that nearly all dairies have now submitted the latest “annual reports” that were due July 1. Those reports will of course be due again next year, and because the regulations are being “phased in,” additional information is due this December.

It’s no surprise that like other businesses with complicated record-keeping requirements, dairies are working with outside professionals with a “team approach” to get their environmental management job done. The team approach is nothing new: dairy families are used to working with veterinarians and nutritionists, feed and equipment suppliers, maintenance specialists and many others.

However, now is also a good time to remember that though tasks can be delegated, the responsibility for meeting all regulatory requirements still remains with the owner and operator. Because the regulations are new, many questions are arising as dairies work to meet the new requirements, and even professional consultants are “learning as they go.”

For all these reasons it’s critical the dairy owners and operators stay in the game. The team approach may be best for many dairies, but it is important to remember that the dairy operator’s role is leading that team (not following it). One great way for dairy producers to stay in the game is attending free California Dairy Quality Assurance Program workshops in your neighborhood.

Once again, CDQAP is offering a series of workshops for producers, at 10 locations throughout the Central Valley, between October 14 and November 19. Announcements of the workshops with times and locations will be mailed to dairy producers in the next few days.

Among other items, the workshops will focus on:

- Which reports are due this December and how to get them completed

- Importance of good sampling procedures
- How leaching impacts nutrient management
- What you can do now to make your next annual report go smoothly

The CDQAP, which was last year honored by Gov. Schwarzenegger for its outreach programs for dairy families, has also earned good marks from regulators for its work to keep dairy producer up to speed on the requirements.

“CDQAP workshops are a great source of information,” Regional Board Executive Officer Creedon said. “This has and continues to help hundreds of dairy producers and industry professionals comply with the requirements of the General Order for dairies.”

Announcements of the workshops with times and locations will be mailed to dairy producers in the next few days. Information about the workshops is also available by contacting your producer trade association, UC Cooperative Extension office or by calling 1-866-66CDQAP (1-866-662-3727).

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.