



Dairy Cares Newsletter, December 2019

Dairy farmers continue collaborative efforts to address community drinking water

The California dairy community has long been dedicated to improving groundwater protection, and this commitment will only grow in the new year. By participating in the Central Valley Salinity Coalition, and working closely with regional and state officials, dairy farmers have been part of an incredible 13-year stakeholder effort, which recently resulted in the adoption of a new long-term plan. Dairy farmers remain engaged as implementation begins, starting with the most important goal, ensuring safe drinking water for all.



In October, the State Water Resources Control Board approved the ambitious Central Valley-wide Salt and Nitrate Management Plan. The plan allows for water permit holders—including dairy farmers, other farmers, food processors, and other industries—to form nitrate management zones. Each zone will be required to develop plans for providing safe drinking water to residents in need, and ultimately, implement measures to reduce nitrate impacts to groundwater.

“Dairy Cares has been participating in a stakeholder process known as CV-SALTS for a number of years, with the goal of reforming the regulatory system to better address water quality challenges while providing drinking water to those who need and protecting the ability of agriculture, including dairies, to survive and thrive in the valley,” said J.P. Cativiela, Regulatory Affairs Director for Dairy Cares. “That effort recently achieved a significant milestone with the adoption of Salt and Nitrate Management Plan. The year 2020 will be very important as we lay the foundation for management zones. Dairy farmers must remain at the table as local management zones are formed and begin to adopt local drinking water solutions.”

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- Ray Prock Jr.
California dairy farmer

Dairy farmers and dairy industry representatives have already been participating in two pilot management zones, which have been exploring a number of unique avenues for delivering temporary safe drinking water supplies to local residents in need. The goal for each zone is to decide upon a solution, or set of solutions, and raise funds to cover the cost of implementing those solutions. Since early 2019, organizers in the pilot zones have been working on creating blueprints for other zones to follow.

“I think it's very important for us as dairy farmers to continue to participate in this effort. We care about our community. It's where we live and raise our own families, we want to make sure we're finding solutions that serve

everyone well into the future.” said Ray Prock Jr. a dairy farmer, who has been participating in the pilot taking place in the Turlock area. “It’s been a challenging task, but we need to be at the table, to be part of the solution, and ensure a fair and well-managed process to benefit our communities.”

Ray says he hopes the lessons they’ve learned in his area will be helpful to others. The progress made at pilot management zones will soon be replicated across the Central Valley. Water users in the four other Priority 1 areas will need to organize their own management zones and create a drinking water plan. Dairy farmers will continue to participate in local efforts, ensuring safe drinking water for all and working toward greater groundwater protection.

Dairy farmers are committed to being a part of the solution and ensuring safe drinking water.

Dairy Cares is a statewide coalition supporting economic and environmental sustainability and responsible animal care. Our members include Bar 20 Dairy Farms, California Cattlemen’s Association, California Dairies Inc., California Dairy Campaign, California Dairy Research Foundation, California Farm Bureau Federation, Dairy Farmers of America - Western Area, Dairy Institute of California, F & R Ag Services, GHD, Inc., Hilmar Cheese Co., Joseph Gallo Farms, Land O’Lakes, Merck Animal Health, Milk Producers Council, Ruan Transport Corp., Yosemite Farm Credit, Zenith Insurance Company, and others. For information, visit DairyCares.com or call 916-441-3318. To subscribe to the e-newsletter, contact news@dairycares.com.