Dairy Management Software Seminars

Sponsored by the California Dairy Herd Improvement Association and University of California Cooperative Extension
November 11 Stockton Inn, Stockton
November 12 Holiday Inn, Santa Nella
November 13 Holiday Inn, Visalia
November 15 El Prado Golf Course, Chino

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

In order that we may plan for lunch, please phone in your reservation to your local farm advisors office.

21st Century Dairying

October 1991

Agenda

Morning Session
✓ Introductions
✓ Overview of Software
✓ Panel Discussion with Dairymen

Lunch - Courtesy of Software Vendors

Afternoon Session
✓ One-on-One Consultations
✓ In-Depth Separate Sessions

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
COUNTY OF FRESNO
1720 S. Maple Avenue
Fresno, CA 93702

21st Century Dairying
A dairy newsletter for Fresno and Madera Counties

OCTOBER 1991

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1720 S. Maple Avenue
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328 Madera Avenue
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Ag Employers Seminar

Hospitality Building
Fresno County Fairgrounds
Fresno, California
Friday, November 15, 1991
7:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Topics
✓ Employment Development Department in Agriculture
✓ Sexual Harassment and Discrimination in Agriculture
✓ Panel-Written Injury and Illness Programs and Related Laws

A $3.00 pre-registration fee per person permits entrance to the seminar as well as the Ag Fresno Farm Show.

For more information, contact
Steve Sutter, Personnel Management Farm Advisor, at (209) 488-3285.

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Questions and Answers
The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board’s Dairy Regulatory Program

What is the California Regional Water Quality Control Board?
The Regional Board is a state agency that is responsible for protecting the quality of both surface and groundwaters. It enforces both federal and state water quality laws and regulations.

How does the Regional Board protect water quality?
The Regional Board protects water quality by controlling the discharge of waste to water bodies. For cities, industries and many other operations, this is done through the issuance of waste discharge permits. Therefore, the Board seeks implementation of management practices that reduce discharges to acceptable levels.

What level of water quality protection is required?
The Regional Board may require that water quality is protected for the beneficial uses of the water. For example, the Central Valley Regional Board has requirements to protect water quality at beneficial uses.

Water Quality

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What wastes does the Regional Board regulate at a dairy?

The Regional Board regulates the disposal of manure, urine, wash water, storm water that has come in contact with manure, runoff from silage piles, and bedding material. Application of manure and wastewater to cropland is also considered a discharge of waste. To protect surface and groundwater the Board regulates irrigation tailwater and as well as excess irrigation water that moves through the root zone.

What are the primary water quality impacts resulting from discharges of dairy wastes?

Dairy wastes are typically high in ammonia, bacteria, and organic matter. In surface waters the ammonia is highly toxic to aquatic organisms, decay of the organic matter reduces the oxygen content of the water, and the bacteria poses a threat to recreation and other uses.

Dairy waste is also high in salts, including nitrogen salts. When the salt moves to groundwater, it can make the aquifer unsuitable as a drinking water supply.

My dairy does not have waste discharge requirements. Why hasn’t the Central Valley Regional Board issued waste discharge requirements to all dairies?

The Central Valley Regional Board could issue waste discharge requirements to all dairies, but instead has adopted a program that waives such requirements for dairies that are operated in compliance with application regulations. All dairies operate under either waste discharge requirements or a waiver and must comply with the regulations.

What are Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs)?

When adopted by the Regional Board, waste discharge requirements spell out discharge prohibitions and limitations that a facility must comply with. The WDRs are designed to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and the Regional Water Quality Control Plan.

What is a Report of Waste Discharge?

A Report of Waste Discharge is submitted by a discharger to the Regional Board and is used by the board to evaluate the threat to water quality at an existing or proposed facility. The report consists of a standard form, information requested by the Regional Board, and a filing fee of $2,000. Note that the filing fee is collected to pay for the costs of reviewing the information and is not a penalty.

When does a dairy have to submit a Report of Waste Discharge?

A Report of Waste Discharge should be submitted at least 120 days prior to the start-up of a new dairy or a facility that has been out of operation (buy out dairies). A report should also be submitted when there are major changes in the waste management system (new pond construction) or significant increases in herd size. Having plans reviewed before construction will minimize costly changes.

Why has there been so much enforcement activity against dairies lately?

A lot of dairies are not operating in compliance with the regulations and the problem is getting too big to ignore. At the same time, there is more pressure than ever on the Regional Board to deal with the water quality impacts resulting from agricultural operations.

Why would an existing dairy have to submit a Report of Waste Discharge?

Some dairies operate in violation of the WDR waiver conditions and degrade water quality. The Regional Board attempts to work cooperatively with the dairy to correct the situation. At times, the dairyman fails to cooperate or there are repeated violations indicating that corrective measures have not worked. In these cases, a Report of Waste Discharge is requested and WDRs are prepared.

Why are other agencies taking enforcement action against dairies?

The discharge of dairy waste to surface waters is a violation of regulations administered by the Regional Board, Department of Fish and Game and other agencies. Any of these agencies can take enforcement action if they determine that the circumstances warrant.

How does a dairy avoid enforcement action?

Enforcement action can be avoided by taking the following steps:

1. Operate the dairy in compliance with the regulations. This requires an understanding of the regulations and a daily effort to ensure that your waste management system is operating correctly.
2. If you or a regulatory agency discovers a problem, fix it promptly and permanently. Do not put off the work or use a shovel full of dirt when a constructed berm is needed.
3. If a regulatory agency is involved, keep in touch with them and let them know how you have corrected the problem. Above all, respond to written requests for information.

What can a dairy do with its wastewater and manure?

The preferred disposal method is to use the wastewater as part of the irrigation supply and the manure as a fertilizer. Application rates cannot exceed the needs of the crops grown and runoff of waste to surface waters is not allowed. Alternative treatment or disposal methods may be proposed to the Regional Board.

Does a dairy have to have enough land to dispose of all the waste generated?

State regulations do not require that a dairy dispose of all of its waste on cropland at the dairy facility. Manure can be hauled for use elsewhere and arrangements can be made with neighbors to apply wastewater and/or manure to their land on a regular basis. The important point to remember is that no matter where the waste is used, the application rates must be reasonable and runoff controlled.

Where can a dairy get help in dealing with waste management issues?

Regional Board staff can provide help in understanding the regulations, but are prohibited by law from designing a waste management system. The University of California Cooperative Extension and U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service may also be able to provide help, but neither agency has staff to provide detailed assistance to all dairies. There are times when dairies are going to have to turn to engineers, agronomists, and other consultants for help on waste management issues.

What is a 25-year, 24-hour storm?

A 25-year, 24-hour storm is the largest storm expected to occur over a 24-hour period once every 25 years. Dairies are required to retain storm runoff from all storms that do not exceed 25-year, 24-hour storms if that runoff has come into contact with manure. A long series of smaller storms may produce a large amount of rain, as we saw in March 1991, but manured runoff from these storm events must be retained.