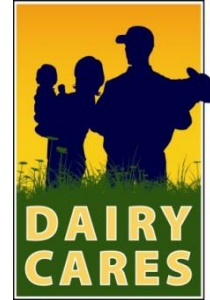


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## Dairy Cares Newsletter

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[DairyCares.com](http://DairyCares.com)

# Despite tough economic challenges, dairy families achieved milestones in 2012

There's no doubt that 2012 was a challenging year for dairy families. Record-high feed costs, the Midwest drought and low milk prices early in the year squeezed dairy families to the point where many had to close their barn doors. It's estimated that more than 100 dairies shuttered in California in 2012, and that's in addition to the more than 250 dairies that closed from 2009 to 2011.

Despite these economic troubles, dairy families still managed to make significant progress when it came to sustainability, reaching major milestones on a number of ongoing initiatives. Here's a look back at some of the highlights dairy families collectively achieved in 2012.

### **Pioneering efforts to protect, improve Central Valley water quality**

May 2012 marked the five-year anniversary of the adoption of the nation's most [comprehensive and stringent water quality protection regulations](#) for dairies in the Central Valley. Designed to protect both surface and groundwater sources from contamination, these measures have been and continue to be successfully implemented through the hard work of the dairy community. In doing so, California dairies now lead the nation in developing the art and science of utilizing natural fertilizer to grow crops, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and synthetic fertilizers. Much progress has been made and more is expected as dairy farmers continue to monitor the success of their efforts and refine practices further.

2012 also saw continued progress with the [Central Valley Dairy Representative Monitoring Program](#) (CVDRMP), a first-of-its-kind effort by Central Valley dairy farmers. The program's goal is to measure the positive results and benefits of improved management practices being adopted at dairies across the valley. Voluntary membership in the program topped 1,300 dairies in 2012, 99 percent of all dairies eligible for membership.

### **Dairy FARM marked second year with more than 1,000 dairies evaluated**

The California dairy community voluntarily announced participation in the [National Dairy FARM Program](#): *Farmers Assuring Responsible Management* in 2010. Two years later, more than 1,000 dairies (about 66 percent of the state's total) had been evaluated in this comprehensive animal well-being education and verification program. With many dairy farms evaluated, and more scheduled in 2013, Dairy Cares members are preparing for the next phase of FARM Program implementation – ongoing periodic re-evaluations, supported by continued education and training offered by the California Dairy Quality Assurance Program (CDQAP).

### **Happy New Year!**

As we begin 2013, there's no doubt California dairy families will build on the progress made related to sustainability this past year. And they surely will continue to do what they do best in 2013 – responsibly caring for their animals and the environment in their work to produce safe, affordable and nutritious milk for millions of consumers.

Here's wishing everyone a happy, healthy and safe New Year!

*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 Council, Dairy Institute of California, GHD, Inc., Hilmar Cheese Co., Joseph Gallo Farms, Land O'Lakes, Merck Animal Health, Milk Producers Council, Ruan Transport Corp., Western United Dairymen, Yosemite Farm Credit and others. For information, visit [DairyCares.com](http://DairyCares.com) or call 916-441-3318.*