



CDQAP Quality Assurance Update - November 2024

Water Quality Regulations to Change

By Deanne Meyer, Ph.D., Livestock Waste Management Specialist Dept. of Animal Science, UC Davis and UC ANR

After more than a decade of legal discussions and analyses, the State Water Resources Control Board issued its [remand draft Order](#) for the Central Valley Dairy General Waste Discharge Requirements on October 1, 2024. Public comments are due Dec 6, 2024. Included in the document are two eye catching phrases: “monumental shift in policy” and “fundamental operational changes.” The document provides insight into the State Water Resources thought processes.



Who is impacted? Although most of the information and instructions are directed at the Central Valley Regional Board (whom will modify its Dairy Order), “specific components of the regulatory framework” are made precedential, meaning other Regional Boards will need to modify their Dairy Orders to include new directives.

What will change? The draft document focuses on nitrogen management to reduce the adverse impact of nitrate to underlying groundwater. The framework establishes key concepts in land application of manure, waste retention ponds, and provisions for providing alternative water supplies. The attention to nitrogen management will lead to additional reporting requirements likely statewide. As drafted, those who participate in nitrate management zones will comply with the alternative water supply component through their management zone’s plan and others who impact groundwater will need to find a pathway to compliance on alternative water supply.

What comes next? The public review and comment process has begun. The State Water Resources Control Board hosted a workshop October 30 to review the remand. Numerous dairy industry groups, consultants, and University of California Cooperative Extension Advisors and Specialists are working on technical comments. The Environmental Justice groups are expected to comment as well. The State Water Resources Control Board staff will review comments and modify the document where appropriate. A modified document will again be made available to the public for additional comment. This iterative version will be reviewed again or go before the Board for adoption. Once adopted by the State, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board will roll up their sleeves and work on modifications of the Dairy General Order. This process will take time and

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Golden State Dairy Conference

Register to Attend November 18 in Modesto

The University of California Cooperative Extension is pleased to present the third Golden State Dairy Management Conference, to be held **November 18, 2024, in Modesto**. The program will feature information that California producers can use. This will include concurrent scientific sessions, research updates on crop production, animal health, manure management, and current hot topics. Corey Geiger, the Lead Dairy Economist with CoBank, will be our keynote speaker with a presentation on dairy’s bright future. [Register by November 15 for the early bird rate.](#)



Winter Rains Are Coming

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The trucks are hauling solids and slurry to fields. Be sure to sample manures as they are applied, and record how much went onto each field. These results are essential to calculate nitrogen application to each field and to prevent Notices of Violation, either during an inspection or when your Annual Report is reviewed.

Look around the production area to be sure all the winterization is finished. As facilities are winterized it’s time to carefully review each area of the dairy:

- Gutters cleaned with downspouts repaired, installed, or flexible hose put in place
- Receiving area for roof runoff ready
- Corrals scraped and manure hauled off-site or to fields
- Manured areas cleaned to minimize rain infiltration into manure or soil where manure was stored
- Stockpiled manure outside of corrals covered to prevent rain contact
- Bedding stored outside of corrals covered to prevent rain contact
- Corrals groomed and low spots filled to prevent ponding and enhance drainage
- Feed center reviewed for rainy day protocols

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require public review. When the Central Valley Dairy Order is adopted, then the other Regional Water Quality Control Boards will begin their process.

What can you do? It is likely that the precedential components of the remand will impact your facility. Paying attention to manure nitrogen in ponds and piles will help you in the long run. If there are meetings near you to discuss the remand, be sure to attend and provide constructive input.

What will industry leaders do? The dairy industry and University of California Cooperative Extension have invested time and effort in developing tools to assist producers in identifying and understanding surplus nitrogen in solid and liquid manures. You'll want to work with your nutrient management consultant when this is available. The sooner you understand where your manure nitrogen balance stands with respect to surplus, the sooner you can begin to identify your options. In facilities that have no surplus, it's important to document manure is applied appropriately to land, based on crop needs.

Keep alert for information in the coming months and years to see how this impacts management at your facility.

Winter Rains Are Coming - continued

Manage solids (dried manure and/or bedding, from calves or special needs animals). Remove or relocate solids that can cause puddling of rain. Now is the window of opportunity to spread manure.

Inspect corrals today. Take 17 minutes to drive around the dairy. Pay special attention to fencing and posts, fence line manure, stanchions/locking gates (if present), areas where manure is collected, watering troughs, upslope areas where rainwater may runoff and go through corrals, pipes and pipelines where lot runoff is collected to be sure it's open and not plugged by other materials, and grade, slope, and fill low spots in open lots.

Review your facility's Operation and Maintenance Plan. It contains your list of things to remember to do before winter arrives. Remember that all manure leaving the production facility needs to be either manifested off farm, or records associated with what and how much goes to each field need to be maintained. Consult Tab 6 of your Water Quality Regulatory Binder for [North Coast](#), [San Francisco Bay](#) or [Central Valley](#) Regions, should you need record keeping templates.



Happy Thanksgiving!

In this season of thankfulness, our heartfelt gratitude goes out to the many, many people that have been working countless additional hours to assist our industry and farms in the fight against Bird Flu. These include CDFA staff, industry field staff, and herd veterinarians who are in the trenches, dairymen who are sharing their experiences to help fellow producers, and of course farm workers who work tirelessly to care for our animals. To all of them and many others too numerous to mention, we say **THANK YOU!**

