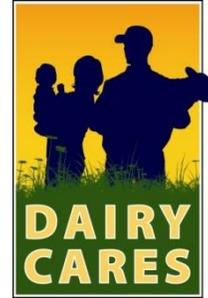


Funding provided by:



Dairy Cares Newsletter

January 2011

DairyCares.com

Following successful membership drive, monitoring coalition still welcomes applicants

Thanks to an unprecedented outreach and communications effort by California dairy organizations, a two-month membership drive for the Central Valley Dairy Representative Monitoring Program (CVDRMP) was a huge success.

A nonprofit organization formed in May 2010, CVDRMP is governed by a 12-member board of Central Valley dairy owner-operators. Its sole purpose is to conduct scientifically guided groundwater monitoring on behalf of its members to meet State of California regulatory requirements.

Beginning in late October 2010 and ending in late December, CVDRMP opened enrollment to all Central Valley dairy owners and operators, inviting applications at the introductory sign-up fee (\$500 to join plus \$81 month). While this is a significant investment, it is far less than the tens of thousands of dollars it costs to install and test wells on most dairies. Membership in the coalition is intended to serve as an alternative to a regulatory requirement – adopted in 2007 – that each Central Valley dairy install its own monitoring wells to sample and test firstencountered groundwater.

Understanding the value of a cost-saving, strategic approach to monitoring, more than 880 dairies joined the coalition. This provides a solid foundation for the program's launch, and with

this very important milestone reached, there are only a few remaining steps before the program can reach final approval.

Next steps. With the successful conclusion of the initial membership drive, CVDRMP is proceeding with the next step – developing work plans for well installations. All told, CVDRMP proposes to monitor between 50 and 100 of the valley’s 1,400 dairies, with monitoring sites in at least nine counties. Monitoring is to be planned and conducted under the scientific guidance of licensed hydrogeologists, who will select dairies from among the CVDRMP membership for monitoring. The goal is to monitor dairies representing the range of different conditions under which Central Valley dairies operate, including varying soil types, management practices and other important factors.

CVDRMP expects to complete its first work plan – covering a subset of member dairies in Merced and Stanislaus counties – within a few weeks. The plan must be circulated for public comment and Regional Board approval prior to the commencement of monitoring. An additional work plan encompassing the remainder of the dairies to be monitored (in seven other valley counties) will be completed within one year.

Dairies that did not join CVDRMP remain subject to monitoring requirements. Dairies that have not chosen (and do not later choose) to join CVDRMP will be required to conduct individual groundwater monitoring. Each dairy not joining CVDRMP will eventually receive a letter from the Regional Board ordering the dairy to submit a well installation plan prepared by a licensed engineer or geologist. It is important to understand that dairies choosing independent monitoring are responsible for all the costs of preparing well installation plans, installing the wells, sampling and analysis and preparation of technical reports (for CVDRMP members, all

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costs related to groundwater monitoring are covered by their membership fees, but the dairy remains responsible for other regulatory costs, such as nutrient management, supply well sampling, etc.).

In late January, the Regional Board issued well installation orders to about 50 dairies. The letters allow dairies to choose between installing wells or joining an approved coalition (CVDRMP is currently the only coalition that has formally proposed to monitor for purposes of meeting the dairy regulatory requirement). Those dairies wishing to do so can still apply to join the CVDRMP – forms are available at www.dairycares.com.

Dairy Cares coalition members, including trade associations and creameries, should be applauded for their hard work and impressive communication efforts to get the word out to dairy producers about this important opportunity. CVDRMP provides another example of how today's California dairy families can and do work together. Guided by science, they are demonstrating that we can preserve and protect the environment we all share in an efficient, cost-effective manner.

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