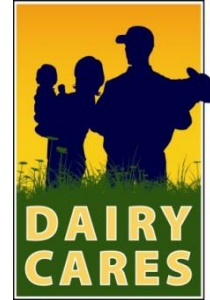


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Dairy Cares Newsletter

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DairyCares.com

Last chance to sign up for monitoring coalition prior to sharp increase in membership fees

As most dairy operators already know, water quality regulations adopted in May 2007 require all Central Valley dairies to install monitoring wells to demonstrate that management practices designed to protect groundwater are working properly. These regulations also require that samples from the wells are regularly tested at a certified laboratory to determine water quality.

While this regulation was intended to protect our water resources – a goal dairy and all farming families strongly support – it comes with significant costs. To ease this burden while still meeting the requirements of regulations, dairy farmers organized and launched a not-for-profit coalition known as the Central Valley Dairy Representative Monitoring Program (CVDRMP).

Founded on the principle of meeting the regulatory requirements in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible, in October 2010 CVDRMP invited all Central Valley dairies to sign up for the group monitoring effort and opened a two-month signup period. To incentivize early sign-ups and ensure a critical membership mass, CVDRMP offered a special introductory application fee of \$500 followed by monthly fees not to exceed \$81 per month.

The coalition membership drive was widely publicized at the time by all dairy organizations doing business in the Central Valley. The unprecedented outreach effort included:

- Direct mail to all dairy producers in the Central Valley;
- Articles published in major dairy trade publications, association newsletters, websites and other important communications channels;
- Individual outreach (visits and phone calls) by field staff of trade associations such as Western United Dairymen, Milk Producers Council and California Dairy Campaign;

- Outreach to professional dairy consultants to educate them about the program benefits and sign-up procedures;
- Special presentations at dairy cooperative annual meetings; and
- Dozens of free workshops held at locations from Orland to Bakersfield

The initial outreach effort was a tremendous success, with more than 900 dairies signing up to become members of the CVDRMP before the December 2010 introductory fee deadline (the introductory fee deadline was later extended until January 2011 to accommodate as much as possible dairy families who missed the initial deadline due to holiday travel and other issues).

After January 2011, the CVDRMP Board of Directors (all dairy farmers serving voluntarily and without compensation) decided to temporarily keep membership open to dairies that wished to join, but raised initial application fees from \$500 to \$1,500 and adopted a policy that any further late entries would need to pay monthly membership fees retroactively. As of the end of April 2012, more than 1,220 Central Valley dairies have joined CVDRMP.

Why do late joiners to CVDRMP pay more?

A group monitoring effort relies on critical mass to be successful – more members mean lower costs overall for each member. Members not only pay fees, but also volunteer their dairies as CVDRMP monitoring sites. Although not every dairy is selected to be monitored, it is understood upon joining that all members agree to be monitored if selected by CVDRMP.

CVDRMP has already selected some dairies for monitoring, and monitoring wells have already been installed on some dairies. Late entrants to the program were not available to participate in the program and thus have not been subject to selection for participation in monitoring; as such, they have not participated in the program at the same level as those who joined the program in a timely fashion. Instead of closing the program to new members, leaving those new members no other option besides installing wells at their own cost, CVDRMP has instead chosen to allow late entry but with a higher application fee than initially offered to offset the lower level of participation. The current application fee is \$1,500 (plus back monthly fees to the beginning of the program in July 2011).

As of July 1, the fee will go up sharply!

By now, all dairies currently operating in the Central Valley have received mailings from both the CVDRMP and state water quality authorities reminding them of the regulatory requirements. All dairies have been notified to either join a monitoring coalition or install their own wells. The deadline to join a coalition – set by the state water quality authorities – is early May.

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 Dairywomen, Yosemite Farm Credit and others. For information, visit DairyCares.com or call 916-441-3318.

Meanwhile, CVDRMP is in the process of selecting additional dairies in Glenn, Tehama, San Joaquin, Kern, Tulare, Fresno and Madera counties for monitoring. Dairies that have not joined the coalition by early May will not be able to participate in the selection process and will face substantial economic penalties.

For the reasons stated above, the application fees for CVDRMP membership will become \$6,500 as of July 1. While it appears nearly all Central Valley dairies have joined the CVDRMP at this time, **any Central Valley dairy that has not joined CVDRMP and wants to should act immediately to avoid having to pay this substantial increase.**

Anyone interested in signing up for the program or learning more can do so by visiting www.dairycares.com/CVDRMP or calling (916) 441-3318.

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