
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

20 March 2020

To: Dairy Owners and Operators

EMERGENCY DISPOSAL OF WASTE MILK

In response to Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), dairy producers are developing contingency plans for possible scenarios that include a need to dispose of milk in the event it cannot be sent to a processor in a timely manner.

Unused milk is a waste that can affect the quality of waters of the State. It can also create serious nuisance conditions in the form of vectors and odors. The Dairy General Order (R5-2013-0128) applies to the discharge of manure and wastewater at dairies, but it does not apply to disposal of milk.

Under normal circumstances, California Water Code section 13260 requires any person discharging waste that could affect the quality of waters of the State to file a Report of Waste Discharge. The administrative process in the Water Code provides for public noticing and formal approval by the Central Valley Water Board through issuance of Waste Discharge Requirements. The emergency nature of this situation does not afford the time to properly review a proposal and present it to the Board for its consideration.

The Central Valley Water Board therefore requests that dairies take steps that will virtually eliminate the possibility of impacts to water quality or the development of nuisance problems. The preferred option is some beneficial use of the milk, such as a feed supplement. Because the risk of nuisance from odors or vectors (such as flies or mosquitos) is so high, only as a last option should the waste milk be impounded. If disposal is necessary, the best option is to directly use the waste milk to irrigate cropland. Central Valley Water Board staff believe that if the following actions are implemented, the short-term nature of directly using milk on farmed land should not adversely affect waters of the State:

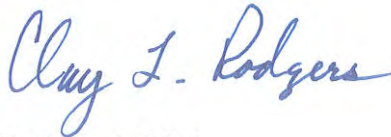
- Prevent waste milk from entering a surface water, either by direct discharge or through irrigation or storm water drainage systems
- When possible, dilute milk with fresh water when applying it to cropland
- Prevent ponding of waste milk, in the dairy production area or in fields

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- If temporarily discharged to a dairy's storage pond, waste milk must not cause the pond to exceed its holding capacity
- Within one week, notify the Central Valley Water Board of any discharge of waste milk, including the date(s), amount(s), and location(s) of the discharge (show the location on a map)
- The notification must include documentation that issues related to COVID-19 required this action to be taken

The Central Valley Water Board reserves the right to request a Report of Waste Discharge if future information suggests that the discharge has, or will, affect water quality of cause nuisance conditions. If the above guidance is not followed, or if pollution or nuisance conditions occur, enforcement action may be taken.

If you have any questions, please contact Doug Patteson at (559) 445-5577 or doug.patteson@waterboards.ca.gov.



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