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California Environmental Protection Agency

NEWS RELEASE

State Water Resources Control Board

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Gray Davis
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For Immediate Release
November 2, 1999
99-11

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State Water Board Approves Program to Assist Small Dairies with Waste Management

SACRAMENTO-- The State Water Resources Control Board has approved a resolution establishing a loan program to help small dairies in Glenn, Tehama, Colusa and Butte counties better protect water quality. The program will provide \$1 million from the State Revolving Fund to finance the Dairy Loan Project to Protect Water Quality. The funds are available to the State through the federal Clean Water Act.

There are approximately 150 dairies within the project area, many of which are small and family run. Most of these operations were established before the current guidelines were issued on Best Management Practices (BMP) for managing manure and wastewater. The program will provide funding for low interest loans to the small dairies to implement BMPs. The loans will be administered through financial institutions.

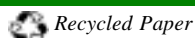
The loans to dairy operations will be for on-site structural improvements to protect water quality. Examples of projects that would be funded include: constructing or increasing the size of lagoons; lining lagoons; grading cow areas so they drain into lagoons; and installing irrigation equipment that will uniformly distribute lagoon water over crops.

Within the project area, dairy cows annually produce 600,000 tons of wet manure. Wastewater generation for the area is about 2,100 acre feet per year. Implementation of BMPs to protect water quality will substantially reduce nitrogen and nutrient contamination to both surface and ground waters in the Stony Creek fan and Colusa Basin Drain, which are tributaries to the Sacramento River. Groundwater supplies are especially at risk due to the porous nature of soils in the project area.

The SWRCB, in conjunction with the Glenn County Resource Conservation District, will use a linked deposit system for the loan approval and disbursement process. To be eligible for such a loan dairies must have plans that have been approved by the District.

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