

CHANGING CALIFORNIA'S GROUNDWATER POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES COULD INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROTECTING DRINKING WATER WHILE IMPROVING DAIRY FARM ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

JUNE 30, 2016
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DAIRY CARES (USA)

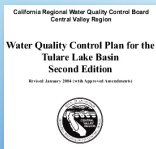
A SIMPLE QUESTION



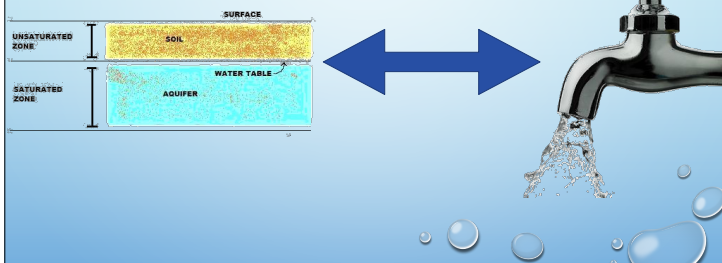
Is farming legal in California?

POLICY HISTORY

Legislature



POINT OF COMPLIANCE



IS COMPLIANCE HAPPENING? IS IT POSSIBLE?

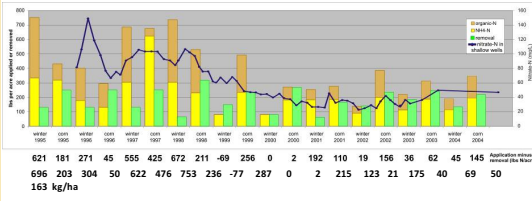


- Past and present look at dairies
- Future unknown
- Much of rest of CA agriculture unknown

DAIRY PRESENTS SPECIAL CHALLENGES



1998 – 2004 project used only manure nitrogen on fields with shallow monitoring wells
Three locations, each with multiple years of data



Successful in decreasing the nitrate concentration
Unsuccessful in maintaining production
Large proportion is organic nitrogen not available to crop
Large leaching losses of available N from root zone

IMPROVEMENT NOT EASY – BUT POSSIBLE



- Strict regulations
Millions invested
- Education/outreach
 - Compliance
 - Monitoring
 - Research

REGULATORY OPTIONS LIMITED

Option 1



REGULATORY OPTIONS LIMITED

Option 2



POTENTIAL POLICY OPTIONS BEING ACTIVELY CONSIDERED

Legislatively redefine compliance and liability for situations when nitrate water quality objectives are exceeded

State Water Board groundwater/anti-degradation policy

(Regional) Water Quality Control Plans revised to include options to permit agriculture, including livestock operations, and other dischargers when it is not reasonable or feasible to meet WQOs for nitrate and/or salt

NO “GET OUT OF JAIL FREE CARD”

Situation created together, must be addressed same way

Access to safe drinking water is paramount and immediate

Environmental justice communities must be part of the discussion

Commitment to reasonable progress by all dischargers essential



SCIENCE(S) AS OUR GUIDE



“One of the most important sciences to be involved in this is the social sciences.” Karen Ross, CDFA Secretary

PARTNERSHIPS NOT MANDATES



“Top down doesn’t work as well as partnering with landowners.”
Karen Ross, CDFA Secretary

LESS BUREAUCRACY, MORE ACTION

- Current approach mostly generates records
- We need: Informed recommendations and actions
- Government’s role: Incentives first
 - Training
 - Equipment
 - Technology
 - Research
- Verify
 - Grower engagement
 - Monitor improvement



IT’S A LONG ROAD



THANK YOU!

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