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Watershed Connection

*A publication for members of the El Dorado Subwatershed Coalition
 A member of the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition*

Presidents Message

By Dedrian Kobervig

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 Irrigated Pasture

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Dear El Dorado County Agricultural Water Quality Management Corp. Members,

Things have been relatively quiet at the coalition office so far this year. We just turned in our annual membership and our dropped members lists to the Northern California Water Association. Currently we have 213 members enrolled representing 2,989 acres.

The Northern California Water Association, which enforces the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program in the Sacramento and the Northern California region, has amended its order and removed the requirement for parcels within the Goose Lake watershed to obtain coverage under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Goose Lake is located in the northeast corner of the state. Goose Lake is primarily irrigated pasture with 7,060 acres and only 29 growers. This may be the first step in removing all irrigated pasture from the program.

We are in our first year of a three-year cycle where we are not required to test our surface waters. Planning for the future, we have been working with the Agriculture Department and our members to try and eliminate the use of Pyrethroids in the county. Pyrethroid is a relatively new testing requirement that adds thousands of dollars to our testing expenses. We are hoping that by demonstrating to the Regional Board that this particular group of pesticides is not applied by growers in the county, that they will exempt us from testing.

Pyrethroids are man made insecticides modeled after Pyrethrum, that is naturally occurring. Pyrethrum is a naturally occurring mixture of chemicals found in certain chrysanthemum flowers. Pyrethrum was first recognized as having insecticidal properties around 1800 in Asia and was used to kill ticks and various insects such as fleas and mosquitos. The first synthetic pyrethroid, allethrin, was invented by the United States Department of Agriculture in 1949 and hundreds of modifications have been made by various companies since. The problem with the man-made pyrethroid is that it does not break down quickly like its predecessor Pyrethrum. Pyrethroids bond to the soil and can remain in the environment for years. It is toxic to aquatic organisms.

Lastly, I'll leave you with a reminder to continue to keep track of your outreach education. Newsletters, agriculture meetings, agriculture articles all satisfy the outreach requirement by the regional board.

Dee Kobervig, President

Ag. Water Quality Member Update

Treasurer's Report

Balance Sheet		Balance Sheet	
Ending June 30, 2021		Ending June 30, 2022	
Income:		Income:	
Membership Dues	\$29,474.91	Membership Dues	\$27,877.10
Checkbook balance	\$2,068.78	Checkbook balance	\$4,697.67
Savings balance	\$60,533.39	Savings balance	\$66,587.42
Total:	\$62,602.17	Total:	\$71,285.09
Expenses:		Expenses:	
	\$43,320.28		*\$9,571.48
Net Income:	\$-13,874.10	Net Income:	\$17,911.13

* Total annual expenses decreased from last year because it was a non monitoring year.

Controlling Cost of Compliance

Agricultural Council of California Fund Request Letter

A broad coalition of agricultural organizations led by Western Growers and the Agricultural Council of California is working to secure a General Fund allocation go to water quality fees. Each year NCWA on behalf of the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition members has advocated for more reasonable allocation methodology related to the State Water Quality fee, including the request last year for \$10 million in General Fund dollars. With the State Water Quality fee expected to increase to \$1.35 an irrigated acre, plus Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan fees, and in some parts of the Central Valley fees for nitrate management plans, the burden has never been greater on agriculture. Couple that with the drought!

Every year millions of dollars are spent on the Irrigated Lands Program elements that benefit safe drinking water and aquatic life. This contribution also benefits disadvantaged communities. It is time this is recognized. We strongly encourage the State Budget to recognize the investment California farmers and ranchers make to protect water quality for all Californians and include a general fund allocation this year for the public benefits of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. From Bruce Houdesheldt, NCWA

Contact Bruce Houdesheldt, Director of Water Quality

Northern California Water Association

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Ag. Water Quality Member Update

Policy Consistency

On June 1, 2022, the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition met to determine that all Subwatersheds are applying Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program criteria consistently to ensure Coalition Members are receiving the same guidance and direction. Here are criteria that pertains to El Dorado County.

Minimum Acres

Outcome: There is no minimum and it is in the best interest of landowners to obtain coverage if they are both irrigated and commercial, even it is only 0.5 acres.

The WDR does not specify a minimum enrollment threshold acreage. Many Subwatersheds expressed frustration that 0.5 acre lands or less must participate in the program and pay fees while having very little threat to water quality. While this is may be something the Coalition chooses to begin discussions with the Regional Board about in the future, currently there is no minimum and it is in the best interest of landowners to obtain coverage if they are irrigated and commercial.

Transition Years Between Re-planting Orchards and Fallow Fields

Outcome: If a member is going to be immediately replanting a field within one year, the field should remain enrolled with the future crop type at the full acreage and pay fees. If the field will be fallowed for more than one year, then the crop type should be changed to fallow and the field should not be charged.

Each Subwatershed handles fallow fields more similarly than different and all shared that it can be difficult to ensure fallow fields get updated once it changes back to a crop. Yet, the key consideration is whether or not the field will be replanted and a crop in the ground within one year or not. If no crop will be replanted within one year, the field should be fallowed and should not be charged. However, if a crop will be in the ground within one year, the field should remain enrolled at the full acreage. This is because oftentimes preparations to the field are being performed which could impact water quality.

Indoor Agriculture: Nurseries and Greenhouses

Outcome: Nurseries currently must be enrolled regardless of it the plants are in containers or root-in-the-ground. The WDR does not require greenhouses to be enrolled.

Most Subwatersheds have already been requiring nurseries to be enrolled. However, many members and Subwatersheds are frustrated with this requirement, especially in regards to container nurseries. The Coalition would like to eventually work to get these operations exempted and encourages nursery operations to become involved to work towards this goal. Further, the Regional Board recognizes that the INMP Worksheet and SR are not good fits for nursery operations. At this time, they ask that they fill out only what the reasonably can.

Organic/Direct Marketing Operations

Outcome: Organic and direct marketing operations must be enrolled. Although they may pose less of a threat to water quality, they still meet the standard for enrollment which is commercial and irrigated.

Most Subwatersheds have already been requiring organic and direct marketing operations to be enrolled.

On-Farm Drinking Water Well Requirement

Annual monitoring of on-farm drinking water wells for Nitrate + Nitrite as Nitrogen on ENROLLED parcels is required of all Coalition members by December 31, 2022. A drinking water well is defined as a well used for drinking or cooking.

This only applies to farms that use their well for drinking water. On-farm wells used for irrigation is not required to monitor. More information can be found at the Central Valley Water Board's Drinking Water Well Monitoring website at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/irrigated_lands/drinking_water/

The website contains an overview of the requirements, a list of ELAP-certified labs, and FAQs. If you have specific questions pertaining to your operation, you may reach out to your Subwatershed or contact the Regional Board.



**EL DORADO AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY
MANAGEMENT CORP**

PROTECTING OUR PRECIOUS RESOURCE

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IMPORTANT NOTICES

1. Irrigation & Nitrogen Management Summary Reports for the 2022 growing season will be asked for again in 2023. This is an annual requirement.
2. Keep track of your "Outreach", any articles, newsletters, trainings etc., you participate in for 2022.
3. If you are interested in serving on the Board please contact Melissa Neal.
4. Please contact Melissa Neal with any questions.

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