

Irrigated Agriculture Program Renewal
August 13, 2008

Conditional Ag Waiver Enrollment Status as of June 30, 2008

Enrollment Status	Number of Operations	Irrigated Acres	Tailwater Acres
Tier 1 (15 hours ed + farm plan)	1203	358,424	79,107
Tier 2 (incomplete ed or farm plan)	526	37,120	5,517
Growers with >14 hrs ed	1127	319,320	71,120
Growers with completed farm plan	1419	379,022	80,974
Total Enrolled	1735	396,030	84,802

Estimated number/acreage of non-enrollees: 500-800/40,000 acres.

Current Ag Waiver Requirements

- Enrollment
- Fifteen hours farm water quality education (one time)
- On-site farm water quality plan/copy of Conditional Waiver Order
- Implementing and reporting (two times) management practices for irrigation, nutrient, and pesticide management and erosion control
- Monitoring (individual or cooperative)
- Not cause or contribute to condition of pollution or nuisance
- Comply with the Central Coast Basin Plan
- Not cause or contribute to exceedances of any Regional, State or Federal numeric or narrative water quality standard
- Not discharge wastes to groundwater which could result in a groundwater nitrate concentration above 45 mg/l
- Comply with applicable TMDLs
- Comply with applicable time schedules

Conditional Ag Waiver Renewal Process

Staff is planning internal stakeholder meetings in August to solicit management and staff input on the irrigated agriculture program. Staff will hold external stakeholder meetings with the Agricultural Advisory Panel to develop recommendations to staff for incorporation into the ag waiver program. Staff may also hold additional workshops and other outreach to receive input from other stakeholders.

Ag Waiver Renewal Timeline

August 2008	Internal Water Board stakeholder meetings (management and staff)
September 2008 - January 2009	Agricultural Advisory Panel meetings, other outreach
February 2009	draft Conditional Waiver Order
February – March 2009	CEQA/public review
May 2009	draft staff report
July 9-10, 2009	Board hearing to adopt Order

Agricultural Advisory Panel

The Agricultural Advisory Panel was convened in February 2003 to provide staff with recommendations on requirements for the conditional ag waiver. Staff conducted extensive outreach to insure broad representation from the agricultural and environmental communities, while at the same time keeping the size of the group to a workable level. Many groups contacted were willing to be represented by other groups that shared their interests. The panel members adopted groundrules and a mission statement:

The goal of the panel is to assist staff in developing recommendations to the Regional Board for a replacement to the expired waivers that will be protective of water quality, the viability of Central Coast agriculture, and comply with state law.

The panel met for nearly 18 months and used a consensus-based process to reach agreement on all recommendations. Staff incorporated the panel's recommendations into the Conditional Waiver Order that was adopted by the Central Coast Water Board on July 9, 2004. Listed below is the original representation on the Ag Advisory Panel. Staff is currently assessing the need for additional representation, as well as the interest of past members in continued participation. Some representatives have changed due to staffing changes at various organizations. Staff anticipates a shorter process for renewal, with possibly 3-5 meetings.

Ag Advisory Panel Representation 03-04

Organization	Representative
Ocean Conservancy	Kaitlin Gaffney
Monterey County Farm Bureau	Bob Martin
Central Coast Coalition of County Farm Bureaus	Dawn Mathes/Kirk Schmidt
Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo	Sandra Sarrouf/Miranda Leonard
Agricultural Land-Based Training Association	Brett Melone
Environmental Defense Center	Eric Cardenas
San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau	Joy Fitzhugh
Central Coast Wine Growers Association	Victoria LeBlanc/Amy English/Kevin Merrill
Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary	Katie Siegler
Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau	Steve Siri/Teri Bontrager
Grower Shipper Vegetable Association	Richard Quantt
San Benito County Farm Bureau	Paul Hain
Regional Water Quality Control Board	Lisa McCann/Karen Worcester
Santa Barbara Channel Keeper	Drew Bohan
Cattlemen's Association	Ray Allen
UC Davis	Brian Anderson/John Hunt
Jefferson Farms	Benny Jefferson

Areas of Board Concern and Items for Discussion

Areas of Board concern include riparian and conservation practice removal, toxicity from OP and pyrethroid pesticides, and high tailwater flows with associated pesticide, nutrient and sediment movement. Possible topics for discussion include the need for additional education requirements, the frequency of management practice reporting, and the need for a small acreage or de minimus category, and any other issues raised by the panel.