

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SUMMARY REPORT
9:00 a.m., Thursday, September 11, 2008
Regional Water Board Office Hearing Room
5550 Skylane Blvd, Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: Status update on development of General Waste Discharge Requirements for Dairies and Waiver of General Waste Discharge Requirements for Dairies (Board members request)

DISCUSSION

Dairies in California are regulated under Title 27, Subchapter 2, Article 1. SWRCB – Confined Animal Facilities (Statewide Water Quality Regulations for Confined Animal Facilities¹), Section 22560 through Section 22565. These regulations require all confined animal facilities to properly manage solid and liquid manure waste and manured storm water to prevent negative impacts to surface and groundwaters. This will help avoid and remedy surface and groundwater contamination by controlling nutrients, erosion and sediment delivery; and prevent elevated stream temperatures through improved nutrient and farm management techniques.

Several regions throughout the state, including Regions 2, 5, and 8, have adopted general waste discharge requirements (WDRs), NPDES permits, and/or waivers to regulate dairies in their regions. Staff at the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board are reviewing these permitting approaches in detail, as well as the dairy water quality problems faced in this region.

The State Nonpoint Source Implementation Plan (NPS) requires all nonpoint source discharges to be covered by a permit or a waiver of a permit. The Regional Board nonpoint source and sediment workplans consider the development of dairy permits/waivers a high priority activity. Staff is currently working to develop a permitting framework to regulate dairies in the North Coast Region. This framework may include both general WDRs, and waivers of WDRs, similar to the successful approach we have taken to regulate timber harvest activities. In conjunction with developing the permitting framework, we will be seeking input from stakeholders, including both the dairy industry and the public. We anticipate field trips, staff workshops, meetings with interested parties, and updates to the Board as part of this outreach effort.

PRELIMINARY STAFF
RECOMMENDATION:

Status update for the Board Only.