



The Milk Lines



June 2001

DAIRY MONTH

SETTLEMENT

REMINDERS

Dairy Month

June is Dairy Month and congratulations are in order to the many local family dairies and allied industry for the continued great job of supplying dairy products to the public, as well as providing the many jobs for the general economy. Dairy is the number one income generator in Tulare County and helps other agriculture by recycling by-products into cattle feed, which otherwise would end in landfills. Milk prices are good and feed prices are relatively low so on one hand the present is well.

On the other hand an alfalfa hay shortage is looming in the near future and reduced cotton acreage, because of low prices, will eventually lead to a shortage of cottonseed feeds. The energy crisis is ongoing with little relief in sight, especially with the summer heat waves. The threat of foot and mouth disease still exists. More stringent mandatory environmentally related controls will raise the cost of production, some are already here and others are in the near future. In spite of these things the dairy families will continue ahead, make adjustments, and keep on going for the better of all.

Settlement

A public meeting was held at the ag center regarding the recent settlement of the lawsuit by the Center For Race, Poverty and Environment (CRPE) against Tulare County, which claimed inadequate measures were being taken by the county in issuing dairy permits. The settlement reached now allows the county to

proceed with dairy permits under the existing Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). However, additional points must be included. They are:

- (1) The county agrees to perform a reasonable cumulative groundwater impact analysis.
- (2) The county agrees to perform a cumulative air quality analysis of effects from existing dairies and additional ones proposed.
- (3) The county agrees to analyze and evaluate the feasibility of air quality impact mitigations measures for dairies for a "reduced impact to less than significance."

Included in the groundwater issue is a collection of at least 45 existing water wells for testing of coliform, nitrates and various chemicals. These tests do not include any toxics and the information can be useful to the dairy producer. These wells will be selected for equal representation by dairy age, size and location. The information will be public record, which already occurs if any well is tested by public officials. This is voluntary and any dairies interested in helping get this chore done can contact this office or the county Resource Management Agency (733-6291) or Environmental Health (733-6441) for a "Consent to Enter Premises for Well Testing" letter to be signed by the farmer.

The mentioned air and water quality conditions will be a supplementary EIR (SEIR) and attached to the PEIR for dairy permits to be issued. It will take several months for the related cumulative data to be gathered. It remains to be seen if this will be challenged by the CRPE in court. In the meantime individual dairies can

get their permits processed but can be subject to litigation. Dairies that wish to wait for the county SEIR and PEIR will have relatively less issues to contend with.

Questions were raised in the meeting as to the cow air emissions figures shown in the settlement from the California Air Resource Board (CARB). It was stated that the CARB numbers are estimations and are not the final word. New published data from the University of California and elsewhere can be incorporated into the evaluations. Specific legal questions on the settlement should be directed to the Tulare County Board of Supervisors (733-6271) and/or County Counsel (733-6263).

Reminders

The Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) problem continues abroad and local vigilance for bio-security on the dairy is very important. Any questions on this can be answered by your veterinarian, specialists at the UCVMTRC, and the UCCE dairy advisor. As of June 20th 1,762 cases were reported in the UK, with 3 new cases recently (Type O). No new cases have been reported in Northern Ireland or Holland as of this date.

In South America, Uruguay has had 1,596 confirmed cases of FMD (Type A), with no new cases as of June 15th. Argentina has had 1,240 cases (Type A), with no new cases since June 15th. Brazil continues to have 17 cases (Type A), with no new cases since May 30th. Venezuela, Bolivia and Colombia each have one case (Type A), with no new cases reported since June 15th.

Elsewhere, Mongolia has had 28 cases (Type O), Kuwait five cases (Type O), and Kazakhstan one case (Type O), with no new cases reported since June 8th.

Updates regarding the FMD outbreaks will be provided as they become available. If you have any questions regarding travel to these countries or visitors from them, please contact 301-734-8073, 800-940-6524 or EMOC@APHIS.USDA.GOV. The FMD problem is a bit quieter than a couple months ago, but it has by no means subsided and bio-security remains the first line of defense.

Mark your calendars! There will be another series of Environmental Stewardship Short Courses on October 15th, 22nd and 29th, all Mondays, all from 2 to 4 and all in the UCCE meeting room on North Campus Drive in Hanford. If anyone wishes to attend a pre-evaluation meeting to prepare for the third party evaluation of your dairy, please contact the farm advisor offices in Tulare, Kings, Kern or Fresno Counties so that one can be arranged. Also, a Herdsman Training Short Course is being planned for October 22nd, 23rd and 24th by UCCE, VMTRC and FSU at the FSU dairy in Fresno. More details on these classes will be coming in future newsletters.

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