

DAIRY DISCHARGE REGULATIONS

Protecting our groundwater from industrial pollution is a priority to all of us.

F A C T S H E E T

Updated 5/11/2015

ISSUE: After six years, community groups, industry groups and the State have negotiated a set of groundwater discharge regulations for dairies. The dairy industry has been a part of the fabric of New Mexico for decades, but over **the past 20 years the way that dairies operate has changed**. The average dairy in New Mexico holds over 2000 cows and creates about 6 million gallons of manure every day.

According to the New Mexico Environment Department, nearly 60% of the dairies in New Mexico have polluted groundwater.

In a state where drought is the norm, protection of all of our water resources is of the utmost importance.

PROGRESS: **This settlement is the direct result of community groups calling out the State to do its job, and the Dairy Industry to be better care takers of the environment we all share.**

The settlement has common sense practices like:

- **Better monitoring wells.** The agreed upon language specifically states that the wells be placed to monitor sources of pollution – i.e. waste lagoons and fields with manure applications - where they are intended to intercept pollution. In its proposed Rule, the dairy industry sought to remove source-specific wells, and replace them with just 2 monitoring wells at each dairy.
- **Stricter specifications to liner requirements.** Two-foot thick clay liners will have to be installed according to Environmental Protection Agency guidelines.



- **Escalated steps if the new wells detect pollution.** If the monitoring wells detect pollution, operators are required to step up protection. If pollution is detected at a clay lined lagoon, an operator will be required to upgrade to a synthetic liner. If that liner fails, an additional synthetic liner will be required, etc.

IT'S NOT OVER: On May 12, 2015, the Water Quality Control Commission will vote on adopting the settlement at their regular scheduled meeting in Santa Fe, NM. The meeting is open to the public.

The settlement represents clear and common sense practices that the dairy operators must follow and regulators can enforce - all to the betterment and protection of our most precious resource - water.

The meeting will begin at 10:00am

Room 307

State Capitol Building,

490 Old Santa Fe Trail

Santa Fe, NM 87501

map



New Mexico Environmental Law Center helps open the doors of our legal process to local communities who are working to protect their water, land and air from pollution and environmental degradation.

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