

# Central Valley Dairy Representative Monitoring Program

*For the benefit of dairy producers, cattle operators and water quality across our valley*

## February 2023 Newsletter

### Letter From the Chairman: You're invited to CVDRMP's Annual Membership Meeting



As chairman of the Central Valley Dairy Representative Monitoring Program (CVDRMP), I would like to personally invite you to our annual membership meeting, 1 p.m. Monday, March 6. We will hold this meeting by Zoom teleconference to make it as easy as possible for our members from around the Central Valley to participate. (*Meeting agenda, instructions for joining are on page 2.*)

Also, please take a few moments to review this newsletter – it contains helpful information about the annual fees you pay CVDRMP, services we provide in exchange, other facts to help keep you in compliance with Central Valley water quality regulations, and how to contact CVDRMP staff or elected representatives with any questions you have.

#### **Serving you, saving money**

Since 2011, CVDRMP has managed a representative groundwater monitoring program on behalf of dairies. In 2020, we expanded to allow other bovine facilities such as heifer and calf ranches and feedlots to participate. Without this valuable program, installation of dedicated groundwater monitoring wells would be required on all dairies and other confined cattle operations. Instead, by efficiently monitoring a representative subset of our members' facilities, we've collectively saved our members more than \$65 million since 2011.

CVDRMP's Board of Directors – elected by you, the members – is committed to continuing efficiency going forward. Like you, each of our Board members is

a dairy or cattle ranch operator, and we pay the same fees our members do.

Thanks to our continuous push for efficiency, we are offering another fee decrease this year. For dairy members in 2023, we'll reduce the annual monitoring coalition membership dues from \$900 to \$700, a

22 percent decrease from last year, and nearly 28 percent lower than the original fees set in 2011. (Important note: Even though we've lowered CVDRMP program fees, your dairy may be in a Nitrate Management Zone that is charging higher dues this year; if so, even with our discount, you could still end up paying a higher overall bill). For bovine members, dues will remain the same in 2023, and we are looking for ways to also lower

those fees as that newer program matures.

**Nitrate and Salt Program requirements made easy.** About three years ago, Central Valley dairies and cattle operations (as well as other businesses with Water Board permits) came under two new regulations, the Salt Control Program and the Nitrate Control Program. CVDRMP did not create these regulations, but once they landed, we immediately went to work looking for ways to save our members money, time and paperwork.

We provided our members a streamlined process to make compliance as easy and inexpensive as possible. We negotiated with coalitions of other water quality permit holders to obtain fair-share costs and group discounts. For our members, there is no additional

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***'Thanks to our continuous push for efficiency, we are offering another fee decrease this year...'***  
***- Scott Wickstrom  
CVDRMP Chairman***

paperwork to complete, no consultants to hire and no correspondence needed with the Water Board. Simply pay your CVDRMP bill and our coalition handles the rest.

All our members are now compliant with the Salt Program, and about two-thirds of our members are currently enrolled in Nitrate Management Zones, with more such zones being phased in. This keeps cattle operations in compliance and provides a cost-effective way of ensuring that every person living in a rural area of the Central Valley has access to clean water. In exchange, our members receive significantly more time to reach longer-term water quality protection objectives as required by regulation.

Lastly, our members should be aware that big moves are under way at the state government level to further revise water quality regulations for dairies. We're monitoring the process closely and taking steps to make it as easy as possible for dairies to navigate any future changes.

Experience shows us that working together creates opportunities to save costs and provide effective solutions. On behalf of CVDRMP, thanks for your support and I hope to see you at the annual meeting!

Sincerely,



Scott Wickstrom  
CVDRMP Chairman

# Agenda

## Annual CVDRMP Membership Meeting

### DATE AND TIME

1:00 to 3:00 p.m.  
Monday, March 6, 2023

### PLACE

Virtual meeting via Zoom video conference,  
<https://bit.ly/CVDRMP2023>

Or call: 1 (669) 900-6833 and enter meeting ID:  
885 7337 5367  
Passcode: 055658

### AGENDA

1. Determination of quorum per CVDRMP by-laws
2. Welcome to the members; review CVDRMP mission and goals (*Chairman Scott Wickstrom*)
3. Results and certification of 2022 Board of Director elections (*Secretary Greg Hooker*)
4. Report to the members on organizational finances (*Treasurer Rodney Kamper*)
5. 2023 Fee Schedules for Monitoring Program, Nitrate Management Zones, and Salt Control Programs (*Treasurer Kamper/Administrator James Garner*)
6. Nitrate and Salt Control Program updates (*Director of Regulatory Relations J.P. Cativiela*)
7. Dairy and Bovine monitoring program technical reports (*Technical Program Manager Till Angermann*)
8. Questions and comments from members
9. Adjourn

**NOTE:** CVDRMP bylaws require that no action by the members shall take place unless a) it is included on a properly noticed agenda, AND b) a quorum (one-third) of voting members are present. The membership meeting will take place and informational presentations provided without a quorum present; however, no actions will be taken by the members on matters not on the agenda, nor if a quorum is not met.

# Key Information & Updates

- **Expect a membership invoice by April 2023.** CVDRMP is coordinating with local Nitrate Management Zones, which are in the process of setting budgets for water quality permit holders, such as dairies, bovine operations, irrigated farmland and other non-agricultural businesses. This is the first step in determining annual fees for compliance with the Nitrate Control Program for our members.
- **Your total CVDRMP fee this year may be different than last year.** Your CVDRMP invoice many include line items for three regulatory programs: Groundwater monitoring, salt control and local Nitrate Management Zones (if applicable). Fees for local Nitrate Management Zones are impacted by budgets set in those local zones and changes in the herd size of your operation.
- **Your fee “tier” for your Nitrate Management Zone is based on the Annual Report you filed in 2022.** CVDRMP determines your herd size and corresponding fee tier based on the most recent Annual Report you submitted to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board; it is not based on the herd size at the time you receive your CVDRMP invoice.
- **Do not pay fees directly to your local Nitrate Management Zone or the Central Valley Salinity Coalition for the Salt Control Program.** If you pay your CVDRMP invoice, you’re in compliance with both of these regulatory programs.

## 2022 Board of Directors Election Results

CVDRMP has a 12-member Board of Directors, elected by members. There are two directors in each of five Central Valley regions, and two at-large directors. Directors serve staggered two-year terms, so half the Board seats are open for election each fall.

The following nominations were received, and accepted by the candidate nominated, by the October 25, 2022, deadline for “A” seat directors:

- District 1 (Tulare County): No nominations received;
- District 2 (Merced and Madera counties): Greg Hooker;
- District 3 (Fresno, Kings and Kern counties): Rodney Kamper;
- District 4 (Stanislaus County): Justin Gioletti;
- District 5 (all other Central Valley counties): No nominations received;
- At-large: Lucy Areias.



Following CVDRMP’s election procedures, further balloting was suspended to save costs since no races were contested, and all nominees were elected and the results certified. The new terms began in January 2023 and all the directors elected are returning incumbents. Pursuant to CVDRMP bylaws, the Board can consider appointing a director to a vacant seat to fill out its term until the next election.

There are currently four vacant seats on the CVDRMP Board of Directors: 2 seats in **Tulare County**, 1 seat in **Stanislaus County**, and one seat for **San Joaquin and all northern counties**. The Board usually meets 6-8 times annually via Zoom teleconference to oversee and direct the work of the coalition. If you are interested in filling one of the vacancies, please contact CVDRMP staff at CVDRMP@gmail.com or 916-594-9450.

# Nitrogen Management Zones steam ahead in 2023

An important benefit of CVDRMP membership is automatic, continuous enrollment in Nitrogen Management Zones (NMZs). But what are NMZs and why are they important?

In a nutshell, NMZs are areas of the Central Valley where holders of water quality permits – farmers, dairies, cattle ranchers, manufacturing and processing facilities, public waste treatment facilities and more – work together to save costs by participating in an alternative compliance program. They do that by supporting collective efforts to protect water quality and to ensure residents in rural areas have a safe water supply.

There are six “Priority 1” NMZs in the Central Valley, running roughly from north of Modesto to south of Tulare (see map). In 2021, these Priority 1 areas began offering free well testing for rural residents. Residents whose wells test above safe levels for nitrate, which can come from agricultural fertilizers, septic systems, manure

and other sources, are eligible to receive free replacement drinking water.

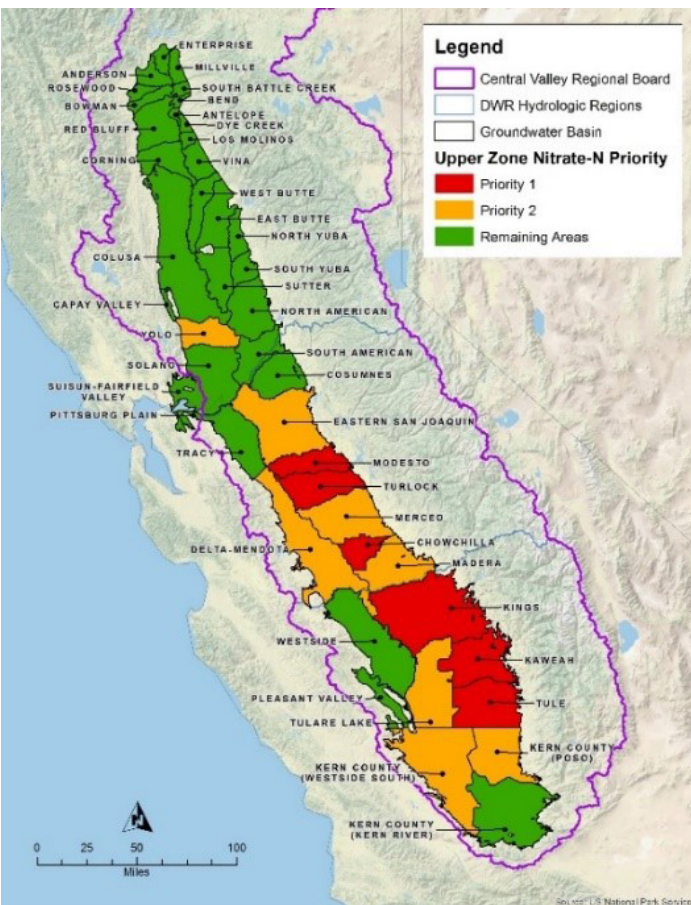
Who pays for the testing and the water? Costs are shared among the various groups of permit holders, including dairy and cattle operators. In each NMZ, dairies pay between about 15 and about 30 percent (depending on the number of dairies in the NMZ) of the costs of testing and replacement water, along with associated outreach and planning costs.

Why do water quality permit holders voluntarily pay these costs? Because in return, they are offered flexibility in meeting the state’s stringent water quality standards. Meeting the standards will likely take decades and require major upgrades in technology and practices related to irrigation, fertilization, wastewater treatment and other management practices.

Recognizing that time was needed to reach these goals, the state in 2019 adopted alternative compliance pathways within its Nitrate Control Program. This allows permit holders who can’t meet nitrate standards today more time – up to 35 years – to reach the objectives, but only if they demonstrate progress toward the goals along the way and contribute to providing safe drinking water where needed within affected rural communities.

Because it is the only financially feasible path forward, CVDRMP assisted all its members who operate facilities in Priority 1 NMZs to automatically comply with this alternative pathway. Our coalition has negotiated with individual NMZs to set “fair share” costs for dairies and cattle operations, with group discounts that result in lower rates than those offered to individual permit holders. We also made sure CVDRMP is represented throughout the governing boards of all NMZ groups, so dairies and cattle ranchers always have a seat at the table where important decisions are made.

That’s just the beginning: CVDRMP has advocat-





Nitrate Management Zones have installed water filling stations like this one to provide rural residents access to free, clean drinking water.

ed for efficient management of NMZs, also supporting successful grant applications to reduce overall costs. Finally, to reduce administrative costs, CVDRMP handles billing of NMZ fees on behalf of its members – instead of receiving separate bills from different organizations and having to execute individual agreements between each dairy or cattle operation in each NMZ, each of our members receives a single detailed bill explaining each charge. As the nonprofit middleman between our members and NMZs, we do not take a “cut” – we collect only the amount needed to cover NMZ costs and pass that along to NMZs, with no “markup.”

Importantly, the job of NMZs goes beyond testing wells and providing replacement drinking water. Over the long term, each NMZ must develop plans with progress milestones to reduce the impacts to groundwater, and to develop permanent sources of safe drinking water. As this process moves forward, CVDRMP will stay closely engaged to make sure that the perspective of dairies and cattle operations are at the center of the discussion and decision-making.

**Are all CVDRMP members already in NMZs?**

Most (about two-thirds) of CVDRMP members are already in Priority 1 NMZs and can learn

exactly how much they pay to support their NMZ by checking their annual CVDRMP invoice for a breakdown.

However, some dairies and cattle operations are not yet members of NMZs – but will be soon. Beginning late in 2023, water quality permit holders in Priority 2 NMZs (orange areas on the map) will receive notices to begin participating in their NMZs. Eight new NMZs will form, many on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, and also in parts of Kern, Yolo, Merced and Madera counties.

If your dairy or cattle operation is in a Priority 2 area, don’t worry – you, too, will be automatically enrolled at the right time. But fees for Priority 2 areas won’t begin until 2024.

**State Water Board considering new dairy rules**

It has been 10 years since the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted water quality rules for dairies, collectively known as the Dairy General Order (Dairy Order). It now appears changes to that Dairy Order can be expected in the not-too-distant future. The State



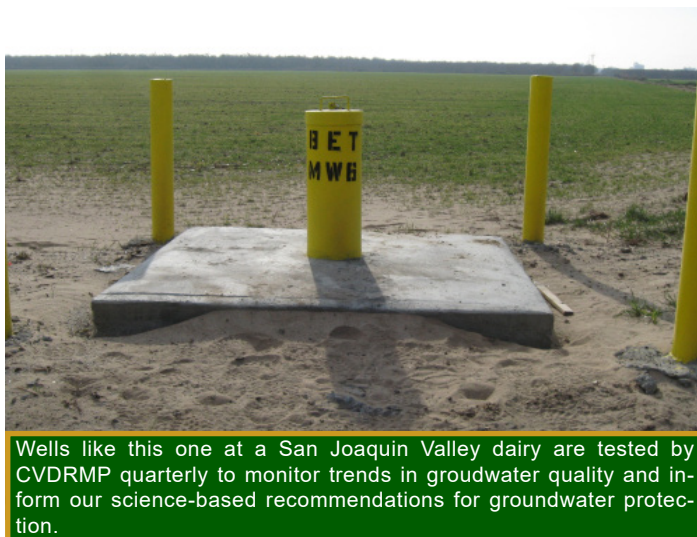
A CVDRMP well is sampled to measure depth to first-encountered groundwater, total dissolved solids, nitrogen and general minerals.

Water Resources Control Board announced last year that it plans in 2023 to issue a directive to the Central Valley Board to revise the Dairy

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Order. While it is not clear exactly what the new requirements will be or when they will be adopted, the State Board has signaled that dairies can expect:

- More focus on achieving a “whole-farm balance” of nitrogen, meaning the amount of nitrogen produced by cattle in their manure is in a rough balance with the ability of non-alfalfa forage crops grown by the dairy to take up the nitrogen without losing an unreasonable amount of it to the environment. (Surplus manure will still likely be allowed to be exported, but expect more scrutiny and record-keeping to ensure that export happens, especially when farm plans call for significant export of manure).
- Stricter standards for storage or manure process water in retention ponds, including lining of ponds that exceed seepage standards, and periodic monitoring to establish whether ponds are performing up to standards.
- Development, over time, of stricter application limits for manure to crops with a goal of reducing the amount of nutrients that escape the root zone and make it into groundwater (farmers using synthetic fertilizers will also be expected to reduce losses and increase crop uptake of nutrients).



Wells like this one at a San Joaquin Valley dairy are tested by CVDRMP quarterly to monitor trends in groundwater quality and inform our science-based recommendations for groundwater protection.

As a producer-led, nonprofit coalition, CVDRMP does not create regulations. However, we always look for ways to assist our members in understanding and navigating the changes, and

helping them to comply through efficient, group efforts.

### **Also included in your membership: Cost-effective salt compliance**

Besides providing representative groundwater monitoring – needed to comply with the Dairy General Order – and automatic enrollment in NMZs, CVDRMP membership also covers the requirement that dairies and cattle operations comply with the Salt Control Program.

Like the Nitrate Control Program, this alternative compliance pathway allows our members to defer meeting strict standards for salt control in land application of manure and process water. Without this pathway, many operations would be forced to meet strict standards and adopt expensive control measures to reduce salt loading.

As with nitrates, the state has concluded that significant time is needed to determine control measures for salt that are feasible (technically and economically) and will allow farming to continue in the San Joaquin Valley. The Central Valley Salinity Coalition (CVSC), a stakeholder group made up of farmers, cattle and dairy, other industries and cities, is funding a long-term study to develop a road map for controlling salt in the future. In the meantime, permit holders who fund development of the roadmap are determined to be in compliance with the Salt Control Program.

The cost for alternative compliance is minimal, much smaller than immediate implementation of control measures. Our members (depending on size) pay between \$80 and \$320 per year to comply. As with the Nitrate Control Program, compliance is automatic for our members, with no need to hire consultants or execute new agreements and paperwork. Your Salt Program contribution is clearly identified on your annual invoice, and like NMZ fees, it is a “pass through” to the CVSC with no added charges.

## Questions?

**At CVDRMP, we are literally here to serve you. For questions about your invoice or anything else related to our program, contact the CVDRMP office at [cvdrmp@gmail.com](mailto:cvdrmp@gmail.com) or call (916) 594-9450.**

## Thank you, Tony Ott!



After more than a decade of service on the CVDRMP Board of Directors, former CVDRMP Vice Chairman, Tony Ott completed his final term as a Stanislaus County director at the close of 2022. Tony has retired from the dairy business and we wish him all the best on his next endeavor. Thank you for your leadership, Tony!

## 2023 CVDRMP Directors & Officers

**Scott Wickstrom**, Chairman, At-large

**Jeff Troost**, Vice Chairman, District 2  
(Merced/Madera Counties)

**Greg Hooker**, Secretary, District 2  
(Merced/Madera Counties)

**Rodney Kamper**, Treasurer, District 3  
(Kern/Fresno/Kings Counties)

**Perry Tjaarda**, District 3  
(Kern/Fresno/Kings Counties)

**Justin Gioletti**, District 4  
(Stanislaus County)

**Rien Doornenbal**, District 5  
(Other Central Valley Counties)

**Lucy Areias**, At-large

## CVDRMP Member Liaisons to Local Nitrate Management Zones

*The following CVDRMP members have volunteered to serve as liaisons to local Nitrate Management Zones in 2023, making sure CVDRMP members are fully represented in local management decisions and strategic direction. We thank them for their service!*

**Justin Gioletti & Ray Prock, Jr.**

Valley Water Collaborative  
(Modesto & Turlock Management Zones)

**Scott Wickstrom & Greg Hooker**

Chowchilla Management Zone

**Rodney Kamper & Lucy Areias**

Kings Management Zone

**Gerben Leyendekker & Pete Tiemersma**

Kaweah Water Foundation

(Kaweah Management Zone)

**Tom Barcellos & Mike Faria**

Tule Management Zone

**Perry Tjaarda**

Kern Water Collaborative

# CVDRMP

P.O. Box 227  
Sacramento, CA 95812

## Central Valley Dairy Representative Monitoring Program

*For the benefit of dairy producers, cattle operators and water quality across our valley*

**CVDRMP Membership covers compliance for three Central Valley Water Board Requirements:** Groundwater monitoring, salt control, and local Nitrate Management Zone participation (if applicable).

Please pay your CVDRMP invoice upon receipt to maintain coverage in the coalition. **Failure to pay will result in cancellation of your membership, Notices of Violation and potential fines from the Water Board, and additional fees to reinstate your membership.**

If you have a Dairy or Bovine permit open with the Water Board – **regardless of whether there are any animals on your property** – you must maintain membership in the CVDRMP coalition or install your own monitoring wells.

### **Want to verify your membership standing in CVDRMP?**

Email your facility name & address to [CVDRMP@gmail.com](mailto:CVDRMP@gmail.com) or call (916) 594-9450.

Recent change of ownership? Update your membership forms at [CVDRMP.org](http://CVDRMP.org).