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Partnership with Glenn County RCD

The California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) recently awarded the Glenn County Resource Conservation District, in partnership with the Glenn County Cooperative Extension, funds to develop an "Improving Air and Water Quality through Sustainable Agricultural Practices on Dairies" program.

The project's objective is to improve and protect water and air quality on and around dairy operations in the Northern Sacramento Valley region through education and outreach. The project will consist of four newsletters and one workshop.

Over the next several months, my newsletter will provide information about manure nutrient monitoring, irrigation management, air quality information, organic dairying and RCD and NRCS programs that can help dairy farmers make improvements to their manure management systems.

RCD/Cooperative Extension Workshop

Save the Date - October 24th at the Kountry Kitchen in Orland

The workshop will include topics such as manure nutrient utilization and irrigation, no-till cropping, steps in transferring to an organic dairy, and NRCS programs available to the dairy industry. Cooperative Extension Irrigation Specialist Larry Schwankel, Forages Farm Advisors Carol Frate and Marsha Campbell Matthews will be among the speakers on the program. They have all worked extensively with manure water application and metering, nutrient monitoring and irrigation management. We will have a representative from Horizon Organic Milk on the program to talk about their need for organic dairy operators.

RCD and NRCS Programs for Dairies

RCD AND NRCS: What is their relationship?

The relationship between Resource Conservationist Districts (RCD) and the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS), formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), is a long standing partnership that goes back to the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl.



RCD - NRCS (continued)

In response to the national "Dust Bowl" crisis of the 1930s, when millions of acres of cropland were destroyed by drought and soil loss, the federal government passed legislation establishing SCS, now known as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The intent was to work with farmers on soil erosion demonstration projects.

However, critics thought local farmers should take a more active role in the planning conservation of natural resources. Thus, "Soil Conservation Districts" were born. Now known as Resource Conservation Districts (RCD), the original SCD's were developed as a "grassroots" self-governing body made up of farmers elected by their peers, to represent the conservation needs of farmers. Therefore, today when an RCD is formed, the members sign an agreement with the USDA NRCS, thus the partnership is created to perform conservation needs of the district.

RCD's are "special districts" of the State of California, set up under California law to be locally governed agencies with their own locally appointed, independent boards of directors (landowners/managers of the land). Although RCD's are established locally by the rules of a county's Local Agency Formation Committee (LAFCO), and they often have close ties to county government, they are not county government entities. Ultimately, RCD's facilitate communication between local, state, and federal agencies and private landowners, while performing resource conservation work.

Today, RCD's manage a diversity of resource conservation projects, including soil and water conservation projects, wildlife habitat

enhancement and restoration, control of exotic plant species, watershed restoration, conservation planning, education, and many others. Since most RCD's receive very little regular funding through local taxation, they rely heavily on grants and other types of fundraising to stay in operation.

The function and mission of the NRCS is to partner with local landowners to conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. In other words, work closely with RCDs (the local voice) to address local resource concerns.

EQIP

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was established in the 1996 Farm Bill to provide a single, voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers to address significant natural resource concerns. Nationally, it provides technical and financial assistance to address natural resource concerns. Administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), EQIP was reauthorized in the 2002 Farm Bill and awards cost share assistance to projects which provide significant environmental benefit. Eligible farmers and ranchers may apply for EQIP program benefits at any time. Application ranking periods are established to allow evaluation of projects and awarding of contracts based upon an environmental score for each application that achieves the natural resource benefits identified by local, state and national priorities. Practices eligible for cost share and the environmental score is calculated based upon ranking criteria developed with input from Local Work Groups (LWG), Stakeholders and the State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC).



**NRCS California Environmental Quality
Incentives Program (EQIP)
CA Statewide Confined Animal Operation
Initiative**

The California NRCS EQIP Water Quality Initiative for animal feeding operations is being offered to provide accelerated financial and technical assistance to producers who are facing increasing water quality related regulatory requirements on animal feeding operations, dairies and other similar operations. Various Federal and State agencies in California have announced or will announce in the near future, permit requirements which establish waste discharge standards. The NRCS State Conservationist in California has determined that a separate statewide funding pool will be established from California's general Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) allocation in Fiscal Year 2006 to provide support to producers in meeting these new requirements as well as other natural resource protection.

Animal Feeding Operations

The NRCS objective in working with Animal Feeding Operations (AFOs) is to help AFO owners and operators to achieve their production and natural resource conservation goals through development and implementation of comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs). Each CNMP includes the following characteristics:

- A subset of a conservation plan that is unique to the animal feeding operation.
- Combines management activities and practices into an integrated system.
- Site specific.
- Voluntary.
- Focuses on nutrient and sediment aspects of water quality.

For further information regarding USDA NRCS programs, please contact your local field office or visit their Web site at:

<http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/>

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DHIA Data For June 2006

June DHIA Averages for N. Sacramento Valley Herds

Rolling Herd Average	BREED				Overall Average
	Brown Swiss	Holstein	Jersey	Other	
# of Cows	47	437	416	138	386
Lbs Milk	19817	20501	16211	13880	18694
% Fat	4.0	3.7	4.6	3.9	4.0
Lbs fat	796	756	746	547	733
% Protein	3.4	3.1	3.6	3.3	3.3
Lbs Protein	677	637	584	455	603
Somatic Cell Count (1,000)	360	311	299	350	314
% Cull	42	31	34	41	33
Calving Interval	15.4	14.9	13.5	13.4	14.4
Average Services /Conception	4	3	3	2	3
Percent Conception at first service	15	31	37	51	33
Average days open	176	158	144	139	154
Average days in milk at 1st service	68	75	74	78	75

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