Update: Central Coast Water Board Agricultural Order R3-2012-0011

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Overview

• Role of the Water Board
• Agricultural Order R3-2012-0011
• Implementation Priorities
• Resources for Growers
• Questions
Role of the State and Regional Water Boards

Mission Statement

“Preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California’s water resources”
Current Status
2012 Agricultural Order

- 3+ Year Process
- Adopted on March 15, 2012
- Expires in March 15, 2017
- Petitioned to State Board in April 2012
- Order in effect now (except stayed provisions)
- State Board Hearing – September 24, 2013
Agricultural Water Quality Concerns

- Irrigation runoff
- Stormwater runoff
- Drainage water that percolates to groundwater and impacts drinking water sources
- Operational spills
- Pesticides and Toxicity
- Nitrogen and other nutrients
- Salt
- Soil, silt, sediment
- Trash

Old Salinas River, 2007
“Nitrate is one of the state’s most widespread groundwater contaminants, causing major health risks and substantial costs to rural communities.”

“Fertilizers and animal wastes applied to cropland are by far the largest regional sources of nitrate in groundwater.”

“Nitrate loading reductions are possible”
Central Coast Region:

- Highest percentage of toxic sites state-wide
- 56% of sites toxic
- 22% of sites highly toxic
What is the purpose of the Agricultural Order?

Requires farmers and landowners to implement management practices, and conduct monitoring and reporting, to ensure that farms are protecting surface water and groundwater.
What does the Agricultural Order apply to?

1. Land planted to row, vineyard, field and tree crops where water is applied for producing commercial crops;

2. Specific commercial nurseries, nursery stock production, and greenhouse operations;

3. Land planted to commercial crops that are not yet marketable, such as vineyards and tree crops.
# Tiers and Criteria

*Based on relative risk to water quality and discharge*

## Tier 1 (Lower Risk)
- NO chlorpyrifos or diazinon applied,
- NO impaired surface water, AND
- If nitrogen loading crop, must be less than 50 acres and not near impacted public drinking water well.
- OR Certified Sustainable-In-Practice (SIP).

## Tier 2
- Chlorpyrifos or diazinon applied,
- Impaired surface water, OR
- If nitrogen loading crop, near impacted public drinking water well or between 50 – 500 acres.

## Tier 3 (Higher Risk)
- Chlorpyrifos or diazinon applied, and discharge to impaired surface water; OR
- If nitrogen loading crop, greater than or equal to 500 acres.
Central Coast Region

Acreage in Tier

Tier 1: 10%
Tier 2: 39%
Tier 3: 51%

Enrollment
419,872 Irrigated Acres
1739 Operations / 4196 Farms

*data approximate as of 12/2012
Tier 2 Minus:
Annual compliance info - Online entry form

Tier 2 Plus:
- Ind. Discharge Monitoring
- Irrigation and Nutrient Mgmt. Plan**
- Water Quality Buffer Plan**

2012 Order Tier 1
File / Update Notice of Intent
Farm Plan / BMP Implementation
  -- irrigation management
  -- pesticide management
  -- nutrient management
  -- erosion management
  -- schedules to implement
Surface Receiving Water Monitoring and Reporting
Groundwater Monitoring and Reporting
Backflow prevention and Proper Well Abandonment
Annual compliance info - Online entry form
  -- Total Nitrogen Applied Reporting**
  -- Photo Monitoring**
How will the Water Board evaluate compliance?

Goal - Improve Water Quality Over Time
Iterative Process

- Implement Management Practices
- Monitor and Report Effectiveness
- Adjust

Little or No Implementation
Consider Individual Order
Resources for Growers

- Grower Workshops: eNOI and Annual Compliance Form
- In-Person and phone assistance
- Assistance for small/limited resource farmers
- Technical Assistance Providers
- Private industry consultants
- Grant Funds and Cost Share Opportunities
GROUNDWATER MONITORING

- Primary Irrigation Well
- All Drinking Water Wells
- Nitrate
- General Minerals
- Results uploaded by laboratory
- 1200+ Wells Sampled
- Drinking Water Notifications
MEASURES OF SUCCESS

2011
• ~377,988 acres of irrigated land (87%)
• ~1,690 operations / 3,800 farms

2012
• ~396,000 acres of irrigated land (91%)
• ~1,739 operations / 4,196 farms

2013
• ~429,980 acres of irrigated land (99%)
• ~1,918 operations / 4,267 farms
• Annual Compliance Form ~ 1328 farms
THANK YOU

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Water Board Website:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/ag_waivers/index.shtml
Summary

- 2012 Agricultural Order in effect now
- Requirements are scaled based on risk to water quality
- Requires implementation of management practices - to address water quality issues on farm and nearby creeks and groundwater
- Iterative, adaptive approach
- Alternatives available
- Grower assistance and resources