**CDQAP 2023: Year in Review**

Despite 2023’s significant challenges, including historic flooding and persistent supply chain issues, CDQAP and our partners made considerable headway on some stubborn issues.

*By Dr. Michael Payne, UC Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine and Director, CDQAP*

Minimizing Fees Through Certification – Currently 786 California dairies are certified through CDQAP’s third party evaluation program and receive a 50% discount in water board fees. The program continues to provide on-farm evaluations year-round for interested producers.

Response to Historic Flooding – In 2023 producers, particularly in the south valley, faced an unrelenting series of atmospheric rivers, followed by flooding due to snow melt. Coordinating with our regulatory & trade association partners, CDQAP’s outreach on flooding lasted into the summer. Topics covered included emergency actions that could be taken in between storms, livestock evacuations, a checklist for repopulating a dairy, staying in regulatory compliance during flooding, and state and federal relief programs.

Funding for Dairy Plus Program – CDRF, CDFA and industry worked collaboratively, successfully competing for USDA’s Climate Smart Commodities funding. For producers seeking support to improve manure management and reduce GHG emissions, funding continues to be available from the Dairy Plus program.

Dairy Stress & Wellness – Focusing on the needs of dairy field staff, CMAB and CDQAP hosted an October webinar which featured the nation’s foremost experts on farmer stress. The program included testimony from producers who successfully faced crises, a discussion on the most current advice in addressing mental fatigue, and descriptions of free online training. The webinar was recorded and is available.

Responding to Activist Trespass – CDQAP continued to work with national organizations and CMAB to distribute timely information to protect farms from theft and trespass. Particularly concerning in 2023 was activist trespass during historic flooding. Welcome progress, however, was demonstrated in November with the sentencing of an animal activist for conspiracy and trespass on Petaluma poultry farms.

Responding to Drones & Other Suspicious Activity – CDQAP partnered with the Central California Intelligence Center (CCIC) to distribute a new flyer on responding to Suspicious Drone Activity. This training augments CDQAP’s existing guidance on drones and trespass. CDQAP also partnered with CMAB to deliver training on how to submit a Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) to the CCIC. CDQAP partnered with trade organizations to file reports on incidents involving a helicopter hovering low over a dairy and a milk tanker being followed and photographed.

Producer Cybersecurity – CDQAP and CMAB continue to coordinate with our cybersecurity expert workgroup to protect against cyber-threats. Through this collaboration state and federal law enforcement cyber-experts were able to respond quickly to two cyber-attacks against producers this fall.

Emergency Mortality Disposal – CDQAP and CDRF successfully partnered in obtaining a grant to examine environmental impacts of dairy mortality composting. Ultimately, the research will pave the way to allow carcass composting during emergencies and when rendering is not available.

New 2024 Classes for Expected Water Regs – With draft requirements for a new General Order still pending, the exact shape of future Central Valley water regulations remains uncertain. Being pro-active with the goal of providing producers with information as soon as possible, in 2023 CDQAP organized an industry-UCD academic workgroup which formulated a draft curriculum addressing whole farm nitrogen balance and nitrogen management options. Classes will be available in early 2024.

FBI Partners with Agriculture – The cost of agricultural crime in California is staggering, up to half a billion dollars by some estimates. While the strongest producer allies remain local sheriff’s departments, federal agencies also have an important role. In July, CDQAP hosted a blended in-person and virtual workshop, introducing California farmers and ranchers to the InfraGard program, which remains the FBI’s primary outreach effort for industry. After a brief background check, industry representatives can receive intelligence and training not available to the general public.

Joint FBI – USDA Training – Knowing how to differentiate between accidental disease introduction (like the British FMD outbreak) and a deliberate terrorist attack is important for tailoring industry and law enforcement response. That was the focus of a two-day in-person training jointly held by the FBI and USDA in March. Co-hosted by CDQAP, the workshop addressed both foreign and domestic extremist threats, deliberate contamination of the food supply, danger from farm and plant visitors and economic espionage, including theft of intellectual property.

All of us at CDQAP wish you a peaceful holiday season and a healthy and prosperous new year!