

San Joaquin County & Delta Water Quality Coalition

Watershed News

April 2010

Water Quality Management Objectives

- Identify sources of constituents at monitoring sites
- Inform growers of results of monitoring
- Gather information on management practices
- Provide landowners with additional management practices to improve water quality
- Evaluate management practices
- Provide information on water quality issues & solutions for improving water quality

State proposes 200% fee increase next year

Growers will realize a reduction in Coalition fees this year to \$2/per acre compared to last year's \$2.25. (see Finances of Coalition on page 3 for details). However, the savings may be short-lived.

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is proposing raising the fee per acre it charges the Coalition, therefore its members. Currently of the members' fees paid to the Coalition, 12 cents per acre goes to the SWRCB for the purpose of implementing the program. The 12 cents funds staff and enforcement activities for both the SWRCB and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board). The remainder of your membership fee goes

to the coalition for water quality monitoring, grower meetings, management plan implementation and interaction with the Regional Board.

The Governor, in his recent budget, eliminated the general fund money in the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) and proposes moving the program to a totally fee-based program. The general fund paid for \$1.7 million of the \$2.2 million needed for the SWRCB and Regional Board to run the ILRP. By shifting to a fee based only program, the fees per acre for growers would increase from 12 cents to 42 cents per acre.

Any fee increase will be passed on directly to the grower since the Coalition is currently working on a

balanced budget.

This increase will not cover any changes that might occur from the implementation of a ground water monitoring plan as part of the ILRP that is being considered by the Regional Board. The cost of a groundwater plan would be borne by the members of the Coalition.

If you have concerns about the removal of general fund monies for the implementation of the ILRP contact your local state representative and inform them of your concerns. The state legislature has the ability to reinstate the program funding and prevent the fees from increasing.

Information for contacting your legislator is contained on page 4.

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Take action on water quality issues

Growers must be aware of water quality problems in their watershed. As the Coalition tests sites throughout the area, many concerns and issues have arisen.

In the Lone Tree Creek, Temple Creek, Duck Creek and Little Johns

Creek watersheds the Coalition continues to find exceedances of water quality standards. The most often occurring exceedance is chlorpyrifos, known by the trade name of Lorsban or Lockon.

If you are using this product, you must either re-

tain any runoff water on-site, or treat any runoff. Chlorpyrifos is very soluble and has a long half life. This means the material lingers in the soil for up to 60 days until a good rain or irrigation leaches it from the soil or plant material.

(Continued on page 4)

Outreach and education = water quality results

By Melissa Turner
MLJ-LLC

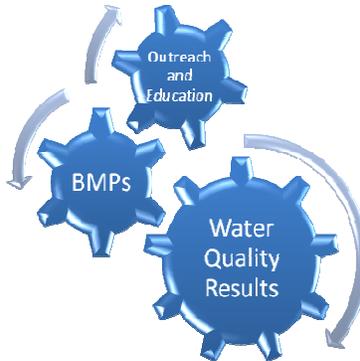
The San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition (Coalition) developed a management plan for constituents that have exceeded a Water Quality Trigger Limit (WQTL) more than once in a three year period. The Management Plan strategy is focused on reducing the runoff of applied pesticides through the implementation of appropriate management practices (BMPs).

The Coalition's Management Plan includes a process to document and track grower efforts and associated water quality improvements based on the following steps:

- ⇒ Contact Coalition members that have the highest potential to directly drain into a downstream water body
- ⇒ Conduct meetings with experts regarding current management practice research and use the information to offer new and updated information for BMP implementation
- ⇒ Have growers fill out surveys documenting current BMPs and any BMPs that are planned for the following year
- ⇒ Conduct water quality monitoring during the following year to determine if newly implemented BMPs have resulted in improved water quality
- ⇒ Follow up with growers to document implemented BMPs

The Coalition is required to report to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board an annual Management Plan update to document the progress achieved in

the previous year. The Coalition reports the number of management practices currently implemented by members, new management practices planned for the following year and water quality results on a sub-watershed level.



In 2009 and 2010, the Coalition has conducted meetings and collected surveys in the following subwatersheds:

- ◇ Lone Tree Creek
- ◇ Duck Creek
- ◇ Temple Creek
- ◇ Littlejohns Creek
- ◇ Union Island Drains (draining south into Grant Line Canal)

Members, permittees and PCAs have attended meetings held by Coalition representatives and Cooperative Extension specialists where they have completed surveys documenting current practices and indicating any additional practices that are planned for implementation in 2009 and 2010.

Meetings have been focused on crop specific management practices which have included spray drift management for orchards, herbicide application management practices, alfalfa/row crop low risk pesticide alternatives and timing of applications to ensure efficacy of treatments while reducing runoff potential.

Monitoring in Lone Tree Creek, Duck Creek and Temple Creek in 2009 indicated continued water quality impairments due to elevated amounts of chlorpyrifos (Lorsban). The chlorpyrifos also resulted in toxicity to invertebrates. The Coalition will continue to monitor for chlorpyrifos within these subwatersheds in 2010. In addition, the Coalition will monitor for copper, diazinon, diuron and simazine. The Coalition is anticipating that monitoring results in 2010 will indicate an improvement in water quality that can be attributed to additional management practices implemented by growers.



Coalition collects water samples in several water bodies.

The information obtained from the surveys allows the Coalition to document the efforts of its members to keep applied pesticides on their property through spray drift control, irrigation efficiency, application timing to avoid storm runoff and sediment control.

The Coalition's Management Plan, associated annual updates, and 2010 grower meeting summaries can be found on the Coalition's website, www.sjdeltawatershed.org.

Finances of the Coalition

*By John Brodie
Financial Officer for the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition*

The good news for members of the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition is that membership fees for 2010 will be reduced from 2009. The Coalition's fiscal management by the San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District (SJCRCD) remains conservative and focused on delivering the best compliance with state water quality regulations at the least cost to landowners.

Total expenses and total revenue for the Coalition were down in 2009 compared to 2008. The reduction in cost was due mostly to a reduction in the number of water quality sampling sites. However, in exchange for a reduction in the number of sampling locations, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board required an increase in the Coalition's education and outreach activities regarding water quality management practices recommended for growers.

Total expenses for 2009 were \$746,112.09, with sampling expenses accounting for just about 42% or \$310,920.22 (Sampling expenses are all

those related to the mandatory collection and laboratory analysis of water drawn from designated sites in the Coalition area). That compares to \$582,783.98 in 2008. All required technical reporting, mandated communications with regional board staff, negotiation of irrigated lands program requirements, fees paid to the water board, and required educational activities and other communications with our membership totaled another \$384,363.50. That compares to \$519,178.81 in 2008. The total paid for overall program compliance activities by the Coalition in 2009 to \$695,283.72

In simple terms, just over 93% of all Coalition expenses went to compliance with the state-imposed Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. The remaining \$50,828.37 paid for Coalition administrative and operations/finance staff, rent, equipment, member services, and charges paid to the San Joaquin County Treasurer.

The 2010 budget approved by the SJCRCD reflects the percentages from 2009 totals. This year, 94% of expenses will go towards program compliance activities as budgeted. Total budgeted expenses are \$1,071,700, with \$1,009,300 of that total incurred in program compliance activities. Coalition

administrative charges are budgeted for \$62,400.

As budgeted, membership dues collected at the \$2.00/acre rate will not cover projected expenses. However, surpluses achieved in previous years due to sound fiscal management by the SJCRCD Board of Directors are enough to allow funds to be returned to members through a decreased annual membership rate while still providing a safety net against unforeseen expenses or mandated changes in program requirements by the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The bad news is that the State Water Resources Control Board has proposed increasing the fee it charges the Coalition from \$.12/acre to \$.42/acre. The Coalition will have no choice but to pass that increase on to its members if it goes into effect for 2011. As on other issues, we will fight against this increase on your behalf.

Remember, the SJCRCD Board and the Coalition Steering Committee don't just manage the Coalition's operations and expenses. They are agricultural operators and paying members of the Coalition, just like you.

Controlling chlorpyrifos residues in corn runoff water

By Terry Prichard, UC Water Management Specialist

The Coalition's surface water sampling program has found a number of water quality exceedances of soluble organophosphate insecticides. The most common of these has been chlorpyrifos (Lorsban or Lock-On). The timing of these exceedances corresponded with chlorpyrifos application and irrigation of corn. In an effort to determine the source of residues and possible management practices to mitigate the problem, studies were conducted in 2008. Lorsban granules

applied with the corn seed at planting resulted in an exceedance of 100 times the water quality standard in the first irrigation's runoff. The second irrigation's runoff averaged 3.4 times the standard and tapered off to 1.7 times the standard by the end of the runoff period—indicating the runoff in subsequent irrigations would probably not cause exceedances. In 2009, similar evaluations were conducted using a pyrethroid granule (Pounce). No detectable residues were found in the runoff from the first two irrigations either in the water, furrow sedi-

ments, or tailwater ditch sediments.

Other research has shown polyacrylamide (PAM), a material that markedly reduces sediment in runoff, ineffective in reducing chlorpyrifos exceedances. Additionally, a delay in irrigation after planting for up to 30 days resulted in a decrease in runoff residues--- but not below the standard. The practice of holding runoff waters in a pond 24 hours before their release resulted in a reduction in residues but still far exceeding the water quality standard.

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Parcel & Billing Information

It is important for the coalition to have the correct parcel number & acreage size of the property within its boundaries. This information is submitted to the Regional Board. The Regional Board compares this information to regional maps. If landowners are not covered under the Coalition, the Regional Board sends out Notices of Violation to those parcels that are not covered under the Coalition. We have had several instances where people have been members, but have submitted incorrect parcel information and received a letter from the Regional Board. You can prevent this by checking your parcel information on your county's tax assessor's website. Each county has maps and parcel numbers on their sites.

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Did you cause this water quality issue

(Continued from page 1)

Over the past year we have had exceedances of chlorpyrifos in the following waterways:

Lone Tree Creek at Jack Tone Road on 8/11/2009 and 1/13/2010

Temple Creek at Jack Tone Road on 5/12/2009, 7/14/2009 & 9/15/2009

Duck Creek at Highway 4 on 6/9/2009, 7/14/2009 & 8/11/2009

French Camp Slough at Airport way on 10/6/2009

Check your records. Did you use this products 30 days prior to the sample date? Did you drain your tailwater into any of these waterways? If you did, you may have caused this exceedance.

There are several management practices farmers can implement to

address this water quality problem. Farmers can look at alternative products that are not as water soluble, preventing materials from migrating into waterways. Many pyrethroids are effective on controlling many of the insect populations, but farmers must be cautious of sediment runoff. Pyrethroids stick to soil particles and will enter the water ways if there is excessive soil erosion from the fields.

Another management practice is to install tailwater recovery ponds that reuse the runoff water from the end of the field and prevents irrigation run off from entering the waterways. These type of systems capture the tailwater and pump it back to the top of the field to be reused. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has programs available to help farmers pay for the expense of installing and building tailwater recovery systems. Contact

your local NRCS office for more information.

During the winter months when we have natural runoff from storm events, farmers must be aware of potential impacts to water quality from storm runoff. Materials applied in the fall & winter can leach into surface water during storm events. Growers need to make sure that materials applied during the fall and winter months are not applied right before storms that are expected to generate runoff from the fields. Timing and methods of application are important to prevent water quality issues in winter months.

For information on management practices to protect water quality visit our website at www.sjdeltawatershed.org or email the Coalition at info@sjdeltawatershed.org.