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Immediate Release

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Environment Department Receives Plan to Investigate Ground Water Contamination at J & M Dairy in Artesia

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has received a Stage 1 Abatement Plan proposal to investigate groundwater contamination at the J & M Dairy. The dairy is located at Route 456 North 13th Street in Artesia.

The dairy operates under an NMED discharge permit (DP-765) and is permitted to discharge up to 90,000 gallons per day of dairy wastewater that is collected in a concrete sump, pumped to a clay-lined lagoon, and applied via flood irrigation to approximately 342 acres of cropland. Groundwater is at depths ranging from approximately 35 to 77 feet below the ground. Maximum groundwater concentrations for nitrate, chloride, and total dissolved solids are 123, 365, 4,340 milligrams per liter (mg/L), respectively, all of which are above New Mexico groundwater standards. State groundwater quality standards for nitrate is 10 mg/L, 250 mg/L for chloride, and 1,000 mg/L for total dissolved solids.

The Stage 1 Abatement Plan proposal includes a detailed description of past site investigation activities conducted under DP-765 and proposed activities. Past activities have partially determined the magnitude and extent of contamination through the installation of monitoring wells and the sampling of groundwater on a quarterly basis.

New Mexico water quality regulations require responsible parties to remediate groundwater pollution. After the Stage 1 plan has been completed, a Stage 2 cleanup proposal will be submitted to NMED. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the Stage 2 plan and request a hearing. Public comment will be sought by NMED within 30 days of receiving the cleanup plan.

For more information, contact Adam Rankin, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314.

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