



BILL RICHARDSON
GOVERNOR

State of New Mexico
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
Office of the Secretary
Harold Runnels Building
1190 St. Francis Drive, P.O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-6110
Telephone (505) 827-2855



RON CURRY
SECRETARY

CINDY PADILLA
DEPUTY SECRETARY

April 5, 2007
For Immediate Release

Contact: Marissa Stone, NMED Communications Director
Telephone: (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475

Environment Department Receives Plan to Investigate Groundwater Contamination at 13 Dairies in Doña Ana County

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department received a Stage 1 Abatement Plan proposal to investigate groundwater contamination at 13 dairies located south of Las Cruces in Doña Ana County.

The plans are for Big Sky, Bright Star, Buena Vista #1, Buena Vista #2, D&J, Daybreak, Del Oro, Desertland, Dominguez, Gonzalez, Mountain View, River Valley and Sunset dairies.

The dairies operate under NMED Discharge Permits. Dairy wastewater is produced at each dairy and is discharged to lagoons and/or disposed by evaporation or application to crops. Past discharges have caused groundwater contamination at the dairies. Concentrations of nitrate, chloride, and total dissolved solids (TDS) have been measured in ground water at these dairies at levels above New Mexico ground water quality standards. The state groundwater quality standards are 10 mg/L for nitrate, 250 mg/L for chloride, and 1,000 mg/L for TDS.

The Stage 1 Abatement Plan proposal intends to compile a detailed report of soil and ground water data from past site investigation activities conducted at the dairies. Additional soil and groundwater investigations are proposed to be conducted based on historical information gathered in the report. The Stage 1 Abatement Plan also proposes interim remedial actions involving the placement of synthetic plastic lining on fifteen wastewater or storm-water lagoons to prevent infiltration of wastewater into groundwater. Six other existing clay lined lagoons will also be evaluated to determine if those structures are protective of groundwater.

New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission regulations require responsible parties to remediate groundwater pollution caused by their operations. After the Stage 1 investigation plan has been completed, a Stage 2 cleanup proposal will be submitted to NMED. The public will have an opportunity to comment in writing on the Stage 2 cleanup proposal and request a public meeting or hearing. Public comment will be sought by NMED within 90 days of receiving the Stage 2 cleanup plan.

For more information, call NMED Communications Director Marissa Stone at (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475.

###