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**Environment Department Receives Plans to Investigate Groundwater Contamination at Five Dairies near Roswell**

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department received Stage 1 Abatement Plan proposals to investigate soil and groundwater pollution at five Dairies located south and east of Roswell.

The department's Ground Water Quality Bureau required the dairies to submit those plans to address soil and groundwater pollution associated with their operations. The dairies include Double Aught, New Horizon, Queso Grande, Winchester (formerly Enchantment Dairy), and Top Line. Double Aught Dairy has submitted a joint plan with 125 LL Dairy (formerly Baca Linda).

“The facilities will work to address pollution of soil and groundwater from dairy wastewater” said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. “The department recently issued a revised draft of regulations that will govern requirements for the state's dairies to address such pollution.”

Scientific data from the department shows that more than 65 percent of dairies have polluted the groundwater beneath their facilities.

Dairy wastewater from the five dairies is discharged to lagoons and applied to crops and has resulted in groundwater pollution. Groundwater in the vicinity of the dairies is contaminated with nitrate, chloride, and total dissolved solids (TDS) at levels *above* New Mexico groundwater quality standards. State groundwater quality standards are 10 parts per million (mg/L) for nitrate, 250 mg/L for chloride, and 1,000 mg/L for TDS.

Double Aught and 125 LLC Dairies' joint abatement plan shows the current maximum concentrations in groundwater for nitrate, chloride, and TDS as 120, 940, and 4,800 mg/L, respectively. The abatement plan proposes the installation of one monitoring well, three soil borings and sampling from existing monitoring wells. New Horizon and Queso Grande Dairies' joint abatement plan shows that two of the most downgradient groundwater monitoring wells have current maximum concentrations in groundwater for nitrate, chloride, and TDS as 73, 360, and 4,700 mg/L, respectively. The abatement plan proposes to conduct short term pumping tests and four composite soil samples, and sampling from existing monitoring wells. Winchester and Top Line Dairies' joint abatement plan shows the current maximum concentrations in groundwater for nitrate, chloride, and TDS as 84, 1,300, and 20,000 mg/L, respectively. The abatement plan

proposes a groundwater slug test in three existing monitoring wells, sampling from existing monitoring wells and two production wells.

The Stage 1 Abatement Plan proposes an investigation of groundwater pollution through the collection of soil samples, the installation of monitoring wells, and the collection of ground water samples to define the extent of soil and ground water pollution. The purpose of a Stage 1 investigation is to define the extent of soil and groundwater pollution at a site where groundwater contamination has been identified. New Mexico's water quality regulations require responsible parties to remediate groundwater pollution. Once a Stage 1 Abatement Plan has been completed, a proposed Stage 2 Abatement Plan will be submitted to NMED outlining proposed actions to clean-up the pollution identified as a result of the Stage 1 investigation. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the Stage 2 Plan and may also request a hearing. The department will seek public comment within 90 days of receiving the plan.

The proposed discharge regulations specific to the dairy industry address issues such as how groundwater is best protected, the lining of wastewater lagoons and monitoring well requirements. New regulations, which the dairy industry requested, to provide more certainty in its requirements, are required as a result of legislation passed in the last session. Senate Bill 206 created changes to the state Water Quality Act and requires the state Water Quality Control Commission to adopt regulations to identify requirements for the discharge of dairy wastewater to protect groundwater quality and provide the dairy industry with clearly identified requirements. The regulations, which are available at <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/gwb/documents/RevisedDairyRegs.pdf> include requirements for protective liners for wastewater storage lagoons and an early warning system of sentry wells to monitor and protect underground aquifers from pollution.

Written comments on the revised discussion draft may be submitted to the department by e-mail at [dairy.regs@state.nm.us](mailto:dairy.regs@state.nm.us) , or mailed to "New Mexico Environment Department – Ground Water Quality Bureau, P.O. Box 5469, Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469." Written comments must be submitted by Sept. 8, 2009.

The department will hold stakeholder negotiations from Oct.15 through Nov. 30. The department invites any stakeholders who wish to participate in the negotiations to contact the NMED by Sept. 8. Please contact Bill Olson, Chief of the NMED Ground Water Quality Bureau, at (505) 827-2919.

According to the regulation development schedule approved by the WQCC, a public hearing before the WQCC is scheduled to begin on March 9, 2010. Public notice regarding the public hearing and hearing participation is scheduled to be published by Feb. 1, 2010.

A copy of the proposed Stage 1 Abatement Plan is available by contacting:

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