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## **Environment Department Receives Plans to Investigate Groundwater Contamination at Par 5 Dairy and Select Milk Producers near Roswell**

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department received a Stage 1 Abatement Plan proposal to investigate soil and groundwater pollution at Par 5 Dairy and Select Milk Producers in Dexter, N.M.

The department's Ground Water Quality Bureau required the dairy and milk producer, both located at 6839 Old Chisum Trail, to submit the plan to address soil and groundwater pollution associated with their operations.

Wastewater from the dairy is discharged to three synthetically lined lagoons and wastewater from the milk producer is discharged to a separate synthetically lined lagoon. Wastewater from both operations is applied to crops through pivot and flood irrigation. Storm water runoff is retained in two unlined impoundments and pumped out following rainstorms. Groundwater in the shallow aquifer is monitored regularly through wells at the site and is contaminated with nitrate, chloride, and total dissolved solids at levels exceeding 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. The proposal shows current maximum concentrations of nitrate, chloride, and TDS in groundwater as 15 mg/l, 610 mg/l, and 4,500 mg/l, respectively.

The Stage 1 Abatement Plan submitted by Par 5 and Select Milk Producers proposes an investigation of groundwater pollution through the use of improved management practices for contaminant source control, identification and evaluation of nearby domestic wells, and the possible installation of soil borings and new monitoring wells based on the domestic well evaluation. No additional collection of soil samples, installation of monitoring wells, or the collection of groundwater samples to define the extent of soil and ground water pollution is currently proposed. 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 which was 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.

Monitoring data available to the department shows that more than 65 percent of dairies in the state have groundwater contamination associated with their facilities. 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.

The department drafted new regulations for dairies as a result of legislation passed in the last regular session. Senate Bill 206 implemented changes to the New Mexico Water Quality Act and required the Water Quality Control Commission to adopt new regulations that identify specific requirements for the discharge of dairy wastewater to protect groundwater quality. The regulations, which the dairy industry requested to provide more certainty in laws governing dairies, are available at:

<http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/gwb/documents/RevisedDairyRegs.pdf> . Those regulations 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.

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 February 1, 2010.

A copy of the proposed Stage 1 Abatement Plan for Par 5 Dairy is available by contacting:

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