



Bill Richardson
Governor

**NEW MEXICO
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

Office of the Secretary

Harold Runnels Building
1190 Saint Francis Drive (87505)
PO Box 26110, Santa Fe, NM 87502
Phone (505) 827-2855 Fax (505) 827-2836
www.nmenv.state.nm.us



Ron Curry
Secretary
Jon Goldstein
Deputy Secretary

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

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

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department’s Ground Water Quality Bureau received a Stage 1 Abatement Plan proposal to investigate groundwater contamination at 12 dairies between the towns of Mesquite and Anthony in southern Doña Ana County.

NMED required those dairies, Big Sky, Bright Star, Buena Vista I, Buena Vista II, D & J, Daybreak, Del Oro, Dominguez, Gonzalez, Mountain View, River Valley and Sunset, to submit a Stage 1 Abatement Plan to address groundwater contamination from dairy operations. The dairies formed a consortium to respond as one to the Abatement Plan requirements.

Dairies produce wastewater that is discharged to lagoons or disposed by evaporation or application to crops. Past discharges have caused groundwater contamination. Groundwater is contaminated with nitrate, chloride, and total dissolved solids at levels above New Mexico ground water quality standards. The state groundwater quality standards are 10 milligrams per liter for nitrate, 250 mg/L for chloride and 1,000 mg/L for total dissolved solids.

The Stage 1 Abatement Plan proposal includes a partial description of past site investigation activities conducted under discharge plans and the installation of additional monitoring wells. Past activities have partially determined the magnitude and extent of contamination through the installation of monitoring wells and the sampling of groundwater.

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 the department. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the Stage 2 plan and request a hearing. Public comment will be sought by the department within 90 days of receiving the cleanup plan.

For more information, call Marissa Stone at (505) 827-0314.

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