



# TAD News

## April/May 2008

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John Cowan  
Executive Director

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**Next TAD Board Meeting:**  
**1 p.m., July 1**  
Grapevine, Texas

## TAD's plate is full of issues as spring heats up

TAD is working on a number of fronts on behalf of dairy producers. In this newsletter, I want to update you on some of these issues.

First, while the Texas Legislature will not convene until January, we already are preparing for the session. And with the Texas primary elections now decided, our political action efforts turn to the November general election with keen interest on many seats in the Texas Senate and House of Representatives.

TAD will continue to work with our elected officials and others when indications are that potential legislation could surface that impacts your business. High on our list of issues are ethanol, energy resources, fuel costs and other production costs that plague your financial reports.

Continuing concerns with water, both the availability and conservation of resources, may be the most pressing issue we will face in 2009 and beyond. I've spent considerable time this year with the High Plains Underground Water District in Region O wrestling with concerns it had with the Ogallala Aquifer and how livestock agriculture fits in with the state water plan. It's been interesting, to say the least. We will continue to work with all regional water districts where we can to provide accurate information on our industry so we maximize our opportunity to influence positive results.

By being proactive, we have the opportunity to help shape policy affecting our future in agriculture.

Among its many issues, the TAD Board spends a lot of time on environmental compliance of dairy operations. TAD invests a lot of time, energy and resources with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality staff working on many different issues such as pending Total Maximum Daily Loads in watersheds that may be impaired and where dairies are located. TAD also reviews regulations such as surface water quality standards, soil sampling protocols and, not the least, the general CAFO permit that is **(Continued, "Update," page 2)**

### Manager's Update

John Cowan

## TAD weighs in as group studies water quality standard changes

The Texas Association of Dairymen is making its voice heard about proposed revisions to the state's water quality standards.

TAD manager John Cowan recently attended the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) Surface Water Quality Standards Advisory Workgroup, which met in Austin to hear comments from stakeholders on proposed revisions to the 2000 Texas Surface Water Quality Standards (30 TAC Chapter 307) and the procedures to implement the water quality standards.

The workgroup's guidance was being sought on various topics, including nutrient criteria development and application, toxic criteria changes per Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) criteria updates, implementation of EPA's guidance on recreational indicators and uses, and site-specific criteria



changes to classified and unclassified water bodies.

Recreational uses of surface water was one topic of discussion. The TCEQ rules now view stream segments, regardless of water availability, under the same criteria.

TAD believes this needs to be changed to reflect the real world. A dry creek evaluated by the same standards as a stream with historic and continuous flows, when it comes to measuring whether the creek can sustain aquatic life or be navigable. When water runs in creeks only during an identified rainfall event, the use attainability is not the same as a stream supporting contact recreation.

Water quality standards revision issues are complex and will be difficult to resolve. TAD will continue to work with this group and other rural and urban interest to find common ground. ▪

## TAD Board Action

The Texas Association of Dairymen Board of Directors took the following action during its April meeting in Grapevine:

- Adopted a policy regarding funding requests to TAD which states only matters related to Texas issues or Texas dairy producers are eligible for possible financial support.
- Accepted the 2007 TAD audit conducted by Boucher, Morgan and Young
- Heard a report by Texas A&M University's Texas Agri Life Sciences Extension about TAD's financial support from the past several years and about the vacant state dairy specialist position.
- Received an update on the status of Hidden View Dairy's pending individual CAFO permit and contested hearing case with the TCEQ. ▪

## "Update," continued from page 1

currently under revision. From time to time, we work directly with federal Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 staff in Dallas with concerns they may have with agriculture.

TAD prides itself on maintaining a good and positive working relationship with these agencies.

Animal health and welfare is the last topic I will mention. This past year, many of you felt the rule change on dairy animal ID and movement by the Texas Animal Health Commission. Some will argue against the rule changes and others will support it; however, once the pain of making the adjustments to your operation are made, the goal is to keep Texas TB-free.

This short summary does not cover all we are doing at TAD, but I wanted to let you know we are working for Texas dairy producers on numerous fronts.

Please let me know if you have comments on any of these topics. ▪

## TCEQ chairman tours Panhandle dairy

The chairman of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality – which has authority over dairy permits – got a first-hand look at a Panhandle Dairy during a West Texas agriculture tour on April 17.

Buddy Garcia visited the Van Ryn Dairy Farm of Rick Van Ryn near Hartley, Texas. Accompanying Garcia was Mark Long, TAD Board chairman.

"I think the tour was extremely beneficial for Chairman Garcia because he was able to obtain a better understanding of how a dairy operates and how the farm is managed under TCEQ rules," Long said. "I think this will serve him well as he considers issues that impact our industry."

The tour was facilitated by the Texas Cattle Feeders Association, Texas Pork Producers and the Texas Association of Dairymen. It also included stops at Cactus Feed Yards and Premium Standard Farms. ▪

## Waco gets fine from TCEQ for discharge

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) in April fined the City of Waco \$54,000 for two sewage spills that occurred in April 2007, one spill of about 100,000 gallons and one of more than 5 million gallons. In both instances, the sewage was discharged into the Brazos River.

The TCEQ postponed approval of the penalty at an earlier meeting until city officials could appear before the commissioners.

Commissioner Larry Soward stated in the hearing, "I just want the city to know that we very intently listen to them when they are raising water quality issues of concern to them. We want them to be keenly aware of others downstream of them who have the same interests. The Golden Rule applies."

TAD attorney Jim Bradbury attended the hearing and asked to speak, but was denied the opportunity by the commissioners. ▪



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