



TAD News

January 2008

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Next TAD Board Meeting:
1 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 27
Grapevine, Texas

TAD helping drive study of Leon River pollutants

TMDLs – what are they and how do they impact you? TMDL, or Total Maximum Daily Load, is a term applied to a watershed declared impaired due to violations of federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) water quality standards and placed on the EPA's 303d list.

Manager's Update
John Cowan

In essence, it determines the total amount a stream, impaired for a certain pollutant, can receive of that pollutant and still meet EPA minimum water quality standards. In Texas, more than 300 impaired segments of rivers, streams or water bodies are on the 303d list.

Texas dairymen will continue to face extreme scrutiny from regulators, environmentalists and uninformed citizens over how they manage their farm's animal waste management program.

This is the primary reason TAD has taken a lead role in working with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB), county leaders and local citizens on TMDL development.

A good example of TAD's efforts along with the valuable assistance of local dairymen is the Leon River TMDL for segments of that river from Lake Proctor to just below Hamilton.

Our persistent efforts have led to working with the TCEQ, TSSWCB and Leon River stakeholders on a TMDL/Watershed Protection Plan initiative. As data is gathered and computer modeling is updated, all potential pollutant sources in the watershed will be equally evaluated, not just permitted CAFOs or municipal water treatment plants.

In the Leon River, we also are evaluating bacterial sources from other species typically not considered in conventional TMDLs, such as wildlife, migratory birds and feral hogs. Without TAD's involvement, the Leon River TMDL primarily would have targeted dairymen in the watershed rather than sources that make up the bulk of the pollutant loading in the river today. ■

New barn style can improve cow health, milk output

*By Harry DeWit, High Plains Dairy, Friona
TAD Board of Directors*

Cross-ventilation is a fairly new concept to the dairy industry, and the adoption of this facility type seems to be spreading across the upper Midwest and other parts of the country. I first heard about these barns about two years ago at a dairy conference in Albuquerque. A few months later, I saw the barns firsthand when a group of dairymen from the Panhandle area traveled to South Dakota.

I really liked several things about the barns we visited, primarily consistency. These barns provide the ability to control variations in the environment – temperature, wind, moisture – thus providing the cows a more consistent environment in which to live and make milk. And the employees seem to be happy about working in an environment without all the variations as well.



These barns were very interesting to me since I was planning to expand our existing facility. My initial plan was to build two more "conventional" freestall barns behind the existing one. Either way, my plan was to bring the outside (Continued, "Barn," page 2)

“Barn,” continued from page 1

cows inside (about 40 percent of my herd) and increase my herd size as I made the transition from 3X milking to 2X milking.

For me, the consistency advantage of these facilities led to my decision.

I decided to remodel my original freestall barn and add eight more rows of cows, which directly attached to my existing barn. It is a retrofit, and therefore looks a little bit different than the ones we visited, but we feel comfortable with our decision and believe it will still provide the consistency we wanted to attain.

We are looking forward to the next 12 months as we will get to see it operate in various environments (spring winds, summer heat, etc.) ▪

In-state movement rule enforcement delayed

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) has delayed enforcement through March 31 of a new cattle tuberculosis requirement that Texas dairy cattle be identified prior to movement within the state.

The delay will give producers adequate time to select and acquire ID tags, according to the TAHC, which is encouraging voluntary compliance with the new regulation through March 31. Under the new rule, Texas dairy cattle, regardless of age or sex, must be identified prior to in-state movement, and owners must keep a record of the cattle they identify. The tags should remain on the animal for life.

For more information, visit www.tahc.state.tx.us. ▪

TAD distributes 2008 environmental calendar

The Texas Association of Dairymen's 2008 environmental calendar was mailed in mid December to each active dairy in Texas. TAD encourages each dairy to follow all required recordkeeping requirements for their farm. The calendar is provided to assist with recordkeeping.

Not only do regulators require good recordkeeping, but records could be your best friend if someone challenges your management of your farm.

If you did not receive your calendar, contact TAD. ▪



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And they're off! Legislative races begin

By Shayne Woodard

TAD legislative consultant

Now that the filing deadline for the 2008 legislative elections has passed (Jan. 2), those with same-party challenges are campaigning in earnest for the state primary election on March 4. The general election will be Nov. 4.

Texas Senate Races to be settled in the Republican primary (no Democratic challengers in November) include Tommy Williams of The Woodlands and Craig Estes of Wichita Falls. No Democratic races will be settled by the primary election.

Key House races to watch in the Republican primary include seats held by these incumbents (with district numbers): Betty Brown (4), Byron Cook (8), Charlie Howard (26), Charles "Doc" Anderson (56), Phil King (61), Jerry Madden (67), Nathan Macias (73), Pat Haggerty (78), Buddy West (81), Delwin Jones (83), Charlie Geren (99), Thomas Latham (101), Frank Corte (122), Joe Crabb (127), John Davis (129) and Corbin Van Arsdale (130).

The District 97 seat, vacated by the retirement of Anna Mowery, was won in a special election by a Democrat, and several Republicans are vying to win it back.

Key House races to watch in the Democratic primary include seats held by these incumbents (with district numbers): Dora Olivo (27), Kino Flores (36), Aaron Pena (40), Kevin Bailey (140) and Borris Miles (146).

Five open House seats currently held by Republicans and two open House seats currently held by Democrats also are in the ballot. ▪

New I-9 form required for new hires

As of Dec. 26, 2007, employers must use a new Employment Eligibility and Verification (I-9) form for new hires.

The new form has an updated list of documents for verifying the identification of workers and their authorization to work in the United States.

The form can be found at TAD's Web site, www.milk4texas.org under "Labor Resources" or at the IRS' Web site, www.uscis.gov under "Immigration Forms." ▪