



TAD News

March 2010

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John Cowan
Executive Director
Darren Turley
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Board of Directors

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Richard DeVuyst, 1st Vice Chair
Joe Osterkamp, 2nd Vice Chair
Reta Dyess, Secretary
Karin Kuiper, Treasurer
Richard Avila
Will Collier
Gary DeVos
Larry Hancock
Joel Hettinga
David Hinders
Tom Hoff
Brad Johnson
Johan Koke
Michael Mund
Lynn Ramsey

Next TAD Board Meeting:
2 p.m., April 8
Sulphur Springs, Texas

Water quality changes would benefit dairies

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) conducted a public hearing in Austin on March 11 to accept written comments and hear public testimony on the proposed revisions to Chapter 307 of the Texas Administrative Code dealing with water quality standards.

The Texas Association of Dairymen filed written comments supporting the proposed changes, which are viewed as not bad for dairy farmers or agriculture in general. The entire proposed revisions – quite lengthy and detailed – can be found at the TCEQ's Web site, www.tceq.state.tx.us/nav/eq/eq_swqs.html.

The TCEQ is charged with issues regarding designation of a body of water for appropriate recreation use and associated bacteria concentration criteria. The proposed revisions include a multi-tiered approach to recreation that recognizes the real recreational potential of water bodies across the state.

For example, TCEQ proposes to significantly increase the mean standard for E.coli. What does this mean?

The change on E.coli is consistent with federal Environmental Protection Agency standards, and the change will remove a significant number of water bodies from the 303d list. This becomes significant when TCEQ reviews the 303d list to evaluate, assess and develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for those impaired water bodies.

Not only will farmers, ranchers and other landowners located in the drainage area of the impaired segment of the water body benefit by this, but so will municipal waste water systems and small communities.

Environmentalists/activists will oppose these changes. However, the changes also are supported by the fact that no evidence shows humans have gotten sick from ingesting bacteria during recreation in these waters.

Changing the standard is appropriate because it will allow TCEQ to allocate its personnel, time and resources to areas that are a problem. ■

Manager's Update

John Cowan

Capitol Report

Not so fast: Some races still undecided

By Shayne Woodard

While the March primary determined most slots for the November general election, April runoffs must determine some legislative races. Also, the race for Senate District 22 – which includes Waco and some of the dairy-rich Central Texas area – also is up in the air.

The Republican primary was won by incumbent Kip Averitt, even though he said he would not return to office due to health reasons. In addition, he resigned on March 17, meaning a May 8 special election must fill his current term. Then his spot on the general election ballot, for the next four-year term, must be filled by the district's county political party chairmen.

So far, Burleson insurance agent Darren Yancy (who lost in the primary), Hood County resident Brian Birdwell and former senator David Sibley of Waco will be in the special election. ■

TAD Board Action

The Texas Association of Dairymen Board of Directors took the following action during its February meeting:

- Approved the annual reorganization of the Board, based on weighted average allocations. Cooperatives and their number of seats for 2010 will be DFA Southwest (6), DFA Southeast (3), Lone Star (2), Select (2), Hilmar Cheese (2) and Associate Member (1).
- Seated new Board members Gary DeVos of DFA Southwest and Richard Avila of Hilmar.
- Elected new Board officers (see listing on front).
- Supported an amicus brief being filed by the Texas Cattle Feeders in a "right to farm" legal action pending in Amarillo and provide up to \$1,500 toward legal costs.
- Endorsed Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples for reelection.

The next Board meeting will be April 8 in Sulphur Springs.



Texas Association of Dairymen
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Grapevine, TX 76051-8734



John Cowan celebrates his award with his family.

TAD director wins statewide ag honor

TAD Executive Director John Cowan was named 2009 Cooperator of the Year by the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council (TACC) in a surprise presentation at TACC's recent annual conference in Corpus Christi. After 38 years in the dairy industry, Cowan will formally retire on March 31 but will continue to consult for TAD

In presenting the award, Ken Leiber, president of the Texas Livestock Marketing Association, called Cowan "a man of extreme importance to agriculture."

"He has earned a reputation as a hard working, knowledgeable, honest and loyal representative to the industry," Leiber said. ■

TVMDL proposing to raise fees

The Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory is proposing changes to its fee structure, effective June 1.

It is accepting comment on the proposals through April 16.

TAD is not opposing the fee increases because it recognizes they are necessary in order for the TVMDL to continue to efficiently provide quality, state-of-the-art testing services in a timely and accurate manner.

Some examples include: a 20 percent increase in all in-state testing fees. Necropsy fees for bovines, in-state, would increase to \$50 for less than 200 pounds, \$100 for 200-500 pounds and \$150 for more than 500 pounds. ■

Texas AgriLife Extension Service Save the Date – 2010

April 12-13 – MidSouth Ruminant Nutrition Conference, Arlington. For more information, visit www.txanc.org.

May 27 – Southwest Dairy Field Day, Hart, Texas. For more information or registration, visit

<https://agrilifevents.tamu.edu/events/details.cfm?id=574>

Online Education Opportunity (DOPA credits):

Environmental Quality Management of Animal Feeding Operations – various animal waste handling, storage, treatment and utilization processes and systems and best management practices and available technologies to reduce air and water pollution from animal feeding operations. Ten, one-hour modules available. For more information or to register, visit <http://texasdairymatters.org/dopa.html>.

EPA targeting CAFOs, animal waste

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its "National Enforcement Initiatives for Fiscal Years 2011–2013," and the number two initiative is "Preventing Animal Waste from Contaminating Surface and Ground Waters."

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) also were on the EPA's "National Enforcement Initiatives" list for 2008-2010.

According to the EPA, if not properly controlled, manure from CAFOs can "overflow from lagoons or run off from the fields into nearby surface waters or seep into ground water, carrying disease causing pathogens, nutrients, or other contaminants into the water."

With an estimated 19,000 CAFOs nationwide, livestock agriculture appears to be a permanent part of the federal enforcement landscape.

Although the EPA has not announced increased enforcement focused on CAFOs, TAD has seen increased EPA activity on Texas dairy farms.

TAD urges its members to make sure they are in compliance with the appropriate state and federal regulations. ■