

# North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Agricultural Lands Discharge Program Development

Advisory Sub-Group Meetings  
May 3rd, 4th, 8th and 9th  
2012



# Program Purpose

- Water quality compliance program to address discharges of waste associated with agricultural lands
- Meet and maintain water quality standards
- Protect beneficial uses of waters of the state
- Comply with Federal and State law
  - Implement TMDLs and address impaired waters listings
  - Meet State Nonpoint Source Policy that implements California Water Code
  - Protect high quality waters

# Presentation Overview

- Draft products requested by group
- Products developed by Regional Board staff
  - Draft scope of work
  - Draft program framework
- Purpose of subgroup meetings
  - Present draft products
  - Receive comments from group
  - Incorporate recommendations and present to full Advisory Group in June, 2012
- Final recommendation for scope/framework from Advisory Group at or following June meeting

# Program Scope

- Broad coverage of agricultural activities
- Activities included
  - Vineyards and orchards
  - Row crops and field crops
  - Forage crops
  - Irrigated pasture
  - Medicinal marijuana farms
  - Nurseries
- Dryland grazing not included

# Outside of Scope

- Agriculture generating less than x crop value or revenue (excluding medicinal marijuana) or
- Commercial agriculture less than x acres (can vary based on land use) or
- Agriculture for 4H, FFA, or other club projects

AND

**No tailwater discharge**

# Scope Refined

- Farmed acreage – agricultural lands where crops are produced
- Associated facilities including private roads

# Program Framework

- Tier 1 defined by physical criteria related to risk to water quality
- Tier 2 and 3 are distinguished by the level of planning, implementation, and reporting
- All tiers have Terms and Conditions and Standard Provisions
- Regional Board may adopt Waste Discharge Requirements for individual operations as needed

# Tier 1

- Must meet all Tier 1 criteria
- Criteria based on risk associated with physical characteristics of the farm or ranch
- Represents the lowest risk to water quality
- No enrollment
- No monitoring or reporting requirements



# Tier 2

- Does not meet Tier 1 criteria
- Meets Tier 2 requirements
- Farm actively managed for water quality protection
- Monitoring and reporting shows that practices are effective
- Monitoring and reporting could lessen over time based on performance
- Lower inspection priority for Regional Board staff
- Enrollment and fee

# Tier 3

- Does not meet either the Tier 1 criteria or the Tier 2 requirements
- Tier 3 monitoring and reporting requirements would be more stringent than Tier 2
- Higher inspection priority for Regional Board staff
- Enrollment and fee

# Ideas for Farm Water Quality Management Performance Goals – Related to Risk

- Riparian Area Management
- Tailwater and Tile Drain water Management
- Stormwater Quality and Erosion Control
- Road Erosion and Maintenance
- Pesticide Application

# Tier 1

- For farmed acreage and associated facilities
  - less than x% slope
  - outside of riparian area for perennial or fish bearing streams
  - x feet from conveyance or other stream
  - Roads less than x miles or mi/acre density
- No tailwater, drainwater or frost water discharges
- No use of certain pesticides
- Cover crop established for vineyards and orchards

## Tier 2

- Riparian areas are designated and managed for establishment and maintenance of riparian vegetation and site potential shade
- Nutrient Management Plan developed and being implemented where nutrients are applied on over x acres
- Sediment control BMPs are functioning and new sediment sources are addressed as they develop
- Road Management Plan (RMP) has been developed and is being implemented for more than x miles or miles/acre or roads
- For farm/ranches that discharge tailwater, an Irrigation Management Plan is developed and implemented to address and/or eliminate polluted tailwater discharges

## Terms and Conditions (Partial List)

- Nutrients applied at agronomic rates
- Cover crop established for vineyards and orchards
- Minimum setback from streambank for all activities besides grazing
- Riparian Grazing Management Plan required for riparian areas where grazing takes place
- Other management plans may be required
  - On an individual or watershed basis

# Planning Options

- Plans may be combined into a single water quality management plan for the property or combined with other planning documents
- Plans may be developed
  - Individually
  - Through a coalition or other group
  - As part of a third party program
- Plans must be implemented and monitored individually
- Optional third party certification