



# Fact Sheet

## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Agriculture in Lake County

How does the Central Valley Water Board regulate irrigated agriculture?

The Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program ([ILRP](#)) is a Central Valley Water Board program that addresses discharge of wastes such as sediments, pesticides and nitrates from commercial irrigated lands. The Central Valley Water Board adopts ILRP General Orders to protect surface water and groundwater and to reduce impacts of irrigated agricultural discharges to waters of the State. ILRP staff conducts compliance and enforcement activities to ensure growers comply with Central Valley Water Board regulations and the ILRP General Orders. Anyone who irrigates land to produce crops or pasture commercially must enroll in the ILRP.

Irrigated agriculture occurs in only a small portion (< 2%) of Lake County's total acreage, with less than 12,000 irrigated acres in Lake County's total acreage of approximately 850,000. Irrigated acreage consists primarily of wine grapes, walnuts, and pears. Dryland farming (no irrigation) of walnuts, wine grapes, and pasture hay make up approximately 7,000 unirrigated acres in production. Dryland growers are not regulated by the ILRP.

How does the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program address potential pollution concerns?

The Central Valley Water Board adopted the Sacramento Valley ILRP [General Order](#) in 2014. The General Order regulates commercial irrigated lands and requires implementation of management practices, including those to address erosion and sediment discharge. Within the Clear Lake watershed, ILRP operations are required to implement practices with the goal of reducing pollution, such as phosphorus loading.

Is there any monitoring conducted in the Clear Lake watershed? Where are the ILRP monitoring sites?

ILRP monitoring is conducted as required by the General Order. The two monitoring sites within the Clear Lake subwatershed are the representative site at Middle Creek upstream of Highway 20; and the special project site McGaugh Slough at Finley Road East. The Middle Creek site was chosen specifically to avoid influence from the town of Upper Lake. Monitoring for nutrients at McGaugh Slough was initiated in 2012 to provide additional data for the Clear Lake Nutrient Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and to assess the effectiveness of implemented management practices.

What do Central Valley Water Board ILRP staff review during their inspections?

Central Valley Water Board staff conduct on-farm inspections of irrigated agriculture. During these inspections, ILRP staff evaluate the following:

- Farm evaluations
- Nitrogen management plans
- Irrigation supply wellheads
- Fertilizer and pesticide storage areas
- Sediment and erosion control
- Other management practice effectiveness and appropriateness

What types of management practices are implemented to address erosion and nutrient input concerns in Lake County?

- 95% of growers get professional assistance from a Pest Control Advisor (PCA), Certified Crop Advisor (CCA), agronomist, soil scientist, or Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- More than 90% use drip, sprinklers, or microdrip as their primary irrigation method
- 78% use cover crops or native vegetation to reduce erosion
- 75% use minimum tillage to minimize erosion potential

Nearly all growers use additional irrigation and cultural practices to minimize erosion potential and soil loss from their lands.

Is Central Valley Water Board staff regulating vineyards in Lake County?

Yes, ILRP staff regulate and conduct inspections of vineyards in Lake County. In addition, Central Valley Water Board staff follow up on specific concerns brought to our attention from the public regarding irrigated lands.

What observed practices did Central Valley Water Board staff find at recent inspections of vineyards?

In February 2017, ILRP staff conducted four regulatory compliance inspections at commercial vineyards in Lake County. The inspections included reviews of farm evaluations, nitrogen management plans, and pertinent site features, such as perimeter areas that may drain offsite, irrigation supply wellheads, fertilizer and pesticide storage areas, and farm equipment areas.

Observed management practices included vegetated buffers, grasses between the vine rows (cover crops), and in some cases, farm roads were closed and stabilized for the winter. Staff found that the vineyard operations inspected were applying adequate management practices to minimize winter erosion runoff to Clear Lake.

How can I find more information about the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program?

ILRP staff can be reached via email at [IrrLands@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:IrrLands@waterboards.ca.gov). You can also receive ILRP-related notifications, updates and other correspondence by email. Subscribe on-line to our electronic mailing list using the link below and selecting the "Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program" box. [www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email\\_subscriptions/reg5\\_subscribe.html](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg5_subscribe.html)

More Lake County Agriculture Resources:

Lake County Department of Agriculture

- "The Lake County Department of Agriculture and Weights and Measures is entrusted with the mission of promoting and protecting the agricultural industry of the County and its environment, ensuring the health and safety of the County's citizens, and fostering confidence and equity in the marketplace through education and the fair and uniform enforcement of laws, regulations, and ordinances enacted by the people of the State of California and Lake County."
- <http://www.co.lake.ca.us/Government/Directory/Ag.htm>

Lake County Farm Bureau

- "Lake County Farm Bureau (LCFB) is a non-profit organization of farmers and ranchers that represent over 500 farm families and companies that reside in Lake County, California. The Lake County Farm Bureau promotes agriculture in Lake County and advocates on issues relating to farming, ranching and rural California."
- <http://www.lakecofb.com/>

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