

State of California  
Regional Water Quality Control Board  
San Diego Region

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT  
May 8, 2013

ITEM: 5

SUBJECT: Information Item: Water Quality Management Training Requirement of the Agricultural and Nursery Operations Waiver and the University of California Cooperative Extension Irrigated Lands Education Program. (*Julie Chan*)

PURPOSE: To provide the Board and the public with information on the need for water quality management training in the agricultural community and on resources available from the University of California Cooperative Extension.

RECOMMENDATION(S): This item is for information only. The Board will take no action.

KEY ISSUES: The University of California Cooperative Extension's (UCCE) Irrigated Lands Program offers a range of resources and tools to assist growers with meeting waiver requirements.

DISCUSSION: Discharges from lands used for agricultural or nursery operations can be significant sources of sediment, dissolved solids, nutrients, pesticides, and other pollutants. These pollutants can adversely affect the quality of waters if growing operations, irrigation return flows, and storm water runoff are not properly managed. For example, water bodies in this region on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List for nutrient-related impairments tend to be in watersheds with the most agricultural land use acreage.

In 2007, when the Conditional Waiver for Agricultural and Nursery Operations (Ag Waiver) was adopted, the San Diego County Farm Bureau reported that 60 percent or more of the farms in the San Diego Region were small operations on parcels of 10 acres or less. Furthermore, the owners and/or operators did not occupy the parcels or were present only part of the year. Out of concern that these small and often part-time operations were unaware of the consequences of poor water quality management, the San Diego Water Board included a self-assessment and an

education requirement in the Ag Waiver. The purpose of the self-assessment is for growers to identify the pollutants present at a site, and the potential for runoff and/or infiltration. The education requirement is that operators complete at least 2 hours of water quality management-related training annually, and have proof of training available on site for inspection.

Many organizations in our region provide information and/or assistance to growers such as the County Farm Bureaus, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Resource Conservation Districts, and the UCCE. In particular, the UCCE has developed several tools and services to assist growers with waiver requirements. The UCCE offers two hours of water education covering six water quality topics that alternate from year to year. A certificate of completion is provided in each class. Tools for self-assessment and record keeping are made available both in class and online, along with grower resources to assist in employee training. A variety of management resources and BMP's are available on the UCCE website along with slide presentations on select agricultural water quality topics.

**LEGAL CONCERNS:**

None.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

None.

**PUBLIC NOTICE:**

Public notice of this item was provided in the Meeting Notice and Agenda for the May 8, 2013 Board Meeting.