



Coalition for Urban/Rural Environmental Stewardship  
www.curesworks.org

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## **USDA Approves Funding for Water Quality Improvements in Stanislaus and Merced Counties**

*(Modesto, CA – July 30, 2009)* The United States Department of Agriculture announced today an award of \$2 million that will provide funding for qualified farmers and ranchers in Stanislaus and Merced counties in 2009; annual funds are anticipated to total \$10 million over the next five years. The funding, available almost immediately, comes under the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) created in the 2008 Farm Bill and will be directed to farms and dairies with operations bordering waterways in the two county region.

Key in securing the AWEP program in the 2008 Farm Bill were U.S. Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-Merced/Modesto/Stockton), chairman of the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture, and U.S. Rep. Jim Costa (D-Bakersfield/Fresno), a member of the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Conservation. The applicant for the funding to this nationally competitive program was the Coalition for Urban Rural Environmental Stewardship (CURES) which worked in conjunction with the Partnership for Agriculture and the Environment, a coalition of local interests ranging from Stanislaus and Merced County Farm Bureaus, Almond Board of California, and Western United Dairymen to the Environmental Defense Fund (full partner list below).

“Securing this USDA funding shows the power that comes when agricultural and environmental interests combine their energies to help growers solve water quality problems,” says Parry Klassen, Executive Director of CURES. “Representatives Cardoza and Costa should be commended for their efforts in making AWEP a reality. The benefits from projects supported by AWEP will last for decades.”

The AWEP funding will be directed to farms and dairies that operate along waterways shown to be impaired by farm inputs through water monitoring performed by the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition and Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition, which also are members of the Partnership for Agriculture and the Environment. These two organizations represent landowners under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) mandated by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. Growers must make changes to irrigation and farming practices to meet requirements of the ILRP and can use AWEP funding for irrigation drainage sediment basins and irrigation tailwater recirculation systems, among other practices.

Applications for AWEP funding will be administered by county offices of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with CURES providing program outreach and assistance with identifying and screening funding applicants.

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*CURES was founded in 1997 to support educational efforts for agricultural and urban communities focusing on the proper and judicious use of pest control products. CURES' focus is to implement educational programs, coordinate research and provide information and professional expertise to users and applicators of crop protection chemicals and pest control products to enhance and protect the environment, as well as public and worker health and safety. On the web at [www.curesworks.org](http://www.curesworks.org)*

***Partnership for Agriculture and the Environment***  
**Members List**

*(Contact information/quotable sources available on request)*

*Details about partners at <http://www.curesworks.org/bmp/20090722Press.asp>*

Almond Board of California  
California Dairy Campaign  
Coalition for Urban Rural Environmental Stewardship  
East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition  
East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District  
Environmental Defense Fund Center for Conservation Incentives  
Merced County Department of Agriculture and Weights and Measures  
Stanislaus County Farm Bureau  
Stanislaus County Department of Agriculture and Weights and Measures  
Tuolumne River Trust  
University of California Cooperative Extension  
West Stanislaus Resource Conservation District  
Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition  
Western United Dairyman

- **Almond Board of California** will solicit its members for participation in the grant program through outreach to its members. ABC is committed to developing and promoting almond production practices that are based on sound scientific research, common sense and a respect for the environment. To this end, they fund a number of initiatives beneficial to the industry including environmental programs in air quality, crop protection, endangered species, water quality and environmental stewardship.
- **CA Dairy Campaign** is a subdivision of the California Farmers Union (CFU) and is actively engaged in assisting dairy producers address water quality concerns. They are committed to providing producers with access to the best information and management tools available. They have coordinated numerous on-farm water quality and nutrient management projects, and have received several grants to provide economic and environmental demonstrations of improved management practices. CDC has worked with dairymen to develop Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans, in cooperation with NRCS, and will continue to do so through this partnership. CDC will also conduct outreach and provide technical support to dairy producers on this project.
- **Coalition for Urban and Rural Environmental Stewardship (CURES)** will assist partners in identifying funding recipients and develop project reports. CURES is a non-profit organization founded in 1997 with the mission of promoting scientifically based management and stewardship practices to address water quality concerns when using pesticides and fertilizers in agricultural and urban settings. To fulfill this mission, CURES staff designs and implements water quality and stewardship projects in the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys. CURES will play a key role in

partner coordination, producer outreach, project evaluation and reporting. Since 2001, CURES has implemented a number of major water quality projects in both the San Joaquin and Sacramento River watersheds. These projects have required extensive partnerships with a range of stakeholders including the Regional Water Board, the Department of Pesticide Regulation, watershed coalitions, Universities, County Ag Commissioners, RCDs, water districts, pest control advisors and individual growers and researchers.

- **Eastside San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition (ESJWQC)** will provide water monitoring data and assist CURES in identifying funding recipients. ESJWQC provides annual outreach and monitoring programs and works closely with growers and PCAs to address local water quality problems. The Coalition's goals are: 1) file required reports with the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) to provide ILRP coverage for members of the coalition, 2) develop and implement an economical and scientifically valid water monitoring program for area rivers and agricultural drains (as required by the waiver), 3) spread costs equitably among farm land owners/operators who are coalition members, and 4) communicate to landowners where water monitoring indicates problems and work to solve those problems.
- **East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District (ESRCD)**. Resource Conservation Districts (RCD) will provide administrative and organizational support and planning assistance. RCDs are non-regulatory, legal subdivisions of the State of California, authorized to enhance and protect the State's natural resources. Established in 1996, ESRCD covers 984 square miles to the east of the San Joaquin River. It provides technical, financial and educational assistance to help both rural and urban communities conserve, protect, and restore their natural resources, and has served as the lead on several projects to promote water quality, improve dairy waste management, support environmental stewardship and protect endangered species habitat.
- **Environmental Defense Fund's (EDF) Center for Conservation Incentives (CCI)** will be available to consult on fish and wildlife, permitting, and partnership administration, as needed. CCI develops innovative approaches to conserve working landscapes through market incentives. EDF's science and policy staff bring to the partnership experience in ecological restoration planning; implementation of water quality projects in the San Joaquin Valley, Lake Erie basin, and Chesapeake Bay region; and development of Safe Harbor agreements on private agricultural lands.
- **Stanislaus County Department of Agriculture and Weights and Measures**. Also referred to as the Office of the Agricultural Commissioner, this entity will provide outreach and training support through meetings and publications, and serve as the source for pesticide use data to the watershed coalitions. The Ag Commissioner supports and protects the well-being of agriculture, business and the community in Stanislaus County. The Office of the Agricultural Commissioner is responsible for the regulation of pesticide use, and implements active continuing education, training and outreach programs.
- **Merced County Department of Agriculture and Weights and Measures**. Also referred to as the Office of the Agricultural Commissioner, this entity will provide outreach and training support through meetings and publications, and serve as the source for pesticide use data. The Ag Commissioner supports and protects the well-being of agriculture, business and the community in Merced County. The Office of the Agricultural Commissioner is responsible for the regulation of pesticide use, and implements active continuing education, training and outreach programs.
- **Stanislaus County Farm Bureau** will provide outreach assistance and publicity for the project with its weekly radio show and newspaper, the Farm News. This county Farm Bureau is a nonprofit voluntary membership organization whose mission is to serve as the voice of Stanislaus County agriculture. With more than 3,000 members, the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau provides programs to assist farmers and educate the general public of the needs and importance of agriculture.

- **Tuolumne River Trust** is a non-profit organization that promotes stewardship of the Tuolumne River and its tributaries to ensure a healthy watershed. Since 1981 the trust has been an advocate for improved water flows and a healthy riparian corridor for spawning fish, waterfowl and other river-dependent species. Specific initiatives have included strategic land acquisitions, habitat restoration on preserved parcels, and public education and outings on the river.
- **University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE)** will provide outreach support in their six separate commodity based newsletters, existing outreach events, and trainings for producers. The University of California is one of the preeminent agricultural and environmental research institutions in the world. County farm advisors, supported by campus-based research specialists, will provide technical, research-based solutions to a wide variety of water quality and production challenges encountered in the project area.
- **Western United Dairymen (WUD)** will conduct outreach to dairy producers on this project. WUD is the largest dairy producer trade association in California formed to keep dairies in business and assist with many issues including environmental compliance. WUD has formed Western United Resource Development (WURD) to administer grants to benefit the California dairy industry, including the Proposition 50 water quality grant that is currently being administered to implement on farm water quality improvement projects. WUD has also formed Western United Environmental Services (WUES) to help dairymen comply with the Dairy WDR and protect water quality. WUES is currently developing Nutrient Management Plans as Technical Service Providers, in cooperation with NRCS, and will continue to do so through this partnership.
- **Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition (WSJRWC)** will provide water monitoring data and assist CURES in identifying funding recipients. WSJRWC provides annual outreach and monitoring programs and works closely with growers and PCAs to address local water quality problems. The Coalition's goals are: 1) file required reports with the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) to provide conditional waiver coverage for members of the coalition, 2) develop and implement an economically and scientifically valid water monitoring program for area rivers and agricultural drains (as required by the waiver), 3) spread costs equitably among farm land owners/operators who are coalition members, and 4) communicate to landowners where water monitoring indicates problems and work to solve those problems.
- **West Stanislaus Resource Conservation District (WSRCD)** will provide organizational support, planning assistance, and use of existing mobile irrigation laboratory equipment. The WSRCD, established in 1980, covers 594 square miles to the west of the San Joaquin River. It provides technical, financial and educational assistance to help both rural and urban communities conserve, protect, and restore their natural resources, and has served as the lead on several projects to reduce soil erosion, promote water conservation and improve water quality.