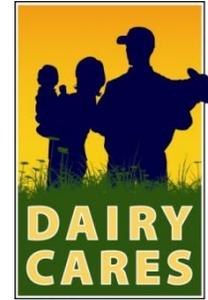


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Dairy Cares Newsletter

April 2017

DairyCares.com

Implementing California's new dairy methane reduction efforts

When legislators approved Senate Bill 1383 (Lara) last September, California became the first state to initiate plans for reducing dairy methane emissions. The law gives broad authority to the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to set aggressive goals for reducing “short-lived climate pollutants,” including reducing methane emissions from dairy manure management by 40 percent below 2013 levels by 2030. Although regulations to reduce dairy emissions cannot take effect until at least January 1, 2024, the clock is already ticking. The next few years are critical for California dairy families, as they aim to voluntarily reduce methane emissions and avoid potentially costly regulation in the future.



On March 24, 2017, ARB adopted its Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy (SLCP Plan), outlining future steps for implementing SB 1383 and the need for cooperation. As the plan states, “the State will work to support improved manure management practices through financial incentives, collaboration to overcome barriers, and other market support.” This support is much needed. California dairy families have a tremendous track record of environmental sustainability, but will need the full support, commitment, and partnership of the state to achieve the methane reductions being sought.

Initial funds totaling \$50 million were appropriated by the Legislature for reducing dairy methane through development of anaerobic digesters and alternative manure management practices. This funding is being administered through the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)'s [Dairy Digester Research and Development Program \(DDRDP\)](#) and a new [Alternative Manure Management Program \(AMMP\)](#). There are currently 16 dairy digesters in operation across the state, which capture methane gas and generate renewable energy. This technology is advancing and has already proven to be an effective means to reduce emissions on California dairy farms, with dozens more projects under construction or in planning. Funding of up to \$36 million for dairy digesters is expected to be released very soon. Alternative projects could include installation of mechanical manure solids separation on dairies with flush systems, or conversion to dry manure management

practices, such as scrape or vacuum systems, combined with composting or solar drying of manure. The framework for the AMMP will be available for comments until May 8. The program is expected to make funding available to dairies in July. Additional funding will be needed each and every year, if the state wants to make its dairy methane reduction goals a reality.

Research is underway to further identify methods and tools to help reduce dairy manure methane emissions. This includes an industry-sponsored study with UC Davis researchers to examine manure solid separation technology and its potential in reducing methane emissions. Dairy Cares is also working closely with CDFA to measure the methane reduction potential for projects funded under the AMMP. More research will be necessary. Research is a critical first step, so dairy farm families can know what cost-effective tools exist and what might work best on individual farms.

Moving forward, a dairy workgroup is being formed to identify and address barriers to the development of dairy methane emission reduction projects. In addition to dairy industry representatives, this group will include ARB, CDFA, State Water Resources Control Board, regional water and air quality regulators, energy agencies and utilities, and other stakeholders. Proceedings are also being initiated at the California Public Utilities Commission and California Energy Commission to begin developing the energy infrastructure to facilitate more renewable energy projects. The work ahead is critical. Achieving the dairy methane reductions called for in the SLCP Plan, without dislocation of California's dairy farm families and the tens of thousands of jobs they create, will require careful planning and effective and timely collaboration. It will also require the full faith and partnership and ongoing support of the state.

ARB's Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Strategy (SLCP Plan) is [available here](#).

Dairy Cares is a statewide coalition supporting economic and environmental sustainability and responsible animal care. Our members include Bar 20 Dairy Farms, California Cattlemen's Association, California Dairies Inc., California Dairy Campaign, California Dairy Research Foundation, California Farm Bureau Federation, Dairy Farmers of America-Western Area Council, Dairy Institute of California, GHD, Inc., Hilmar Cheese Co., Joseph Gallo Farms, Land O'Lakes, Merck Animal Health, Milk Producers Council, Ruan Transport Corp., Western United Dairywomen, Yosemite Farm Credit and others. For information, visit DairyCares.com or call 916-441-3318.