

# COALITION NEWS: UPDATE

October 2015

## **Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition**

*A Coalition of Westside Water Districts and the San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority  
Providing Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Coverage for Farmers and Landowners*

### **Long Term Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program**

On January 9, 2014, the Regional Board adopted General Order R5-2014-0002 that affects Growers in the Western San Joaquin River watershed. Key components of the Order are regulation of discharges to groundwater as well as the continuation of the current surface water program. Groundwater requirements include nitrogen management plans and farm evaluations for each farm and subsequent implementation of practices that will minimize discharge of nitrates and salt to the groundwater. A copy of the Order can be downloaded from the Coalition's website at [www.westsidesjr.org](http://www.westsidesjr.org).

### **Coalition Grower Meetings Were Held in March**

A series of meetings were conducted in Los Banos, Newman, and Westley on March 3-5, 2015. The meetings were well attended and provided updates on Grower requirements under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program as well as discussions of recent pesticide exceedances. The central focus of the meetings was on the new certified Nitrogen Management Plan that Growers are required to do and the Nitrogen Summary Report that Growers will send back to the Coalition.

### **Groundwater Assessment Report is Approved**

On September 16, 2015, the Coalition received confirmation from the Regional Board that the Groundwater Assessment Report (GAR) had been approved. The report will be instrumental in designating high and low vulnerability areas for nitrates and salts within the Coalition's service area. The high/low areas will establish timelines for Growers of when their Farm Evaluation and Nitrogen Summary Reports need to be submitted to the Coalition. The GAR also forms the nucleus of a new groundwater monitoring program that will begin to identify water quality problems in our area.

### **More Forms are Coming Your Way Soon**

Growers who are in high vulnerability (HV) surface water and/or groundwater areas and whose farms are greater than 60 acres will be receiving the Farm Evaluation (FE) form and/or the Nitrogen Management Plan (NMP) form and the Nitrogen Summary Report (Summary Report). The FE needs to be completed and sent to the Coalition no later than March 1, 2016 and the NMP needs to be completed and certified by March 1, 2016 as well. The NMP stays on the farm and is not returned to the

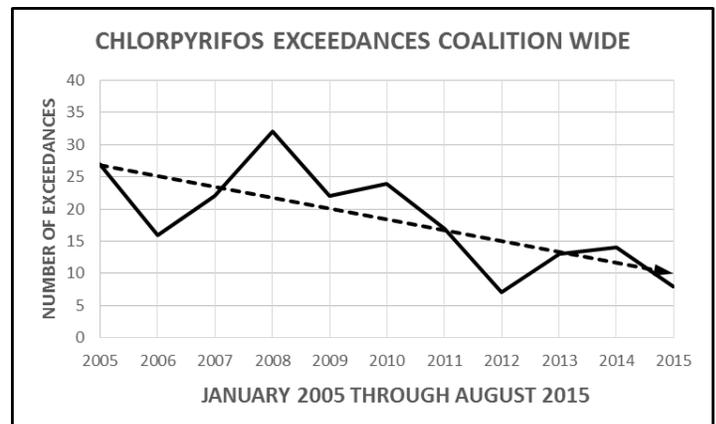
Coalition. The companion to the NMP is the Summary Report. The Summary Report will need to be returned to the Coalition no later than March 1, 2016. Growers in low vulnerability areas and those who farm on less than 60 acres, will receive the forms on a later time schedule. If you would like more specific information, you can contact your Water District or the Coalition at 559-592-9237.

### **Sediment Discharge and Erosion Assessment Report (SDEAR)**

One of the new requirements of the General Order is for an SDEAR to be completed for the entire Coalition. The SDEAR will identify high vulnerable (HV) areas that are susceptible to sedimentation and erosion. On March 16, 2015, the Coalition submitted an SDEAR to the Regional Board for approval. Once approved, those Growers in the HV areas will be notified that they will be required to do a Sediment and Erosion Plan. Approval from the Regional Board is expected soon.

### **Chlorpyrifos (Lorsban, Lock-on, Govern, and NPhos) Continues to be a Problem**

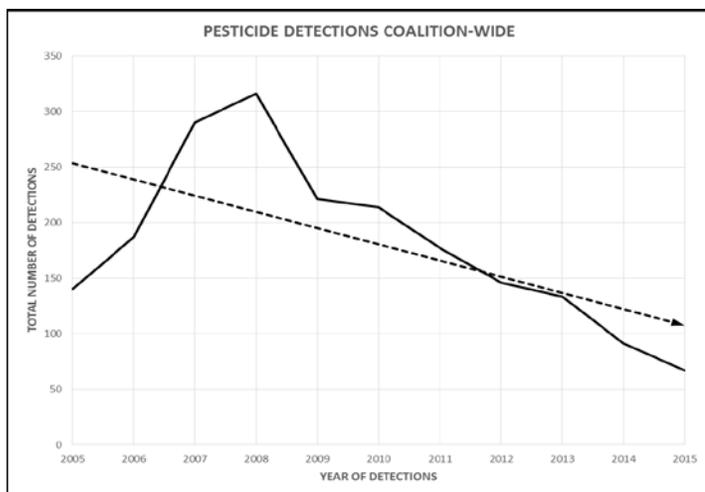
There have been 8 exceedances for Chlorpyrifos so far this year and while that is down from the 2014 total of 14, it still falls below the requirements established by the Regional Board.



The exceedance chart above shows a downward trend (dashed line) and this can be attributed to Growers efforts to eliminate Chlorpyrifos discharges. These efforts need to continue to meet the program requirements.

### **Good News About Pesticide Detections!**

While the goal of Growers should be to have no detections of pesticides in water or sediment moving off their fields, there have been numerous detections none the less. The top 4 pesticides detected (Diuron 478 times, Chlorpyrifos 254, Prowl 177 and Dimethoate 169) accounted for slightly more than 55% of all detections since 2005. It should be noted that not all detections exceeded water quality objectives, but the detections can be used as an indicator of overall progress of the implementation of on-farm pesticide management practices. The chart below indicates that between the years 2005 and 2008, there was an increase of 226% in pesticide detections, but from 2008 to the present, detections have been reduced by over 472%. This noticeable reduction over the last 7 years coincides with the efforts of Growers to implement better on-farm pesticide management practices.



It is incumbent upon Growers to continue their efforts with pesticide management practices and those efforts will be rewarded with continued reductions of pesticide detections.

### **Nitrogen Management Plan (NMP) Self-certification Training Classes**

Growers wanting to certify their own NMPs now have an opportunity through courses being offered this fall. If a field is designated as high vulnerability to groundwater contamination, a NMP must be certified by a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA), or the grower can attend one of these courses and pass a test to certify their own NMP. A grower can obtain certification by attending classes held anywhere in the Central Valley. Classes are currently being offered in Los Banos on 11/19/15, Modesto on 11/9/15, and Merced on 11/10/15. The Los Banos class will be held at the Fair Grounds (403 "F" St.) in the Germino Building from 9AM to 2PM.

The course will be taught by trained CCAs using a curriculum approved by the Regional Water Board.

Training sessions will be administered by the Coalition for Urban Rural Environmental Stewardship (CURES). If you would like to attend a Grower Certification Training Session, please RSVP to Orvil Mckinnis at 559-582-9237 for the Los Banos class or Kara Stuart at 916-628-8241 for the Merced and Modesto classes. The training sessions will be approximately 4.5 hours long and are being offered at no charge to the grower. If you do not pass the test, you may attend a subsequent training session and retake the test.

### **Coalition Field Representatives**

Dave Woolley and Katie Campodonico have been working with the Coalition to review and document activities in the Coalition's service area. They are helping farmers understand their responsibilities under the General Order and are following up on surveys and management practice efforts of the Westside Coalition. Dave and Katie are making periodic visits to the Coalition area and visiting with farmers, observing discharges, and planning on-farm projects to benefit water quality. If you would like to receive information or a one-on-one visit, Dave can be contacted at 559-930-3907 or Katie at 209-846-6112. Dave works for the Westside Coalition, and Katie works for CURES and is funded by the West Stanislaus Resource Conservation District.

### **Coalition Member Districts**

Your local Water Districts were instrumental in forming the Westside Coalition. They are committed to assisting landowners and farmers in reaching its goals and include:

- \* Del Puerto Water District
- \* Patterson Irrigation District
- \* San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (including Central California Irrigation District, San Luis Canal Company, Firebaugh Canal Water District, and Columbia Canal Company)
- \* Tranquillity Irrigation District
- \* Fresno Slough Water District
- \* Twin Oaks Irrigation District
- \* West Stanislaus Irrigation District
- \* Oak Flat Water District
- \* White Lake Mutual Water Company
- \* Lone Tree Mutual Water Company
- \* Turner Island Water District
- \* San Luis Water District
- \* Grassland Water District and RCD

### **Watershed Coordinator**

Joe McGahan, Summers Engineering  
559-582-9237

Westside SJR Watershed Coalition  
c/o San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority  
P. O. Box 2157, Los Banos, CA 93635