



Input on Lower Yakima Valley Nitrate Study

Intranet Daemon Owner to: R10YVNitrate, Caryn Sengupta

11/30/2012 07:42 AM

From: Intranet Daemon Owner <idaemon@chestnut3.epa.gov>
To: R10YVNitrate@EPA, Caryn Sengupta/R10/USEPA/US@EPA

a) Name

[REDACTED]

b) organization

J & K Dairy, LLC

c) Address

[REDACTED]

d) City

Sunnyside

e) State

WA

f) Zip

98944

g) Phone

[REDACTED]

h) comments

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a 4th generation dairy farmer in Sunnyside, WA. I am married with 4 young children, ages 2 months to 8 years. Both my wife and I grew up in the dairy industry and hope that our children can do the same.

Protecting the environment has always been very important to me. I hope to leave the environment in a better condition than how it was when I started. I have always followed the rules and regulations of agencies I work with to ensure that the land and groundwater is safe for my family and other area families. I plan to live in this area the rest of my life and hope some of my children will do the same.

On our dairy, I have always looked for ways to do a better job of farming. Over four years ago, I saw the opportunity to utilize mapping of my soils and fields to apply additional nitrogen using variable rate technology so provide the correct amount of nutrients to all areas of my fields. I saw this as an opportunity to add to the manure applications while protecting the environment.

I also started composting about the same time. It was a great way to take a product like manure and make it into a product in demand in the PNW.

I also volunteered both of our dairies to take part in the Yakima county clean air pilot program to show how our operations do our best to protect the environment. Our dairies got great marks and the inspectors were very impressed with what we do to protect air quality.

Earlier this year I heard that a GWMA was being formed to address the high nitrates in the groundwater. I chose to volunteer my time to represent the dairy industry on this committee. The importance of having safe groundwater is very important to me. I was hoping to again share how our dairies operate to help protect the environment, similar to when we worked with the pilot program with Yakima Clean Air.

But then the EPA released the report and has taken legal action in the form of issuing consent orders to the four dairies that volunteered to help in the study. I was hoping to work with the EPA to share how our dairies have

improved the environment through best management practices, but the EPA has chosen to instead take legal actions against those who volunteer. It has created much anxiety in the dairy industry and now no one in the dairy industry is willing to work with the EPA. It is very sad the EPA has chosen to take this route.

The report has many flaws, most of which I will not go into. I am not a scientist, but I know if I made decisions to run my business based on poor science, I would be out of business. I want to move forward to help protect our groundwater and will continue to be part of the GWMA, but the EPA limited my interest in volunteering any information about my business. I hope the EPA retracts this study and works wants to work with our industry to help solve this problem through actions besides legal means.