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The battle rages on *Waco vs. Dairy industry*

By MEGHAN DONALD
Staff Writer

The face off continues in a long-standing feud between those who believe that dairies in the Bosque River watershed are responsible for the poor taste of Waco's water and those who operate the dairy facilities. There are many supporters of both sides, but the dairy farmers have faced much opposition from the city of Waco, some of which leads them to keep quiet.

Nate Goldenberg got fed up with keeping his thoughts to himself and a column by an outdoor reporter for the Waco Tribune-Herald led him to write a letter to the editor which was later published as a guest column.

"I read the article (written by Todd Nafe, entitled Time for dairies to start cleaning up their act) in the February 22 edition of the Tribune-Herald

and it just bashed the dairy farmers. Everything that Todd Nafe said was false. A lot of these dairy farmers are scared of repercussion, so I thought it was time someone spoke up," said Goldenberg, who works as a nutritional management consultant for dairy farmers.

The fight between the two sides has been a war of words and pocketbooks for years and Goldenberg said the city of Waco should be "pointing the finger at someone else." Goldenberg has some allies in his fight against "injustice" and said he has received many calls from "proud" supporters who are glad someone stood up for them.

"I think Mr. Goldenberg's column is a fair assessment of how he feels and I agree with what he says," said John

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Cowan, executive director of the Texas Association of Dairymen.

In his column, Goldenberg asserts that problem with the Waco drinking water started long ago, not when the dairies began to operate along the Bosque River. He also says that the shallow lake bed in Lake Waco is prone to phosphorus growth, which in turn produces the infamous blue-green algae that leads to taste and color issues.

"The problem is not that the dairies are operating outside of industry regulations, the problem is that the city of Waco does not do an adequate job of treating their water," Goldenberg said.

While he admits that there could have been discharges by dairies in the early 1990s when the dairies first started operating in the area, he says that today's dairies are in compliance with regulations that are the standard for the industry.

The dispute, while taking a toll on both the city and the dairymen, has not taken a toll on Waco residents. According to government

boards, the city's drinking water is safe to drink. The taste issues do not mean that the water is contaminated, though Goldenberg pointed out that the sewage plant had a leak in the 1990s and was fined upwards of \$54,000.

"It is clearly documented that the city of Waco has falsely alleged things against the dairies. It is not proven that the dairies cause the problems that Waco is experiencing with their water," Cowan said.

Cowan also stresses that the "unnecessary regulations" put on the dairymen in the Bosque River area are not

on par with the regulations other dairies must follow. These circumstances are placing a "tremendous burden" on the dairy farmers.

Regardless of the back and forth, the economy is hurting dairies all over the nation and the opposition being faced by Bosque area dairy farmers is almost more than they can stand.

"The dairies are working as hard as they can to remain in that watershed. The problems being faced in Waco are not the fault of the dairies," said Cowan.

Calls to Todd Nafe were not returned by press time.