



Texas Dairies: Environmental Responsibility

Texas Dairies Are Committed To Being Good Environmental Stewards

The industry works with government agencies to help ensure a cleaner environment

- All Texas dairy farms, depending on the number of head of cattle they have and the location of the dairy, must obtain a permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) or a Water Quality Management Plan from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) that requires environmental operating practices, such as buffer strips by waterways; lined waste liquid storage ponds, called lagoons, to contain on-farm water; manure management programs; continuous water testing; regular inspections; and a site specific nutrient management plan (NMP). The NMP is developed by a certified crop advisor and guides the farmer as to where and how to apply manure and dairy waste water at approved agronomic rates.
- Dairies that operate as Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) are required by the Environmental Protection Agency to maintain a nutrient management plan.
- Dairy industry organizations work with the Brazos River Authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Texas Institute of Applied Environmental Research, the Texas Farm Bureau and the City of Waco to develop wetlands and implement other environmental solutions to benefit the North Bosque River and Leon River watersheds.

Texas dairy farmers go above and beyond state requirements to help protect the environment.

- The dairy industry is working with university researchers, government, industry and other experts to invest in, develop and test new technologies to protect the environment and conserve natural resources, such as:
 - Methane digesters – convert manure into electricity.
 - Anaerobic digestion – reduce odor by 97% by more quickly breaking down odor-causing components.
 - Manure composting – provides urban residents a source for beneficial organic nutrients.
 - Manure gasification – captures and converts energy for other beneficial uses.
- Producers can ask federal and state agencies for assistance to implement environmental stewardship programs. Through these programs, third-party professionals evaluate farms for environmental compliance and nutrient management planning and assist the producer with developing a NMP to safeguard the environment beyond regulatory permit requirements.
- Water used on the farm is recycled and used multiple times, from cooling milk to cleaning barns to field irrigation.
- Dairy farmers are guided on water conservation practices, including modernized water storage and delivery systems, by multiple government agencies.

The Texas Association of Dairymen (www.milk4texas.org) is a non-profit corporation comprised of dairy cooperatives whose members are individual milk producers in Texas.