

# Central Valley Dairy Representative Monitoring Program

*For the benefit of dairy producers, cattle operators and water quality across our valley*

January 2021 Newsletter

## Letter From the Outgoing Chairman 2021 Brings Important Changes For Our Members



The Central Valley Dairy Representative Monitoring Program (CVDRMP) will hold its annual member meeting at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 24, 2021. For the first time, our meeting will not be in person, but instead by Zoom video conference (instructions for joining the meeting are printed on page 2 of this newsletter along with the agenda for the meeting).

Of course, we all hope to see an end soon to the COVID-19 pandemic, so that we will be able to meet in person again. For now, we hope our February 24 virtual meeting, along with the information in this newsletter, will keep you fully informed of important changes in how CVDRMP serves you.

As you likely know, CVDRMP has always been, and remains, a non-profit organization exclusively for the benefit of its dairy and cattle rancher members. We're governed entirely by dairy and cattle owners and operators elected from our membership. We continue to be dedicated to a single goal: Providing cost-effective regulatory compliance assistance for all our members.

Since forming more than a decade ago, CVDRMP has managed a representative groundwater monitoring program. Without this cost-effective alternative, each individual dairy and bovine operation would have to install and test monitoring wells, analyze data and prepare technical reports and recommendations for improved practices. Thanks to our program, these duties are handled through an organized, centralized effort that samples a representative subset of dairies. We anticipate that this program has already collectively saved our members about \$50 million over the past decade. While we can all be proud of this accomplishment, we must also be ready for new challenges ahead – and 2021 promises some big ones.

This year, dairy and bovine operations face new, additional water quality regulations that went into effect in 2020. As you might expect, these new regulations bring more for us to do, but it's also important to notice that some of the recent changes actually give dairies and cattle ranchers significantly more time than we had before to reach water quality protection goals.

In return for that extra time, dairy and bovine operators must comply with two new programs, known as the Nitrate Control Program and the Salt Control Program. As dairies and bovine operations, you probably have already received formal "Notice to Comply" letters from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board about these regulations. The good news is that – like groundwater monitoring –

cost-effective group compliance options are available. Much as it helped dairies and bovine operations meet the groundwater monitoring requirements, CVDRMP is also stepping up to help our members achieve streamlined compliance with both the Nitrate Control Program and Salt Control Program.

For most of you, **this will result in increases in your annual CVDRMP participation fees.** Please know we did not take this step lightly – as dairy and cattle ranch operators, each of the CVDRMP Board of Directors must also pay these increases. Keeping fees under control has been a top priority for us since the program began. We have continually looked for and found efficiencies over the years to keep costs down, and until now, we have not raised fees since the program's inception in 2010.

Unfortunately, due to the new regulations, a fee

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increase is no longer avoidable. These increases will affect our members with acreage in so-called Priority 1 areas for the Nitrate Control Program, including the Turlock, Modesto, Chowchilla, Kings, Kaweah, and Tule groundwater basin areas. Some of our members will escape these costs this year but will likely face similar increases in coming years as the Nitrate Control Program proceeds to Priority 2 areas and beyond. Our member bovine operations will also face participation fee increases, due to both the Nitrate Control Program and the Salt Control Program.

Both the Nitrate Control Program and the Salt Control Program are complex. Though CVDRMP will continue to do everything possible to make compliance with these new programs simple and virtually automatic for our members, I urge you to read the rest of this newsletter carefully so you can fully understand how your membership fees are invested for your benefit. Your questions can be answered by attending the annual meeting or by calling our office at (916) 594-9450, and watching for bulletins on our websites, [www.cvdrmp.org](http://www.cvdrmp.org) and [www.bovinermp.org](http://www.bovinermp.org).

As you can see, 2021 will be an extremely important year for CVDRMP and its members. We also welcome Scott Wickstrom as the new CVDRMP Chairman beginning in 2021. It has been my pleasure serving our members as Chairman for the past two and a half years, and I look forward to continuing our work together as a CVDRMP Board Member. We'll see you all at our annual meeting.

Thanks, and happy New Year.



Justin Gioletti, Chairman  
Central Valley Dairy Representative Monitoring Program  
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## What's Inside?

- Annual Membership Meeting
- Board of Directors Election Results
- Nitrate and Salt Control Programs

# Agenda Annual CVDRMP Membership Meeting

## DATE AND TIME

1:30 to 3:30 p.m.  
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

## PLACE

Virtual meeting via Zoom video conference,  
<http://bit.ly/3sikqGI>

Or call: 1 (669) 900-6833, and enter meeting ID  
#826 5246 5874

## AGENDA

1. Determination of quorum per CVDRMP bylaws
2. Welcome to the members, review CVDRMP mission and goals, and new amendments to membership agreements related to Salt Control Program and Nitrate Control Program (*Chairman Scott Wickstrom*)
3. Results and certification of 2020 Board of Director elections (*Secretary Greg Hooker*)
4. Report to the members on organizational finances and changes in billing (*Treasurer Rodney Kamper*)
5. Implementation of the Salt Control Program and Nitrate Control Program and what these mean for our members (*Administrator J.P. Cativiela*)
6. Reduction in costs for dairy monitoring and implementation of Bovine Representative Monitoring Program (*Technical Program Manager Till Angermann*)
7. Questions and comments from members
8. Adjourn

**NOTE:** CVDRMP bylaws require that no action by the members shall take place unless a) it is included on a properly noticed agenda, AND b) a quorum (one-third) of voting members are present. The membership meeting will take place and informational presentations provided without a quorum present; however, no actions will be taken by the members on matters not on the agenda, nor if a quorum is not met.

# Key Information & Changes

- **Our billing schedule will be slightly later this year.** CVDRMP normally invoices members annually in January. This year, due to the need to coordinate with Nitrate Management Zones, billing will be staggered in February and March.
- **Most members will see fees increase.** For the first time since its formation in 2010, CVDRMP will increase member fees, to cover increased costs due to the Nitrate Control Program and Salt Control Program.
- **New fees will vary by location and herd size.** All members face a minimum fee of \$972, which includes groundwater monitoring and for many, Salt Control Program Compliance. For larger dairies and bovine operations in Priority 1 Nitrate Control Program areas, **fees could be as much as several hundred to several thousand dollars higher.** Fee schedules are still being developed and will be discussed at the Annual Member meeting on February 24.
- **CVDRMP members do not need to directly enroll in Nitrate Management Zones, or directly pay fees to the Prioritization and Optimization study for the Salt Control Program.** If you have questions, contact the CVDRMP office before signing any agreements or paying any fees.

## 2020 Board of Directors Election Results

CVDRMP has a 12-member Board of Directors, elected by members. There are two directors in each of five Central Valley regions, and two at-large directors. Directors serve staggered two-year terms, so half the Board seats are open for election each fall.

The following nominations were received, and accepted by the candidate nominated, by the October 26, 2020 deadline for “A” seat directors:

- District 1 (Tulare County), no nominations received;
- District 2 (Merced and Madera counties), Greg Hooker;
- District 3 (Fresno, Kings and Kern counties), Rodney Kamper;
- District 4 (Stanislaus County) Justin Gioletti;
- District 5 (all other Central Valley counties), no nominations received;
- At-large: Lucy Areias.



Following CVDRMP’s election procedures, further balloting was suspended to save costs since no races were contested, and all nominees were elected and the results certified. The new terms begin in January 2021 and all the directors elected are returning incumbents. Pursuant to CVDRMP bylaws, the Board can consider appointing a director to a vacant seat to fill out its term until the next election. It exercised this option at its January Board meeting, appointing Trevor Freitas to the District 1 “A” seat.

# CVDRMP Geared Up to Provide Members Assistance With Nitrate and Salt Control Programs in 2021

Dairies and bovine facility operators who checked their mailboxes over the last nine months likely already know about two new, major water quality requirements in the Central Valley. In early June 2020, dairies and bovine operations received something called a “Notice to Comply” with the new Nitrate Control Program. That was followed a few months later, in early January 2021, when they received another Notice to Comply with something called the Salt Control Program.

What are these two new programs and what do they mean for dairy and bovine water quality permit holders? First, they represent major changes in the way “discharges” (releases) of salt and nitrates into groundwater are regulated.

In the past, the State of California, through its State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards, set strict limits on how much nitrate and salts can be allowed to percolate through soil into aquifers.

The limits were intended to protect the safety of those who depend on wells as a source of drinking water, and to protect farmers from buildup of salt in their irrigation water supplies. However, the limits were set with little regard to whether farmers, dairies and other permit holders could realistically meet them. Within the past decade, a growing number of regulators, permit holders and other stakeholders became aware that the limits could not be reached with current technology and practices and more time was needed to meet strict water quality targets.

So, at the urging of groups representing permit holders, the state made a deal – more time to meet the targets, if permit holders work together to develop solutions to the state’s water quality challenges.

## Nitrate Control Program: Interim water solutions now in return for regulatory flexibility

For the Nitrate Control Program, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) was willing to give water quality permit holders more time – up to 35 years – to meet its stringent nitrate targets, but only if permit holders worked together to ensure that all Valley residents with nitrate-impacted drinking water are given access to safe drinking water supplies.

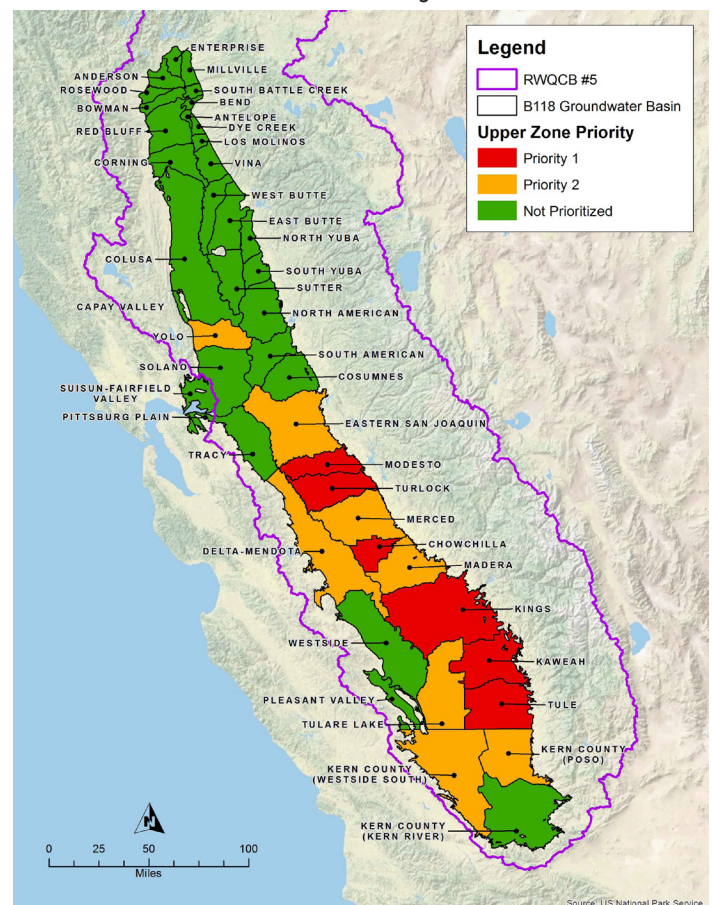
To accomplish this goal, the Regional Board designated

“Priority Areas” (see map below) where stakeholders can form Local Management Zones for nitrates. As a first step, each Management Zone must identify which residents are impacted by nitrates in their drinking water supplies, and then provide those impacted residents access to safe drinking water. In exchange for doing so, permit holders are given more time to reach strict water quality standards.

“Although there are significant costs associated with providing replacement drinking water, those costs pale compared to what it would take to meet nitrate limits in groundwater in the short term,” said J.P. Catiuela, CVDRMP Administrator. “To do that, dairies would likely be forced to line lagoons, implement drip irrigation systems, reduce herd size and perhaps reduce or even eliminate use of manure as a fertilizer. The cost of implementing such practices in the short term would put many, if not most, dairies out of business.”

Water quality coalitions representing other types

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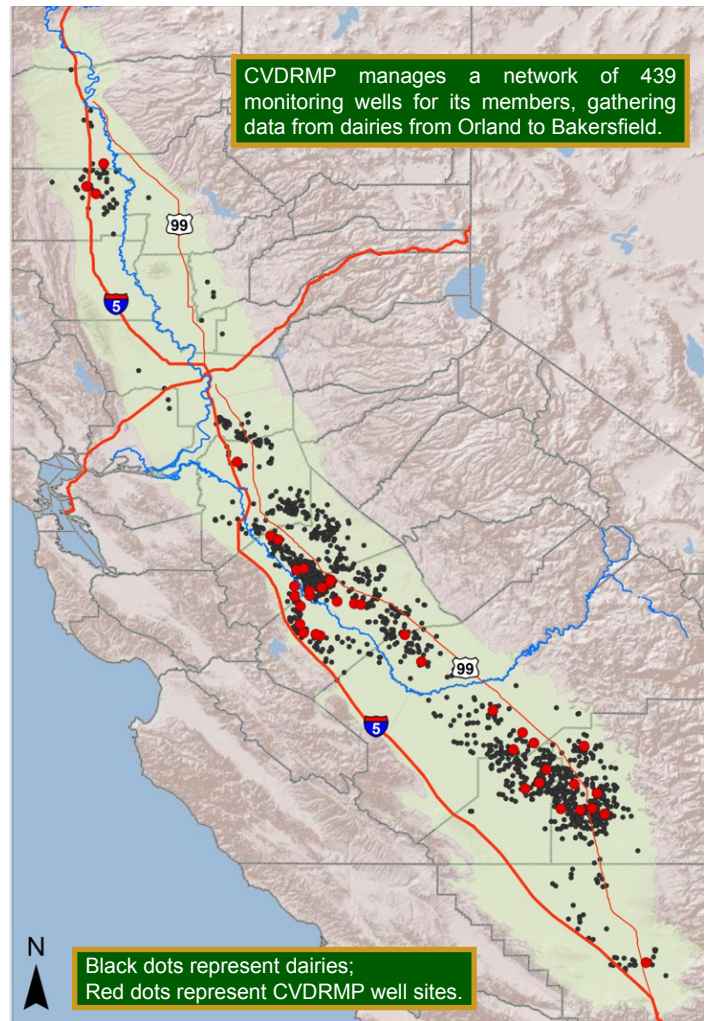
of farmers have drawn the same conclusion, and as such began moving quickly to form Local Nitrate Management Zones. The following zones have already been formed in the six Priority One areas:

- Valley Water Collaborative, a nonprofit, representing farmers, dairies, and other water quality permit holders in the Modesto and Turlock groundwater basins;
- Chowchilla Nitrate Control Program, operated through the Madera County Farm Bureau, representing permit holders in the Chowchilla groundwater basin;
- Kings Water Alliance, a nonprofit representing permit holders in the Kings and Tule Lake basins;
- Kaweah Water Foundation, a nonprofit representing permit holders in the Kaweah groundwater basin; and
- Tule Basin Water Quality Coalition, a nonprofit representing permit holders in the Tule Basin.

Each of the above groups are assessing drinking water needs within their basins and preparing plans and budgets to provide for those needs using tactics like free bottle-filling stations, bottled water delivery and in-home treatment systems. The plans are due by March 8, 2021 to the Regional Board, which will consider whether to approve the plans or seek changes. Meanwhile, Management Zones must begin implementing their water solutions in early May of this year.

### What does this mean for CVDRMP members?

Drinking water solutions will cost money, which must be paid for by water quality permit holders. Dairies and bovine operations represent one of the largest groups of water permit holders in each Priority 1 area and as such will pay a significant share of the costs. Like other agricultural water quality coalitions, CVDRMP has agreed to organize a group effort to collect and



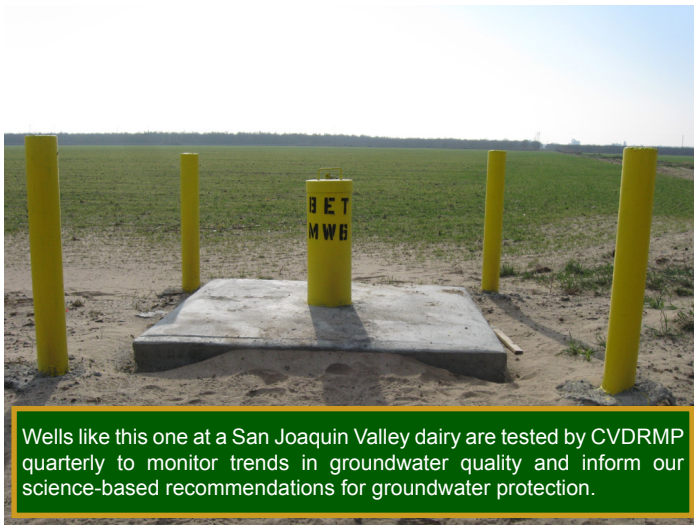
pay these costs on behalf of its members. However, CVDRMP has taken several steps to control these costs and make compliance as simple and straightforward as possible for its members.

First, the CVDRMP Board of Directors adopted a policy in 2020 that all its members will be enrolled in Nitrate Local Management Zones automatically as they are formed. This saves members from having to individually enroll in Management Zones, eliminating the risk of missing deadlines and facing penalties for failure to comply.

Second, CVDRMP leadership – including staff and Board members – have taken active steps to participate in Management Zone governance, to negotiate fair cost shares for dairies and bovine operations, while also seeking every possible efficiency in managing the programs to keep costs down.

Third, CVDRMP will collect costs from its members and pass them on to Management Zones. This prevents Management Zones from having to hire staff to prepare invoices and develop membership databases for dairies and bovine operations. This step alone is expected to save many thousands of dollars for CVDRMP members.

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However, despite these efforts, cost increases for our members will be unavoidable. **For smaller dairies, increases could be a few hundred dollars per year, but for larger dairies, could be several thousand dollars.** Members will receive more information about these fees at the Annual Meeting on February 24, and with their annual invoices, which will be mailed out this year during February and March.

### **What are the Salt Control Program costs?**

There are important differences between the Salt Control Program and the Nitrate Control Program. The Salt Control Program affects all dairies and bovine operations (and other water quality permit holders) at the same time – it is not phased in by Priority Areas like the Nitrate Control Program.

Also, the Salt Control Program does not require permit holders to fund replacement drinking water. Instead, permit holders who don't want to face the most stringent permitting standards can pursue another group compliance option. This option allows permit

holders to comply through funding a long-term study and planning effort aimed at creating a blueprint for managing salt buildup throughout the Central Valley.

Like the Nitrate Control Program, CVDRMP has organized a group effort to collect and pay Salt Control Program costs on behalf of its members.

For dairies, the cost of complying with the Salt Control Program in 2021 will be \$72 per facility per year. Importantly, due to efficiencies in the groundwater monitoring program, CVDRMP is simultaneously reducing its annual \$972 groundwater monitoring fee for dairies by \$72 to \$900. Therefore, costs of both groundwater monitoring and the Salt Control Program will total \$972 in 2021 – the same as the total fee in previous years. However, as noted above, dairies in Priority 1 Nitrate Control Program areas will still face an additional fee for that program.

Bovine operations will face an increased fee of \$160 annually for the Salt Control Program, or \$320 annually for operations with more than 5,000 animal units.

### **Do I have to do this?**

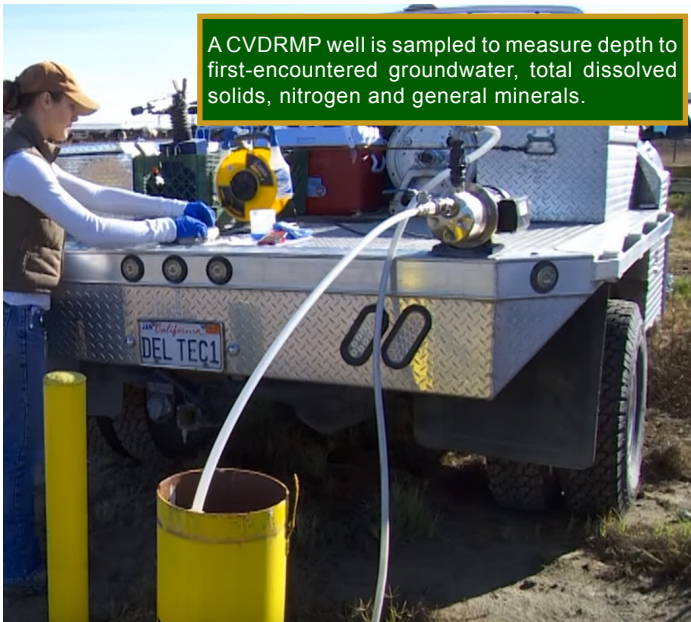
Compliance with the Nitrate Control Program and Salt Control Program is not optional, but there are different methods for compliance. CVDRMP has carefully analyzed the options available and has determined that in both cases, the “Pathway B” alternatives offered in each program are – by far – the most practical and cost-effective for dairies and bovine operations. As a result, to help our members avoid problems, we are automatically enrolling our members in these options to ensure they achieve compliance with the least amount of cost and effort possible.

To ensure all our members are aware of these changes

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CVDRMP monitoring wells are strategically placed across an entire dairy facility, from freestall barns and corrals to lagoons and fields.





A CVDRMP well is sampled to measure depth to first-encountered groundwater, total dissolved solids, nitrogen and general minerals.

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and the reasons behind them, in addition to this newsletter and the Annual Member Meeting on February 24, CVDRMP will provide an announcement of its amended member agreement with annual invoices when those are mailed in February and March.

If you have questions about the Pathway B options CVDRMP has chosen for its members, we urge you to attend the Annual Member Meeting on February 24, or to contact the CVDRMP office.

### More information

This quick overview is intended to give our members “just the basics” of the Nitrate Control Program and the Salt Control Program. For those who want to learn more, excellent, up-to-date information is available at [www.cvsalts.info](http://www.cvsalts.info).

## Special Thanks!



Tom Barcellos this year retires from the CVDRMP Board of Directors, which he has been a member of since the organization’s inception, serving as its first Chairman from 2011 to 2016.

Thank you for your service and the leadership you provided, Tom!

## 2021 CVDRMP Directors & Officers

- Scott Wickstrom**, Chairman, At-large
- Tony Ott**, Vice Chairman, District 4  
(Stanislaus County)
- Rodney Kamper**, Treasurer, District 3  
(Kern/Fresno/Kings Counties)
- Greg Hooker**, Secretary, District 2  
(Merced/Madera Counties)
- Trevor Freitas**, District 1  
(Tulare County)
- Darren Dias**, District 1  
(Tulare County)
- Jeff Troost**, District 2  
(Merced/Madera Counties)
- Janie Sustaita-De Raadt**, District 3  
(Kern/Fresno/Kings Counties)
- Justin Gioletti**, District 4  
(Stanislaus County)
- Rien Doornenbal**, District 5  
(Other Central Valley Counties)
- Lucy Areias**, At-large

## CVDRMP Member Liaisons to Local Nitrate Management Zones

*The following CVDRMP members volunteered to serve as liaisons during the formation and startup of local Nitrate Management Zones, attending meetings, reviewing budgets and plans, and making sure CVDRMP members were fully represented in the process. We thank them for their past and continuing service.*

- Justin Gioletti & Ray Prock, Jr.**  
Valley Water Collaborative  
(Modesto & Turlock Management Zones)
- Scott Wickstrom & Greg Hooker**  
Chowchilla Management Zone
- Rodney Kamper & Lucy Areias**  
Kings Management Zone
- Darren Dias & Gerben Leyendekker**  
Kaweah Water Foundation  
(Kaweah Management Zone)
- Tom Barcellos & Mike Faria**  
Tule Management Zone

# CVDRMP

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Sacramento, CA 95814

## Central Valley Dairy Representative Monitoring Program

*For the benefit of dairy producers, cattle operators and water quality across our valley*

### **IMPORTANT REGULATORY CHANGES IN 2021!**

Continue reading to learn what this means for your dairy or cattle operation

#### **GOOD NEWS!**

**CVDRMP Membership = Compliance with Salt & Nitrate Control Programs**

**Want to verify your membership standing in CVDRMP?**

Email your facility name & address to [CVDRMP@gmail.com](mailto:CVDRMP@gmail.com) or call (916) 594-9450.

Recent change of ownership? Update your membership forms at [CVDRMP.org](http://CVDRMP.org).