

# California Dairy Industry Headline News from Western United Dairymen



Edited by Mark Looker

A news service of Western United Dairymen 1315 K Street, Modesto, CA 95354 (209)-527-6453 [www.westernuniteddairy-men.com](http://www.westernuniteddairy-men.com)

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**Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2007**

- **“Milk is Milk” Billboard Vandalized in Pixley; Alex Avery Responds** -- Alex Avery, the research director for the Hudson Institute’s Center for Global Food



Issues, expressed frustration today with raw milk activists' vandalism of a California billboard. "In August of 2006, we unveiled our billboards along California's Highway 99, in an effort to educate consumers about a simple fact: Milk is Milk. Our efforts have received a lot of response, most of which has been positive. However, it looks like we touched a raw nerve with at least one reader of our blog. A friend of the Milk is

Milk blog sent in a photo, showing our billboard in Pixley, CA defaced with a message from an uninformed and reckless scofflaw. We have reported the defacement to the billboard company, as well as to the local police. Clearly the culprit behind this vandalism does not value his or her life, engaging in two very dangerous activities: defacing private property, and advocating for raw milk. The benefits of milk pasteurization have been proved time and time again. Consuming unpasteurized dairy products poses a serious health risk, especially for children and those with weak immune systems. More information on the dangers of raw milk can be found on our Milk is Milk Web site." *Jan. 17, 2006 Milkismilk.com*

- **Reports Note Lessons Learned for Five California Dairy Manure Digesters** - - Anaerobic digesters are gaining popularity throughout the United States as a means to convert manure to methane, which can fuel an electrical generator. The technology is particularly appealing to dairy farmers, since it provides a means of disposing of manure and avoiding odors while creating a usable energy source. But before taking the plunge themselves, dairy farmers would be well advised to study five evaluation reports on new dairy digester systems that were issued by the California Energy Commission (CEC) in December. The five dairy farmers experienced a number of challenges with their new systems, including delays and cost overruns; lack of funds due to a drop in milk prices; reduced herds that produced less manure; troubles obtaining construction and utility interconnection permits; difficulty staying connected to the utility grid; inability to connect the largest dairy power loads to the generator; difficulty avoiding demand charges due to system down time; financial woes due to inadequate net metering arrangements; and equipment problems. Despite the challenges, though, the systems demonstrated the ability to produce ample biogas and electricity, although all of the farmers ended up flaring much of their biogas instead of producing power. The farmers generally found the systems useful for manure and odor management, but some struggled with the operation of their systems and most were unable to make the best use of the energy provided by their systems. With net metering laws and demand charges often not working to their advantage, it seems that most farmers would be best served by trying to power their farm with their generators, rather than counting on benefits from feeding the power into the electrical grid. [Click here](#) to see the five dairy reports on the CEC Web site.

*Jan, 17, 2007 U.S. Energy Dept Newsletter*

- **Not enough grass for grazing in Sonoma County. Lack of rainfall has affected pasture growth, forcing ranchers, dairy farmers to buy other feeds** - - Lower-than-average rainfall and freezing temperatures are stunting grasses' growth in Sonoma County pastures, driving up ranchers' costs as farmers are forced to supplement their livestock's diets with more hay and other feed. Though the run of freezing overnight temperatures makes bitterly cold work for agricultural workers, "cows are more comfortable at 20 degrees than they are at 90 degrees," said Sebastopol dairyman Domenic Carinalli. A board member and past president of the Western United Dairymen, Carinalli said he and his fellow farmers have endured much drier winters. "I went through the late 70s when we had a drought and got 9 inches all year," Carinalli recalled. "If we get into February and it's still doing this, then we're in trouble," he said. "But if we get a rain in the next couple of weeks, we'll be in good shape." [more](#) *Jan. 17, 2007 Santa Rosa Press-Democrat*
- **Crop disaster aid sought from feds. Lawmakers already looking at options on state's freeze loss.** - - The freeze that crushed California's citrus crop could cause a tempest on Capitol Hill. While farmers tally their losses, lawmakers are preparing for a potential disaster relief package. It's a post-emergency congressional tradition, though one sometimes decried by skeptics. "I think there's

going to be supplemental assistance," Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Tulare, said Tuesday. "The question now is, what is it going to be?" Today, California Department of Food and Agriculture officials will brief members of Congress in a call convened by Rep. Dennis Cardoza, a Merced Democrat who serves on the House Agriculture Committee. Though no decisions have yet been made, lawmakers appear poised to move -- as they do every year when weather hurts farmers.

[<more>](#) Jan. 17, 2007 *Sacramento Bee*

- **2 more ethanol plants planned. Former Fresno-based company considers Stockton and Idaho.** - - Pacific Ethanol Inc. plans to build two \$100 million ethanol plants, one in Stockton and the other in south Idaho, that together are expected to begin producing about 100 million gallons of corn-based fuel per year when they open in early 2008. Pacific Ethanol, which was founded in Fresno in 2003 and moved its headquarters to Sacramento last week, announced Tuesday that it plans to break ground by next month on a 50 million-gallon-per-year ethanol plant in Burley, Idaho. Also on Tuesday, Port of Stockton commissioners took steps to approve Pacific Ethanol's plan to build another 50 million-gallon-per-year ethanol plant on port property, Port Director Richard Aschieris said.  
[<more>](#) Jan. 17, 2007 *Fresno Bee*
- **Farm Animal Welfare Guidelines Brochure Released** - - The Animal Agriculture Alliance (Alliance) has released a new brochure highlighting producer-driven animal welfare programs. The brochure, sponsored in part by the United Soybean Board, highlights programs developed by 11 agriculture and food associations and emphasizes the often-overlooked fact that animal welfare is a high priority of America's farmers and ranchers. The Alliance brochure provides a summary of each program, as well as contact information for each organization. The brochure and all information are available to the public via the Alliance website at [www.animalagalliance.org](http://www.animalagalliance.org) (under the Animal Welfare tab) and each individual program is featured on the relevant organization's website. *Jan. 17, 2007 Alliance Press Release*

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