

Farmer and University Advisor Q&A

How to comply with ag water quality regulations in San Diego



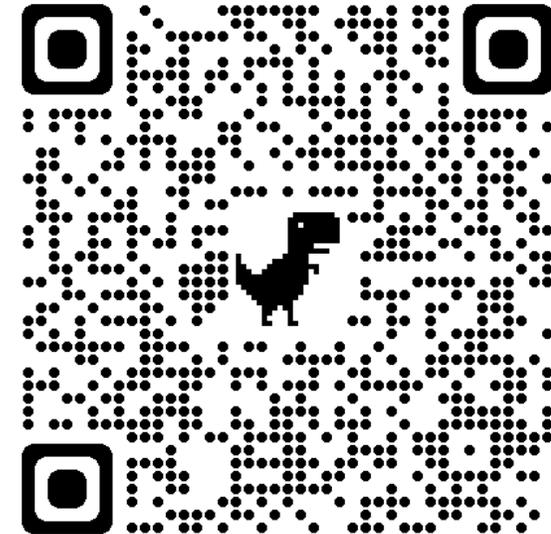
San Diego Farm and Nursery Expo
Val Mellano and Gerry Spinelli, November 2nd, 2023

Do I need to join the Irrigated Lands Group?

If you grow or trade agricultural goods commercially, you must enroll in the Ag Order

The screenshot shows the website for the California Water Boards San Diego Region, specifically the Commercial Agriculture Regulatory Program page. The page includes a navigation bar with the CA.GOV logo, social media share buttons, and links for About Us, Contact Us, Subscribe, and Settings. Below the navigation bar is a menu with icons for Regional Board, Programs, News Room, Board Decisions, Public Notices, Water Boards, and Search. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: Home | Water Issues | Programs | Commercial Agriculture. The primary heading is "Commercial Agriculture Regulatory Program", followed by links for "General Agricultural Order Enrollment Application" and "General Agricultural Order Enrollment Instructions". A "Program Overview" section explains that since the 1980s, the San Diego Water Board has regulated discharges from agricultural and nursery operations. It mentions the adoption of Order No. R9-2016-0004 (Third-Party General Order) and Order No. R9-2016-0005 (Individual General Order). A sidebar on the right contains a "Subscribe directly to the Agriculture and Nurseries Email List" button, a "Contacts" section listing Ben Neill, Cailynn Smith, and Abigail Pashina with their titles, emails, and phone numbers, and a "Quick Links" section with links to enrollment instructions, Geo Tracker, Cannabis Cultivation Program, General Agricultural Orders, Contacts, and Resources.

One of the requirements of the Ag Order is to test surface waters for pollutants



How do I join the Irrigated Lands Group and how much does it cost?

You need to contact Tasha Ardalan!



Irrigated Lands Group

Administered by the San Diego County Farm Bureau



Enrollment Application

Name of Farm or Individual: _____ Date: _____

Principal Farm Owner: _____

Property Owner (if different): _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Farm Bureau Member #: _____ Name on Membership: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Grove Manager: _____ Grove Manager Email: _____

Farm Location: _____ Crops Grown: _____

ENROLLMENT FEES:

Acres Enrollment Fee: Number of irrigated agricultural acres (must be whole number) _____

1: \$325 2: \$650 3: \$975 4: \$1300 5: \$1600 >5-10: \$1700 >10-25: \$1800 >25: \$1900

Enrollment Fee : \$ _____

State Application Fee: (choose one) collected on behalf of the State of California

\$50 OR \$200 if you have received a Directive to Obtain Regulatory Coverage for Irrigated Lands

State Fee : \$ _____

dirrigatedlandsgroup.org/index.html

SAN DIEGO REGION

IRRIGATED LANDS GROUP

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region is responsible for making certain that state water runoff regulations for irrigated agriculture are implemented locally. For commercial agriculture this is done through the General Waste Discharge Requirement for Agriculture (Ag Order), adopted in 2016.

The San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board gives operators the option of compliance through a third-party monitoring group or as an individual. The San Diego Region Irrigated Lands Group (SDRILG) formed so Farm Bureau members would have an easy cost-effective path to compliance.

The San Diego County Farm Bureau carefully studied the regulations and decided to provide members in San Diego, Orange, and Southern Riverside Counties with the option of joining SDRILG.

MEETING ANY ONE OF THE ITEMS BELOW REQUIRES COMPLIANCE

Intent to make a profit (commercial sale of ag products).	Owner or operator files an IRS Form 1040 Schedule F Profit or Loss from farming.	Owner or operator is required to have an Operator Identification Number for pesticide use reporting.	Operator receives agricultural water pricing (residential/ag meters may be exempt if there is no commercial production).
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Please note: the source of irrigation water is not a factor. Any type of irrigation, regardless of water source, triggers compliance.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A MEMBER OF SDRILG?

- UPON ENTRY**
 - Use SDRILG's easy online platform (software) to complete a Notice of Intent (NOI) which includes a Water Quality Protection Plan and details of the farming operation.
- Documents can be completed via telephone interview for those without internet access.
- QUARTERLY**
 - Complete simple quarterly self-inspections provided by SDRILG.
- ANNUALLY**
 - Participate in 2 hours water runoff education provided by SDRILG.
 - Submit Annual Report provided by SDRILG.

San Diego Region Irrigated Lands Group is a 501(c) 5 non-profit administered by the San Diego County Farm Bureau, created to benefit the Farm Bureau members of Region 9.

FEES

ONE TIME ENROLLMENT FEE CALCULATED BASED UPON THE NUMBER OF IRRIGATED ACRES

1 acre -	\$325
2 acres -	\$650
3 acres -	\$975
4 acres -	\$1,300
5 acres -	\$1,600
>5-10 acres -	\$1,700
>10-25 acres -	\$1,800
25+ acres -	\$1,900

ONE TIME STATE FEE

\$50 fee collected on behalf of the state.

If you receive a Directive Letter from the Water Board, the fee increases to \$200.

2023 ANNUAL ACREAGE FEE

Current fee schedule:

- \$75 admin fee
- \$9 per irrigated acre
- \$1.35 state fee per irrigated acre

Annual fee covers SDRILG's operating costs, bio-assessment analysis performed by environmental engineers, laboratory costs, and required state fees.

Due immediately after NOI submission and then billed annually in the spring.

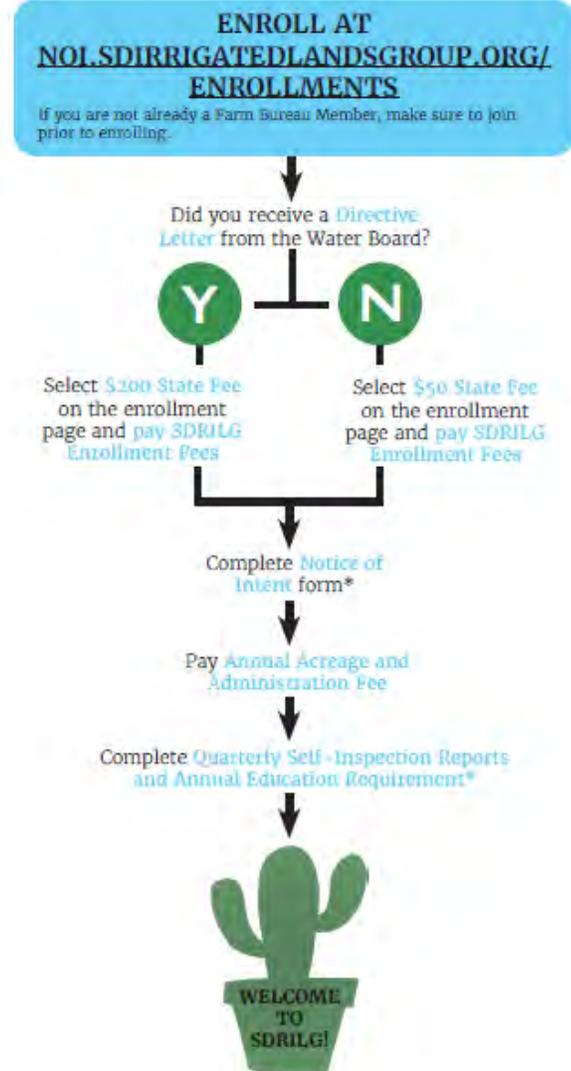
Annual Fees subject to change yearly.

AVOID EXPENSIVE FINES

The San Diego Water Board has GIS maps of the region that show which agricultural properties are in compliance. An effort has been launched by the San Diego Water Board to send Directive Letters to farmers stating that compliance is required and failure to act can lead to substantial daily fines.

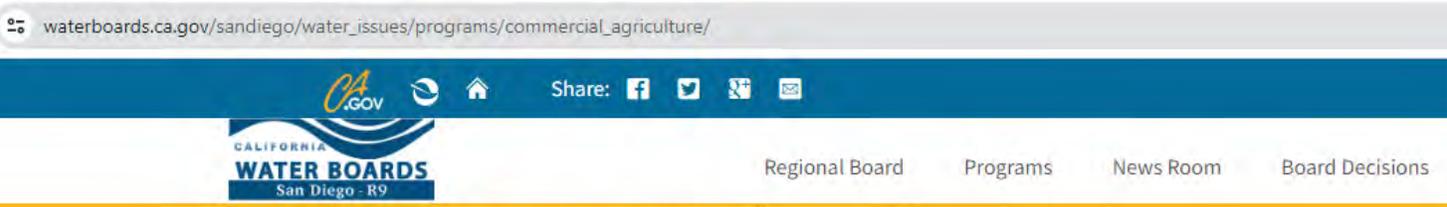
ENROLLMENT PROCESS

SAN DIEGO REGION IRRIGATED LANDS GROUP



*San Diego Region Irrigated Lands Group will communicate instructions and reminders via email. To submit a paper application, call the SDRILG office at (760) 745-2215

Sounds expensive, are there alternatives?



- Complete annual training regarding protection of water quality
- Conduct water quality monitoring and reporting activities
- Pay an annual fee based on acreage of irrigated acreage

How to enroll:

The San Diego Water Board strongly encourages Commercial Agriculture Operations to contact an approved Third-Party Group to assist with application submittal and document upload. Additionally, compliance with the General Agriculture Orders will be significantly less costly if done through the membership and assistance of a Third-Party Group. They also assist growers with the items mentioned above.

The approved Third-Party Groups in the San Diego Region are:

- San Diego Region Irrigated Lands Group - (760) 745-2215
- Upper Santa Margarita Irrigated Lands Group - (909) 208-7847



Approved Third-Party groups

To enroll in the General Agricultural Orders and obtain regulatory coverage, each operation must complete an on-line enrollment application using the GeoTracker database. Please download these [Instructions for Enrolling](#). Operations wishing to comply with the General Agriculture Orders by joining the San Diego Region Irrigated Lands Group have a different enrollment process and should contact them for more information.

Each operation must pay an annual fee that is based on acreage of irrigated lands, in addition to a one-time enrollment fee. Members of an approved Third-Party Group will receive a discounted rate. Third-Party Groups will pay the annual permit fees to the State Water Board on behalf of their members. Annual fees are described on the [State Water Board's Fee Schedule website](#).

(Page last updated 9/16/22)



You could also sample and test water by yourself but it would be way more expensive

Why do I need to be a member of the Farm Bureau to belong to the Irrigated Lands Group?

The screenshot shows the homepage of the San Diego Farm Bureau website. At the top, the browser address bar displays 'sdfarmbureau.org'. The website header includes the logo for 'FARM BUREAU SAN DIEGO COUNTY' and a navigation menu with links for HOME, ABOUT US, MEMBERSHIP, BUY LOCAL, EVENTS, PROGRAMS, RESOURCES, CONTACT US, and SDRILG. Social media icons for Facebook and Instagram are also present. The main content area features a large photograph of a nursery with rows of plants in trays, overlaid with the text 'THE VOICE OF LOCAL FARMERS'. At the bottom of the page, there is a call to action: 'BECOME A MEMBER | San Diego Farm Bureau promotes and protects local farms.' and a green 'Join Now' button.

In San Diego, the Irrigated Lands Group was formed by and is housed by the Farm Bureau

Do all growers need to participate in this program?

All growers that grow commercially and all growers that use irrigation



Besides joining the group, what else am I required to do?

- You need to prepare a Water Quality Protection Plan
- You need to perform quarterly self-inspections
- You need to take 2 hours of education on water quality per year

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A MEMBER OF SDRILG?

UPON ENTRY

- Use SDRILG's easy online platform (software) to complete a Notice of Intent (NOI) which includes a Water Quality Protection Plan and details of the farming operation.

Documents can be completed via telephone interview for those without internet access.

QUARTERLY

- Complete simple quarterly self-inspections provided by SDRILG.

ANNUALLY

- Participate in 2 hours water runoff education provided by SDRILG.
- Submit Annual Report provided by SDRILG.

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Who makes the rules about water quality?

State Water Resources Control Board and >>
Regional Water Quality Control Board

To preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use, for the benefit of present and future generations.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the State Water Resources Control Board website. The header includes the 'CALIFORNIA GOV' logo, social media share buttons, and navigation links for 'About Us', 'Contact Us', 'Subscribe', and 'Settings'. Below the header is a navigation menu with icons for 'Board', 'Programs', 'Drinking Water', 'Water Quality', 'Water Rights', 'Notices', 'Water Boards', and 'Search'. The main content area features a large aerial photograph of a river and surrounding land. Overlaid on the photo is the text: 'Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan' and 'A draft Staff Report in support of Sacramento/Delta updates to the Bay-Delta Plan is now available for public review and comment.' A 'Learn More' button is positioned below the text. At the bottom of the page, there are three columns of 'Upcoming Events' and a section for 'California Governor Gavin Newsom' with a 'CALIFORNIA ALL' logo. The 'Upcoming Events' section lists several events, including a Staff Workshop on Sacramento/Delta Draft Staff Report-Modeling (9:30 a.m.) on November 02, 2023, and a Board Meeting on November 7, 2023. The 'California Governor' section lists Gavin Newsom, Secretary for Environmental Protection Yana Garcia, and Board Chair E. Joaquin Esquivel.

It has nothing to do with the Water Authority/Water Districts. Those are involved with water supply

I am already inspected by the San Diego County Department of Agriculture. I think they inspect for water quality too. Is that correct?

Unincorporated area: San Diego County



sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/awm/ag_water.html

SanDiegoCounty.gov Home

Agriculture, Weights & Measures

San Diego County Department of Agriculture, Weights & Measures

Agricultural Water Quality Program

The County of San Diego Agricultural Water Quality Program (AWQ) helps to ensure that our waterways are protected by preventing pollutants from commercial agricultural businesses from entering the County's storm drain system in compliance with our municipal Stormwater permit.

AWQ conducts outreach, inspections, and complaint investigations at commercial agriculture businesses to ensure operations are protecting regional water quality through compliance with regional stormwater permit standards.

Water that is released to the streets, gutters, and storm drains in San Diego County is NOT TREATED before it reaches our local creeks, rivers, and ocean. All sources of pollution are prohibited from leaving your site and entering streets or storm drains. Only rainwater is allowed in the streets and storm drains. The County of San Diego Agricultural Water Quality Program supports businesses in their efforts to prevent pollution by offering the resources found on this page.

[Contact Us, FAQ's, & Resources](#) | [Watersheds](#) | [Commercial Agriculture Businesses](#)

Stormwater Training

Annual Stormwater Training Material

[Agricultural Stormwater Training Event](#)
[PDF Version of Presentation](#)

[Agricultural Water Quality Best Management Practices \(BMPs\)](#)
[| English | Spanish | Vietnamese | Chinese | Tagalog | Arabic](#)

[Only Rain in the Storm Drain](#)
[| English | Spanish | Vietnamese | Chinese | Tagalog | Arabic](#)

Select Language
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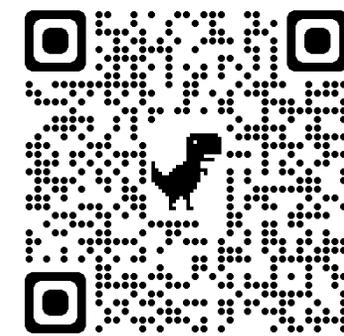
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
 AGRICULTURE, WEIGHTS & MEASURES

AWM Contact Information

If you have questions or would like to contact us:
 Webmail: sdcawm@sdcounty.ca.gov
 San Diego Office: 858-694-2739
 San Marcos Office: 760-752-4700
 Pesticide Inquiry between 8am-5pm: 858-694-8980
 After-Hours Calls and After-Hours Pesticide Inquiry: 800-853-3754

Land Use & Environment Group Open Performance

Incorporated area: Cities



MEMBERS

RMC members consist of the 21 Copermittees in the San Diego Region under the Municipal Permit, Order No. R9-2013-0001 (as amended by Order Nos. R9-2015-0001 and R9-2015-0100). Contact information for each copermittee is listed below.

<p>Chelsea McGimpsey County of San Diego</p> <p>858-229-1865 5510 Overland Ave, Suite 410 San Diego, CA 92123 chelsea.mcgimpsey@sdcounty.ca.gov</p>	<p>Chris Helmer City of Imperial Beach</p> <p>619-628-1370 825 Imperial Beach Blvd Imperial Beach, CA 91932</p>	<p>Reed Thornberry City of San Marcos</p> <p>760-744-1050 x3217 1 Civic Center Drive San Marcos, CA 92069</p>
<p>Marisa Soriano City of Chula Vista</p> <p>619-397-6134 1800 Maxwell Road Chula Vista, CA 91911</p>	<p>Joe Kuhn City of La Mesa</p> <p>619-667-1340 8130 Allison Ave La Mesa, CA 91942</p>	<p>Emily Stein City of Santee</p> <p>619-258-4100 x177 10601 Magnolia Ave, Building 4 Santee, CA 92071</p>
<p>Mike McCall City of Coronado</p> <p>619-522-2652 1825 Strand Way Coronado, CA 92118</p>	<p>Michael Fellows City of Lemon Grove</p> <p>619-825-3812 3232 Main Street Lemon Grove, CA 91945</p>	<p>Dan Goldberg City of Solana Beach</p> <p>858-720-2470 635 S. Hwy 101 Solana Beach, CA 92075</p>
<p>John Quenzer</p>		

Why do we have some many inspectors looking at the same things?

San Diego Region Agriculture & Water Quality

Stormwater is not treated before entering our local waters. Stormwater flowing through storm drains, ditches, and culverts flows untreated to creeks, bays, beaches, and the ocean. Pollutants such as sediment, fertilizers, pesticides, and organic waste are commonly generated by agricultural activities and can contribute to pollution of our waterways if not managed properly.

Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) to help meet both AWQ Program (County) and Ag Order (San Diego Water Board) requirements:

BMP #1: Be aware of how stormwater flows across your property and how this impacts downstream water quality. Map your property and know where the drains on your property discharge. Direct stormwater flows away from potential sources of pollution.

BMP #2: Ensure annual stormwater training is completed and complete 2 hours of continuing education/water quality training.

BMP #3: Use, store, and manage materials properly. Store materials with the potential to contaminate runoff, in a manner that prevents contact with stormwater flows, and inspect these areas frequently.

BMP #4: Practice proper disposal methods. Never dispose of waste in waterways or stormwater conveyances. Waste must be stored to prevent contact with rain and stormwater flows.

BMP #5: Use dry cleanup methods (spill kits) with absorbent material, personal protective equipment such as gloves and eyewear, a dustpan and broom, and a garbage bag to aid in clean up. Keep materials for spill response accessible.

BMP #6: Prevent erosion and sediment loss. Remove or contain accumulations of loose soil. Convey stormwater around areas of erosion. Stabilize graded areas with fiber mats, fiber rolls, geo-textiles, or hydro-seeding. Erect silt fences or construct berms to prevent discharge of sediment. Implement sandbags, straw bales, straw wattles, mulch, and strips of vegetation. Install sediment catch basins to promote settling out of sediments before stormwater flows leave your property. Build farm roads with sediment catch basins and culverts to prevent farm road washouts.

BMP #7: Manage nutrients and pesticides. Monitor crop nutrient needs and apply only what is needed. Store, use, and dispose of pesticides according to the law.

BMP #8: Manage Irrigation Water. Assess and upgrade irrigation equipment to reduce excess irrigation water runoff generated by inefficient irrigation equipment. Do not allow irrigation water to discharge from your property.

BMP #9: Reduce and recycle when feasible. Implement pollution prevention strategies that reduce the amount of pollutants used or generated by your operation. Reuse water where feasible. Excess irrigation water can be collected and applied to farm roads for dust control.



<p>What water quality regulatory programs apply to commercial agriculture operations? Scan QR code for additional program information.</p>	 <p>Agricultural Water Quality (AWQ) → </p>	 <p>Agricultural Order (Ag Order) → </p>
<p>Who enforces the program?</p>	<p>County of San Diego (County)</p>	<p>San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board)</p>
<p>What are they regulating?</p>	<p>Stormwater runoff impacting County-maintained roads, culverts, conveyances, and storm drains.</p>	<p>Impacts to all water resources, including impacts to all surface water bodies and ground water resources.</p>
<p>What is the purpose?</p>	<p>The purpose is to ensure the County is compliant with the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit that is issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) pursuant to National Clean Water Act requirements.</p>	<p>The purpose is to ensure irrigated commercial agriculture businesses comply with the (3rd party or individual) Ag Order, to prevent pollution to all surface and ground water resources.</p>
<p>Do agriculture operations need to take additional steps to enroll?</p>	<p>Commercial agriculture properties do not need to take additional steps to be listed in the County's regulated inventory and there are no fees.</p>	<p>Commercial agriculture properties are mandated to take steps to enroll with the Ag order by submitting a Notice of Intent, a Water Quality Protection Plan (WQPP), and pay an annual fee.</p>
<p>Where are inspections conducted?</p>	<p>County inspectors conduct inspections at commercial agriculture properties in the San Diego Region unincorporated County.</p>	<p>Water Board staff conduct inspections at commercial agriculture properties throughout the San Diego Region, including incorporated (cities) and unincorporated (County) areas of the San Diego Region.</p>
<p>What do they look for during inspections?</p>	<p>Inspections are to ensure annual stormwater training is documented and that best management practices (BMPs) are implemented to prevent pollution to stormwater and to prevent non-stormwater discharges that may impact downstream County-maintained roads, culverts, conveyances, and storm drains.</p>	<p>Inspections are to ensure operations are enrolled with the Ag Order, maintaining a current WQPP, and implementing best management practices (BMPs) to prevent pollution to all surface water bodies and ground water resources.</p>
<p>Is training required?</p>	<p>Annual stormwater training is required. Stormwater training material is available in English, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Chinese on the AWQ Program webpage which you can access by scanning the QR code above.</p>	<p>Annual 2-hour water quality training is required. Training options include formal classroom training, individual meetings with a qualified trainer, and/or internet-based training with the local Farm Bureau, University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), or other comparable organization.</p>
<p>Are other documents or steps required?</p>	<p>No. However, some operations may require a site-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). A Water Quality Protection Plan (WQPP) may meet the requirements of the SWPPP. SWPPP requirements are based on watershed impairments and site compliance history. Unless instructed, operations are not required to maintain a SWPPP.</p>	<p>Enrolled properties are required to regularly update their WQPP, complete quarterly and annual self-inspection reports, submit self-inspection reports to the 3rd Party Irrigated Lands Group (ILG) or Water Board, and collect water samples*. *Water sample requirements are fulfilled by 3rd Party ILG, or individually.</p>