



# Milk Matters

## LEGISLATIVE RECAP

After a regular 105-day session followed by three 30-day special sessions, the Legislature called it quits for 2017 (so far). The special sessions came as no surprise, as over the past several years the divided Legislature has needed special sessions to resolve its business. However, 2017 set a record for the number of days in session.

Legislators reached agreement on the biennial operating budget hours before a June 30th deadline, averting a state government shutdown. Included in that budget package was an education funding plan designed to meet the Supreme Court's *McCleary* mandate primarily through a state levy swap. A reduction of the B&O tax rate on manufacturers that was included in the budget deal was subsequently vetoed by Gov. Jay Inslee, instilling further acrimony into an already bitterly divided and opaque budget process.

The Legislature ended the 3rd special session without passing a biennial capital budget. The Senate stood its ground and refused to pass a capital budget because the House did not pass a permanent fix to the *Hirst* rural water rights issue. As such, the projects in the proposed capital budget remain unfunded and stalled. Unless there is agreement on a *Hirst* fix, there will not be a 4th special session to pass a capital budget.

For more information on the final status of issues important to the dairy industry (such as the beef checkoff, VSP funding, dairy distillers, and paid family leave), view our full legislative recap at <http://wastatedairy.com/2017-legislative-session-recap/>.

## CAFO APPEAL UPDATE

Washington State Dairy Federation and Washington Farm Bureau filed a joint appeal in February that challenges the recent Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation permits issued by the Dept. of Ecology.

Ecology has approved a state-only permit to address groundwater and a combined state-federal permit to address groundwater and surface water.

The intent of the appeal is to address elements that make the permits burdensome and unaffordable for most dairies.

The appeal requests that certain aspects of the permits be reviewed and revised to be consistent with state and federal laws and agency-prescribed practices that already regulate the use of livestock nutrients.

The appeal is expected to be heard by the state Pollution Control Hearings Board in early December. For more information, go to <http://wastatedairy.com/statewide-ag-organizations-challenge-new-permit-requirement-by-ecology/>.

## PAID LEAVE CHANGES

The 2017 Legislature made major, substantive changes to the state's paid family and medical leave insurance program. The Dept. of Labor & Industries is also adopting rules pertaining to the paid sick leave requirements of I-1433. To find out what these changes mean to you, visit our articles on [www.wastatedairy.com](http://www.wastatedairy.com).

A snapshot of current dairy issues  
August 2017

## IMMIGRATION REFORM IDEAS FLOATED AGAIN

The House Appropriations Committee recently approved an amendment by Congressman Dan Newhouse that would allow dairy farmers to more readily use the H-2A visa program to fill their need for year-round workers.

The House Judiciary Immigration Subcommittee held a hearing recently on agricultural guest workers. Judiciary chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) is expected to introduce his ag immigration reform bill soon. The Agricultural Guestworker Act would replace the H-2A system with a new H-2C system. The program would be administered by USDA and would serve the more diverse needs of dairy, food processing and other year-round operations.

Go to [www.wastatedairy.com](http://www.wastatedairy.com) to learn more about this topic.

## MARGIN PROTECTION PLAN DISCUSSIONS BEGIN

The National Milk Producers Federation testified to Congress in late July during a hearing on the 2018 Farm Bill. NMPF said Congress must revise the dairy safety net program established in the 2014 Farm Bill to provide farmers with effective risk management protection that will increase participation in the program. Visit [www.wastatedairy.com](http://www.wastatedairy.com) for more information on this issue.



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**CAFO Permit Update**

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