



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Hawai'i Department of Health and Big Island Dairy sign consent agreement to protect the environment and community as the dairy closes operations

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) today entered into an Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) with the owners of Big Island Dairy, LLC. The AOC was completed to address numerous discharges of wastewater containing manure from the dairy to state waters during the past two years that were documented by DOH.

The AOC requires Big Island Dairy owners to terminate their dairy operations, remove all their cows from confinement on the site, clean and remove the existing wastewater system, and pay \$79,000 by June of 2019, either as an administrative penalty or to fund an environmentally beneficial project in the area.

The removal of cows in confinement and the cleaning and removal of the dairy's wastewater system is expected to halt the odor and wastewater discharges that have affected neighbors in O'okala during operations at the Big Island Dairy facility.

"Entry into the AOC ensures that the closing of the dairy is being conducted in an expeditious and responsible manner," said Keith Kawaoka, DOH deputy director of environmental health. "While the Department of Health supports local agricultural and food sustainability, operation of industrial agricultural facilities must be conducted in a manner that respects both Hawai'i's delicate environment and the local communities that host them."

Big Island Dairy was unable to comply with state and federal laws in place to protect human and environmental health due to the dairy's size, limitations of its wastewater system and local environmental conditions. The property receives a large amount of rainfall, has steep slopes

and volcanic soils making it susceptible to flooding and wastewater discharges. The dairy's inability to comply, along with a federal court lawsuit outside of DOH's enforcement, forced dairy owners to agree to cease milking operations and close their facility.

The Hawai'i Department of Health protects the health of residents and visitors who enjoy the state's coastal and inland water resources. This is accomplished through statewide coastal water surveillance and watershed-based environmental management using a combination of permit issuance, water quality monitoring, investigation, enforcement, polluted runoff control, and public education.

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