

Notes

By: Shelley W. Keen *SWK*
Date: November 5, 2009
Subject: Moo View Cow Palace WSB proposal

This morning I met with Craig Searle, Chuck Brockway, Cynthia Bridge Clark, and Brian Patton to discuss a plan to convert land irrigated with ground water in the ESPA to surface water irrigation. Mr. Searle's company, Moo View Cow Palace, is seeking funding for infrastructure to bring surface water to its farm. The Water Resource Board offers grants through the Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan (CAMP) process. The funds originate from the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) administered by the United States Dept. of Agriculture.

About 88 acres of the place of use Moo View wants to convert to surface water were the subject of Transfer 71925, which was approved in 2006. The transfer converted the ground water irrigation right on those 88 acres to dairy use. The transfer conditions allowed 5 years to complete the transfer, and the dairy has not yet been constructed. The land is still being irrigated with ground water.

Moo View's proposal is to lease the dairy right to the Water Supply Bank and rent it back out as a supplemental supply of irrigation water for the land where it is now used. In addition, Moo View would like IDWR to approve an extension of time to complete the transfer.

The Moo View proposal appears advantageous in that it would authorize through the WSB rental what is now a questionable irrigation practice while buying time for the water right holder to let the economy improve before building the dairy.

One concern is that Moo View transferred only the consumptive volume of the right, but the full irrigation volume may be needed in years when surface water is not available. I told the meeting participants that since the conversion to the dairy has not occurred, IDWR could authorize continued use of the full irrigation volume while the right is in the Water Supply Bank, should it be accepted.