



# Washington State Department of Agriculture

PO Box 42560  
Olympia, Washington 98504-2560  
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Contact: [Hector Castro](#) (360) 902-1815

## **Whatcom County dairy fined \$17,000 for violating Water Pollution Control Act**

**OLYMPIA** – The [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) (WSDA) has cited Edaleen Dairy in Lynden for two violations of the state’s Water Pollution Control Act including improperly applying manure onto a field and allowing polluted water to enter tributaries that lead to a creek identified as salmon habitat. Together, the violations carry a fine of \$17,000.

Washington’s Dairy Nutrient Management Act requires dairies to develop plans to manage the manure produced by their cows. WSDA’s [Dairy Nutrient Management Program](#) ensures dairies comply with this requirement and enforces parts of the state’s Water Pollution Control Act as they relate to dairy operations.

Inspectors with this program visit all of the state’s dairies approximately once every 22 months to examine how dairy owners manage manure and clean water on their property. Inspectors also review soil tests, manure nutrient analysis results, manure application and movement off farm, and irrigation records. The purpose is to ensure the manure is managed in a way that protects surface and groundwater from nutrients and bacteria in the manure, which can be harmful to human health and aquatic life.

The Edaleen Dairy inspection began in November 2012 after a complaint was made that a worker was improperly applying manure to a field in the rain, which can accelerate manure nutrients leaching into groundwater or lead to runoff into ditches and streams. A WSDA inspector visited the dairy twice over the next few days and found that material from the dairy’s manure digester, called digestate, had been applied to a field saturated with water. The inspector also found standing water in some areas of the field and evidence that water with digestate in it had flowed into a nearby ditch. This violation included a \$9,000 fine.

In addition, the inspector found a leaking valve in a waste water system. An analysis determined this polluted water contained fecal matter at rates in excess of state regulations, and it had leaked into ditches that ultimately lead to Bertrand Creek, identified as both salmon habitat and a human recreation area. This violation included an \$8,000 fine.

The dairy has been cooperative in addressing issues raised through these inspections. It has 30 days to pay the penalty or appeal to the state Pollution Control Hearings Board, an independent body whose members are appointed by the Governor.

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