

Nitrate in the Surface Water Supplies of Cache Creek

8/23/2016

Nitrate contamination in California is generally considered a problem in groundwater, not surface water. However, the District has tested the surface water in Cache Creek at Capay Dam for nitrate (as N) 25 times between 2006 and 2016.

Table 1. Nitrate in Cache Creek at Capay Dam (irrigation water diversion point).

	Nitrate as N (mg/l)
Average	0.40
Minimum	Not detected (3 samples)
Maximum	1.94
Number of samples	25

The average concentration of nitrate in Cache Creek at Capay (0.4 mg/l Nitrate as N) can be used for Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program reporting requirements.

If you irrigated with well water, you will need to have your well water tested for nitrate. You cannot use an average value for the area because nitrate varies greatly from well to well. Groundwater in Yolo County can have significantly more nitrate than surface water, sometimes supplying 60 to 100 lbs of N/acre to the crop.

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