

# Ag Community Response to the Sonoma County Drought



# Snapshot of Sonoma County Agriculture

## Top 5 ag commodities in Sonoma County

1. Winegrapes
2. Dairy products
3. Livestock & poultry
4. Livestock & poultry products
5. Cattle & Calves

## Sources of Water

- Surface water
  - Direct diversion from rivers, streams and on-farm storage
- Groundwater
- Reclaimed water
  - From Santa Rosa, Petaluma, Windsor, Healdsburg, and Sonoma Water



# How Ag Has Helped Conserve Water

- Since 1964, water use in the **dairy industry** has dropped by 88%, due primarily to efficient water use in feed crops and the use of crop byproducts for feed.
- **Wine industry** has implemented efficient water management programs in an effort to save water
- New technology allows farmers and growers to use water more efficiently
- The use of soil additives (organic matter) to reduce water runoff and improve water and nutrient holding capacity
- The ag industry is currently working on a Voluntary Drought Initiative (VDI) with the State Water Board for the Russian River permit holders and is participating in a VDI with NOAA



# What will Sonoma County ag look like if the drought continues?

- Reduction in Sonoma County dairies and dairy cattle
- Reduction in acreage of vegetables grown in Sonoma County
- Some vineyard blocks may not be harvested, smaller fruit, fewer tons per acre
- Vegetable farmers will be selective of what and when they plan
- Diversity of products may change



# How can we work together to help our local agriculture community?

- Provide technical support to farmers to assist with grant applications that offer water-saving solutions
- Provide technical support for grant applications
- Develop redundancy in the recycled water system
- Find a more holistic approach to cover the costs associated with GSA fees

