From: jean&pablo mendoza <jmen@bentonrea.com>
Sent: Friday, December 25, 2009 8:17 PM
To: ATR-Agricultural Workshops <agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov>
Subject: Comment

Dear Economic Policy Makers,

As you may or may not know, 12% of wells in the Lower Yakima Valley of Washington State have tested above safe levels for nitrates/nitrites. One study found that 19% of wells were positive for coliform bacteria. Many long time residents believe that this contamination of our aquifers is directly related to the over concentration of confinement animal feeding operations or CAFOs in our valley. In order to protect vulnerable children and the elderly, people with private wells are advised to have their wells tested and to purchase bottled water if nitrate levels are above 10 mg/L. May I share with you the impact this has on all of us, but especially the poor?

Relative cost for Drinking Water in Yakima County – 2007

Family of Two Adults and Two Young Children
2 Liters of water per day per adult
1 Liter of water per day per young child

6 Liters of water per day per family at $.40 per liter equals $2.40 per day
$2.40 per day equals $876 per year

Median Household Income for Yakima County in 2007 **$42,000**

Percentage of Income spent on water **2%**

19.7% of the Yakima County Population and 28% of the Yakama Reservation Population live below the poverty level which, for a family of four, is:
$22,000

Percentage of Income spent on water by families living in poverty
4%

Part of the Obama administration's first economic stimulus package included $38 million for Washington State to improve drinking water. Private wells were not eligible for these monies according to the WA State Dept. of Health.

Paying $800 to $1,000 per year for drinking water is an effective reduction of income. We still pay taxes on this money. This is money that we can no longer spend for attorney fees that are necessary when we seek social justice, mandatory insurance payments, education so that we can converse intelligently with "experts", or charitable contributions to help the increasing number of poverty stricken people in our communities.

Sincerely,
Jean Mendoza
3142 Signal Peak Road
White Swan, WA 98952