



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

October 12, 2016

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**PRELIMINARY STUDY OF CITRUS GROWN WITH CAWELO'S PRODUCED WATER SHOWS  
ORGANIC ELEMENTS NOT ABSORBED INTO FRUIT**

*Reaffirms Results from Initial Water Quality Analysis*

**Bakersfield, CA** – As part of an ongoing testing program, Cawelo Water District (Cawelo) today released the results from its citrus [crop study](#) in which a third-party environmental toxicologist concluded that organic elements found in produced water are not being absorbed into fruit. The citrus study verifies an initial water quality [study](#) that showed Cawelo's produced water supply to be safe for agriculture irrigation.

Produced water is a water source that is naturally obtained from the ground during the oil and gas extraction process. Upon recovery, the water is filtered, treated, blended and subject to monthly water quality testing with results reported quarterly to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board), the regulator charged with ensuring water quality and safety. Cawelo has a long history of complying with all water quality standards established by the Regional Board for produced water.

Certain stakeholders have raised questions regarding the safety of using produced water to irrigate crops. With a mandate to protect public health and ensure factual information is disseminated, Cawelo voluntarily initiated a program to extensively and systematically study produced water quality as well as commodities grown with produced water. Results of all tests are provided to the Regional Board and its recently established Food Safety Panel and made available to the public.

"Cawelo is working collaboratively with regulators to implement a science-based framework that ensures a safe, clean water supply for California agriculture, particularly as the Golden State grapples with a water shortage," said David Ansolabehere, general manager of the Cawelo Water District. "Our latest round of testing shows that organic compounds found in produced water are not absorbed into citrus grown with this water supply."

In April 2016, the third-party environmental toxicologist analyzed water quality samples of Cawelo's produced water supply for more than 70 different constituents identified for testing by the Regional Board. In the initial results, the toxicologist found that organic compounds were within safe drinking water quality standards and concluded that Cawelo's produced water is safe for irrigation.

For the most-recent citrus test, the expert toxicologist analyzed mandarins, oranges and lemons, using testing protocols established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The study compared crops irrigated with Cawelo’s produced water supply versus crops irrigated with water from other sources. After careful analysis, the toxicologist concluded that key organic elements are not being absorbed nor accumulated in edible fruit.

Cawelo is committed to studying this issue and will continue to test additional crops as they come into season to further verify these initial findings, as recommended by the third-party toxicologist.

“We continue to work through this process in close collaboration with the Regional Board,” added Ansolabehere. “As a public water agency, our most important charge is to provide high quality irrigation water for our customers, and engage in a decision-making process lead by sound science, an unbiased review of facts and thoughtful dialogue.”

In fact, Cawelo is now required by the Regional Board to test for more than 160 constituents. The Water District is systematically moving through the review process with the Regional Board on the first wave of expanded testing data, but notes that the vast majority of the 160 constituents have been non-detectable and below drinking water quality standards – an even higher standard than what is required of irrigation water. The expanded testing data, combined with the initial water quality study, is the most-current, factual and science-based information available to evaluate produced water quality. According to the State Water Resources Control Board, [no studies](#) to date have shown that irrigating food crops with produced water poses any threat to public health.

As California grapples with ongoing water shortages and drought, the Governor and state leaders have established water policies that mandate Californians reuse and recycle water whenever possible. Recycling produced water is providing farmers a much-needed additional source of water to irrigate crops and helping protect already depleted groundwater basins.

It is important to note and clarify, water generated from hydraulic fracturing (also known as “fracking”) is not used for agricultural purposes – a point that has been incorrectly reported in certain publications and promoted by opponents of oil production. Cawelo does not accept, use, or deliver water generated from hydraulic fracturing.

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*The Cawelo Water District, located just north of Bakersfield, CA, has been serving the community for more than 50 years. The district includes 45,000 acres in Kern County and provides irrigation water to approximately 34,000 acres of orchards, vineyards, and other crops. For more information, visit: [www.cawelowd.org](http://www.cawelowd.org).*