CCAs have provided trusted agricultural advice to California farmers for many years. Now they are helping growers meet new regulatory guidelines that address concerns about nitrates in groundwater. In fact, with their expertise in nutrient management, CCAs have actually been written into the regulations.

Nitrate in groundwater has been a significant issue in California for many years. Nitrate pollution in groundwater that is used for drinking water can create serious health risks, especially for children and pregnant women. Much of that nitrate found in drinking water today was actually applied to the land years ago.

“We’re dealing with legacy nitrates that were caused by urban, farm, and other uses many years ago,” explains Steve Beckley, marketing consultant to the California CCA Board with S. Beckley and Associates. “It takes a long time for nitrate to reach the groundwater.”

The issue of nitrates in groundwater has been receiving special attention in the last couple of years. A report released by researchers at the University of California–Davis (UC-Davis) found that fertilizers and animal wastes applied to cropland are the most significant sources of nitrates in groundwater. The State Water Board built upon that information and proposed ways to address the nitrate problem. It concluded that remediation can cost billions...