

News Release

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For Immediate Release



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

TO:

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District proposes dairy emission factor

Public hearing in July for feedback on proposal

(Fresno, CA) – After months of exhaustive study, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has proposed an emission factor for quantifying smog-forming gases from dairy cows.

The factor, required by state law, would be used in determining just how many dairies in the eight-county San Joaquin Valley air basin will require Air District permits. A public hearing for comment on the proposal will be held July 11 at 1:30 p.m. at the District's Fresno office and videoconferenced to regional offices in Bakersfield and Modesto.

The proposed factor of 20.6 pounds of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) per head, per year, comes after a report by an independent study group convened earlier this year to examine the available data on dairy emissions. The Dairy Permitting Advisory Group (DPAG), which included environmentalists, scientists, dairy representatives and government regulators, met 11 times over five months and recommended emissions factors that ranged from 5.6 to 38.2 pounds per head, per year.

The factor previously used to quantify dairy emissions – 12.8 pounds per head, per year -- was derived from studies done in the 1930s and was found by DPAG to be inferior to the newer data investigated. As part of a settlement of a lawsuit brought by the dairy industry, the Air District is required by Aug. 1 to adopt a realistic number to reflect the contribution of emissions from the Valley's 2.5 million dairy cows to the air basin, one of the smoggiest places in the country.

"This is the culmination of an effort that looked at every bit of available science," said David L. Crow, the District's Air Pollution Control Officer and executive director. "This is the most comprehensive scientific exercise related to dairy emissions to date."

District officials also note, however, that the proposed emission factor is a low-range estimate that can change as more data becomes available. "This is a conservative figure that does not include known emissions for which scientific studies were incomplete," said Crow.

The proposed emission factor lays the foundation for determining how to approach dairy regulation, he said, and also "reiterates the areas where future work is still needed."

If the proposed number of 20.6 pounds is adopted, dairies would be the largest single source of smog-forming gases in the Valley. Using the new number, the current estimates for the largest sources of VOCs in the Valley's air basin are:

1. Dairies
2. Light- and medium-duty trucks
3. Light-duty passenger cars
4. Oil and gas production (evaporative losses)
5. Pesticides
6. Consumer products
7. Prescribed burning
8. Off-road equipment (lawn/garden, construction, etc.)
9. Aircraft
10. Coatings (paints and thinners, non-architectural)

Source: California Air Resources Board, 2004 estimated emissions inventory

Although significant progress has been made in improving air quality in the San Joaquin Valley the past 13 years, the Valley air basin harbors some of the nation's worst air quality and is under federal mandate to reduce emissions of ozone-forming gases. The Valley air basin ranks as the worst offender for day-long smog violations in the country.

For more information, visit www.valleyair.org or call or visit the nearest District office:

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