

News Release

4/22/04



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

Local News Editors

Central District Contact
Jaime Holt
(559) 230-5800

North District Contact
Anthony Presto
(209) 557-6400

South District Contact
Brenda Turner
(661) 326-6900

New Smoke Management System Will Aid Farmers and Protect Public

A new Smoke Management program spearheaded by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is expected to begin operations on Tuesday May 18. The new system will give farmers more flexibility in scheduling burns and reduce the level of harmful smoke throughout the Valley at any one time.

Under the old system, the District determined “burn” and “no-burn” days for each of two large regions comprising the Valley air basin. Under the new program, the air basin is divided into more than 100 smaller zones. District staff will monitor localized meteorological conditions to determine how many emissions will be allocated to each zone. A computer system will keep track of those emissions and permit burning until the limit is reached in each zone for that day. In this way, a “no-burn” day or limited-burn day for one area would not necessarily translate into the same status for another area.

With the new system, farmers will be able to request burn authorization from the District as early as 8 p.m. the day before their planned burn by contacting the District’s automated voice-response system; or by logging onto the District’s website at www.valleyair.org. They will also be able to talk to an operator from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m., seven days a week including holidays.

Farmers who are unable to burn because the limit on emissions has been reached for that day will be placed on a priority list for the next burn-allocation day in that zone. The District will then inform the requesting farmer the day before a burn is permissible.

An information packet with instructions on how to use the new system will be mailed to all current burn permit holders a week before the new system goes on line. For more information on the new Smoke Management program visit www.valleyair.org or call (559) 230-6000 in Fresno, Kings and Madera counties; (661) 326-6900 in Tulare and the Valley portion of Kern counties; and (209) 557-6400 in Merced, San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties.

