

News Release



Attn: City editor; Business editor

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For immediate release

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Air District board approves ag dust-control rule

A new rule to reduce dust emissions from agricultural operations goes into effect now for implementation July 1.

The San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District Governing Board approved Rule 4550 (Conservation Management Practices) and the accompanying fee rule at its monthly meeting May 20.

Rule 4550 allows ag operators to select a conservation management practice from among approved District options in order to reduce particulate emissions (PM) of 10 microns and smaller. The rule is a component of the PM10 Plan passed last year by the Board and recently approved by the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

PM10 – particulates that are about one-seventh the width of a human hair – has been shown to lodge deep in the lungs and cause serious health problems.

The new rule applies to agricultural field operations of 100 or more contiguous acres, livestock operations above certain population thresholds, and agricultural unpaved roads and traffic areas. In all, about 8,000 agricultural operations in the eight-county District could be affected.

Rule 3190 (Conservation Management Practices Plan Fee) will recover the cost related to the review, approval and enforcement of the conservation management practices plans.

“These new rules are an important part of an overall strategy to reduce a serious form of pollution in the Valley,” said David L. Crow, the District’s Air Pollution

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Control Officer. “We’ve spent a lot of time working with the ag community to ensure that the proposed management practices are feasible and effective.”

There are five source categories pertaining to field ag operations; five for poultry operations; four for dairy; and four for feedlot operations. Operators must choose one Conservation Management Practice for each category applicable to their operation.

The District worked closely with area growers in multiple workshops over the past year to identify commodity-specific practices that are feasible for the Valley region. Examples include:

- Practices that reduce or eliminate the need to disturb the soil or manure;
- Practices that protect the soil from wind erosion;
- Practices that reduce emissions from unpaved roads and parking areas;
- Alternative practices to waste burning.

Farmers who are subject to the rule must put their CMP plan into effect by July 1 and file an application with the District by Dec. 31.

“The District is addressing, and will continue to scrutinize, the variety of emission sources that contribute to the Valley’s air problem,” Crow said. “It’s all part of the big picture.”

For more information on Rules 4550 and 3190, visit the District’s website at www.valleyair.org or call the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District in Fresno at (559) 230-6000; in Modesto at (209) 557-6400; and in Bakersfield at (661) 326-6900.