



Valley Air News

A publication of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

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Changes in air quality rules impact agriculture

A string of new state laws adopted last year, combined with federal requirements to attain clean air standards, have prompted rules that greatly affect farmers in the San Joaquin Valley.



Once permitted, a farm will follow similar air pollution control rules that regulate all other permitted businesses in the San Joaquin Valley.

The San Joaquin Valley air basin, which includes San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the Valley portion of Kern counties, fails to meet federal and state standards for particulates and ozone. In order to meet these standards, adhere to California law, and protect public health, the Valley Air District is required to adopt rules and seek every feasible control strategy possible

to reduce particulate matter and ozone-forming emissions Valley-wide.

LOCAL AND FEDERAL PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS

The first in a group of air quality bills signed into law in September 2003, SB700 removes the decades-old legal exemption for agricultural operations from permitting requirements.

The California Air Resources Board has determined that agriculture contributes 26 percent of the smog-forming emissions in the San Joaquin Valley and more than 50

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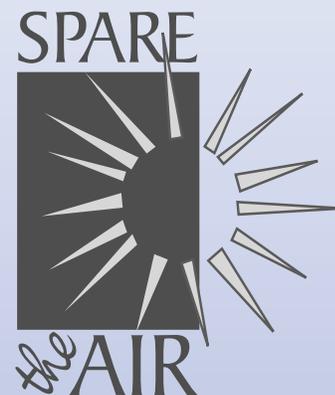
Valley employers prepare for another Spare the Air season

This summer, more than 750 Valley employers will demonstrate their commitment to finding alternatives for pollution-producing activities when they kick off the new Spare the Air season!

Drill Day, the traditional beginning of Spare the Air, is June 8. The season runs through Sept. 28. This year, the District is partnering its popular Clean Green Yard Machine lawnmower-incentive program with the Spare the Air kickoff (see accompanying story).

During Spare the Air season, the Valley Air District notifies employer Spare the Air coordinators – individuals designated by the employer – when air-quality levels are forecast to be in the “unhealthy” range (151 and above on the Air Quality Index). Then, coordinators inform their organizations that it will be a Spare the Air Day, giving everyone the opportunity to put into practice Spare the Air tips such as

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percent of the directly emitted particulate matter emissions during the fall months.

“There is no way we can achieve attainment without regulating these sources,” said Dave Mitchell, District planning manager.

The law affects farms, dairies, orchards and other agricultural operations that emit half the “major source” threshold of air pollutants, meaning they create at least 12.5 tons per year of ozone-forming emissions, or 35 tons per years of particulate matter.

“We will be working very closely with the agricultural industry and directly with farmers to make this process as easy for them as possible,” said air pollution control officer Dave Crow.

The deadline for large agricultural operations to apply for a District permit is July 2004.

AGRICULTURAL BURNING

Two other air quality bills passed last year call for the phase-out of agricultural burning through the use of cost-effective alternatives by 2010 and require biomass plants to use agricultural waste to produce electricity. The Air District has also implemented a significant change in the way agricultural burning is regulated until its phase-out is complete.

SB705 goes into effect June 1, 2005, by prohibiting open-field burning of stubble from field crops, fruit prunings and weed abatement. By 2010, all agricultural open-field burning will be prohibited except prescribed and diseased-crop burning as well as hazard reduction burning in the foothills

and mountain areas of the District. SB704 requires that at least 30 percent of the fuel burned to produce power in all California biomass plants come from agricultural waste. Biomass is a significantly cleaner alternative to open-field burning and results in the production of electricity from the ag waste being burned.

A financial incentive is also being provided to biomass plants for the agricultural waste collected from farmers.

SMOKE MANAGEMENT

The District will be working closely with the agricultural industry and other stakeholders to find cost-effective alternatives to open burning.

The District has streamlined the process for authorizing farmers to burn, and the new system actually reduces emissions.

The 30-year-old program that dictated “burn” and “no-burn” days for three large regions in the Valley will soon be replaced with a Smoke Management Program that separates the Valley into 103 zones, keeping track of limited emission allocations on a daily basis for each zone.

The Smoke Management Program virtually eliminates “no-burn” days but keeps track of the emissions allocated in each zone, so that when the forecast limit is reached, no more burning is allowed for that day.

Farmers will be able to use a telephone voice-response system, the District’s website or speak directly to District staff to get permission to burn as early as 8 pm the day prior to the scheduled burn.

AGRICULTURAL DUST REDUCTION RULES

The Conservation Management Practices Program (Rule 4550) takes effect this July and deals

primarily with the particulate matter emissions from farms of at least 100 contiguous acres and animal feeding operations of specific populations based on the type of animals being raised.

Operators will be able to choose the practices best suited for them to reduce or eliminate the need to disturb soil and manure; protect soil from wind erosion; reduce dust from unpaved roads and unpaved parking areas; and use alternative practices to waste burning.



FUGITIVE DUST EMISSION PROHIBITIONS

In May, the District will consider amendments to *Regulation VIII (Fugitive Dust Prohibitions)*. Amendments to *Regulation VIII* are expected to reduce PM10 emissions by 18.8 tons per day in the Valley from sources such as construction, demolition, excavation, earth-moving activities, transport and storage of bulk materials, landfill operations, unpaved roads, unpaved parking areas and off-field agricultural sources.

Some agricultural sources are removed from *Regulation VIII* because those measures are covered in Conservation Management Practices. However, practices involving carryout/trackout emissions, covering bulk materials and unpaved traffic areas DO affect agricultural operations and are addressed in Fugitive Dust rules.

For more information on these rules, view the District’s web site at www.valleyair.org or call the District at (559) 230-5800 in the Central Region, at (209) 557-6400 in the Northern Region, or (661) 326-6900 in the Southern Region.

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carpooling to work, postponing the use of gas-powered yard-care equipment, or foregoing the use of lighter fluid when barbecuing. These are effective ways to reduce serious levels of ozone (smog).

“Everyone can participate in on some level,” said Janelle Schneider, the District’s Spare the Air employer coordinator. “We all complain about the bad air. This is a way we can do something about it.”

The District makes becoming a Spare the Air partner as easy as visiting www.valleyair.org and following the links to an online enrollment form. Spare the Air incentive items can also be ordered online and will be shipped immediately to partners, making it easy for employees to participate.

The best thing is, it’s free!

Some employers go to extra lengths during the Spare the Air season to demonstrate a commitment to nonpolluting activities. For example, ordering in during lunch, saving employees the necessity of a lunchtime trip.

At the end of the season, the District takes out special advertising in each market’s major media to recognize and congratulate partners for another successful season.

Spare the Air has become a buzzword in the eight counties the District serves, and it’s all because of the effort extended by Valley employers. It’s a shining example of the effectiveness of cooperative efforts by all of us – which is what it takes to clear our air.

What can you do to help clean the Valley's air?

Here are some ideas:

- Carpool or vanpool.
- Trip link. Organize all your errands into one vehicle trip, not several.
- Keep your vehicle tuned up and tires properly inflated. A well-maintained vehicle saves money on gas and runs cleaner.
- It’s not the barbecue, it’s the lighter fluid! Lighter fluid sends noxious chemicals into the air. Instead, use an electric briquette starter (available at hardware stores). Your food will taste better, too!
- Postpone the use of gas-powered yard-care equipment. Think about picking up an electric or manual push mower during the Clean Green Yard Machine promotion – at a huge savings!
- Put those aerosol products down. Switch to a pump spray.
- Consider traveling by train. It’s a more relaxing way to travel.

For more information on Spare the Air tips, visit the District’s website: www.valleyair.org.



District lawn mower incentive kicks off Spare the Air Season

This year the District has a new and exciting lawn mower incentive program that's easier for Valley residents than a trade-in program and gives them a choice when purchasing a new Clean Green Yard Machine at a great price.

Residents of the San Joaquin Valley are encouraged to help kick off the Spare the Air season by purchasing a non-polluting lawn mower at any Orchard Supply Hardware store in the San Joaquin Valley during this promotion from **June 5 - June 8** and taking advantage of discounts on electric or manual reel lawn mowers.

The Air District is partnering with OSH, Black & Decker and American Mower Company to provide up to \$88 off the price of electric lawn mowers and \$45 off manual, reel mowers from June 5 - June 8 only, and only while supplies last with an Air District-issued coupon.

Using an electric or human-powered reel mower will help reduce smog-forming emissions that add to the Valley’s summertime ozone pollution problem. Gas-powered lawn mowers can produce as much nitrogen oxide (a precursor to ozone) as 40 late-model cars, while electric and reel mowers work just as well and produce no emissions at all. Reel mowers are the original, push-style, manual lawn mowers, require no gas or electricity, are very easy to use and perfect for small lawns.

“This is one of the many ways that residents can take a painless step in the right direction to help clean up our Valley’s air,” said Dave Jones, planning director for the Air District. “If people are going to purchase a lawn mower anyway, they can actually spend less and get the same performance,” he added.

Here’s how the program works:

The District will provide interested Valley residents with a coupon for either an electric or a manual, reel mower. The coupon-holder may use that coupon at any of the 14 OSH stores in the San Joaquin Valley between June 5 through June 8 to purchase either of the two electric mower models or either of the two reel mower models available at OSH.

The program is good only while limited supplies last, so buyers should call or write the Air District immediately to get in on this limited offer!

Valley residents can find out more by calling Air District offices in Fresno at (559) 230-5800, in Bakersfield at (661) 326-6900, or our Modesto office at (209) 557-6400. Those interested can also request a coupon by sending a letter to 4230 Kiernan Ave., #130, Modesto, CA 95356-9322 or an e-mail to: anthony.presto@valleyair.org.



District Deputy Director Retires

On March 26, Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer Mark Boese bid farewell to friends and co-workers after 32 years of exemplary service with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

“Mark has excelled at finding innovative solutions to many of the most complex air issues that have faced the Valley,” said Dave Crow, the District’s air pollution control officer.

Boese began his career as a hard-working young man (as seen in the picture, right) and has continued throughout the years with the same urgency and dedication. As a graduate of California State University, Fresno, with a B.S. in Biology and an M.S. in Environmental Science, he began his career as an air-pollution control specialist for Stanislaus County Health Department in 1972. From there, he journeyed through the ranks to engineer and as program manager/deputy air pollution control officer for Stanislaus in 1987. Boese was instrumental in helping the eight counties of the San Joaquin Valley unify to become one air district in 1992. Shortly after the District’s unification, he became the Valley Air District’s Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer.



He fondly remembers the early days of The District. “The challenge was to meet several state laws within a six-month period to develop the infrastructure for the District with just four or five staff members. It was a lot of hard work but the goal was accomplished!”

recognized having served Agriculture’s Air Quality and Air Pollution (CAPCOA)

“District staff stands head over shoulders to any other staff in the state or country.”
 Mark Boese,
 District Deputy Director

Mark says he admits that he won’t One thing is very clear:

the District and considers his greatest personal accomplishment as having been a part of putting together such a talented and dedicated group of staff members. “District staff stands head over shoulders to any other staff in the state or country!” Mark says that he is pleased with the appointment of Seyed Sadredrin as the new Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer.

“I have known Seyed for more than 20 years, and during that time, I’ve watched him grow and develop into a fine leader. He will not have any problems stepping into my shoes,” said Boese.

While Mark was dedicated to his work, he has a greater passion for his family. His retirement plans include moving to Modesto and settling into a new home. He and his wife look forward to spending more time with family, traveling, golfing, fishing and scuba diving. I’ll just enjoy reading about the Air District in the newspaper, he said.”

Thanks for your leadership and camaraderie Mark! It’s been a pleasure.

Less Wood Burning Helped Improve Air Quality

The outstanding cooperation of Valley residents this past winter in voluntarily curtailing their fireplace and woodstove use resulted in fewer days than originally anticipated that burning was prohibited.

This past winter was the first time that Valley residents were prohibited by the Valley Air District from using woodstoves, fireplaces and other wood-burning heaters during periods of unhealthy air quality. But as the wood-burning season ended in February, it was apparent that voluntary self-curtailment by residents helped reduce wintertime air pollution.

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“Valley residents refrained from burning this winter, not only on days when no burning was allowed, but also on days when they were discouraged from burning,” said air pollution control officer Dave Crow. “Their actions definitely helped improve the Valley’s wintertime air quality. People saw the value of not burning and that has allowed Valley residents to breathe easier.”

Prior to the start of the program, District staff expected as many as 25 mandatory wood-burning prohibitions. But throughout the season, wood burning was prohibited only twice: in Fresno and Bakersfield on Nov. 18, 2003, and in Fresno on Jan. 23.

Through the “Check Before You Burn,” program, residents are discouraged from burning wood when the Air Quality Index for their county is predicted to be between 101 and 150. At a level of 151 or higher, wood burning is prohibited.

The weather also played a part in the low number of curtailment days. Evan Shipp, the District’s supervising meteorologist, explained that in previous years, winter weather patterns have been stable for long periods. “When this happens, wood smoke and emissions from morning traffic cause air pollution to rise to unhealthy levels,” Shipp said. “We didn’t have those long, stagnant periods this winter.”

*“Their actions definitely helped improve wintertime air quality.”
Dave Crow, air pollution control officer*

The 25,000-square-mile San Joaquin Valley is among eight areas in the country considered seriously out of compliance with federal standards for particulate matter. Due to the severity of the Valley’s wintertime air pollution, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency required the District to reduce particulate matter emissions Valley-wide. Residential wood burning can add more than 24 tons per day of harmful soot, dust and ash particles to Valley air quality problems.

The District’s wood-burning rule has two other components aimed at improving wintertime air quality. It limits the number of wood-burning devices allowed in new residential developments and requires that any woodstove or fireplace insert left in a home when it is sold or transferred meet 1990 EPA emissions standards.

Board Meeting Highlights

For complete agendas and minutes, please visit the Valley Air District’s web site at www.valleyair.org.

January

- The Board approved a staffing increase to implement new state permitting and pollution controls for agricultural sources.
- The Board adopted amendments to rule 4604 to include stricter coating emission standards and spray equipment requirements for can and drum manufacturing operations.

February

February’s Governing Board meeting was cancelled.

March

- The Board received a verbal report update on the Extreme Ozone Plan schedule.
- The following Governing Board members were appointed to the Ad Hoc Budget Subcommittee:
Supervisor Barbara Patrick, Kern County
Supervisor Thomas W. Mayfield, Stanislaus County
Supervisor Judith G. Case, Fresno County
Supervisor Tony Barba, Kings County
Supervisor Ronn Dominici, Madera County

April

- The Board received a verbal status report on proposed Rule 4550 (Conservation Management Practices), proposed Rule 3190 (Conservation Management Practices Plan Fee), and the proposed list of Conservation Management Practices.
- The Board approved an agreement with Orchard Supply Hardware to institute a lawn mower incentive program.

Meeting Schedule

The next Governing Board meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2004. Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at 9 a.m. in the Central Region Office, 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, (559) 230-6000.

Governing Board meetings are also held via video teleconference in the offices below:
Northern Region Office, 4230 Kiernan Ave., #130, Modesto, (209) 557-6400
Southern Region Office, 2700 M St., Suite 275, Bakersfield, (661) 326-6900.

Valley Air District Directory

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

Smog Info Line [800] 766-4463
 Smoking Vehicle [800] 559-9247
 Job Line [559] 230-6019
 Valley Air District Web Site www.valleyair.org

Northern Region Office [209] 557-6400
 Complaint Line [800] 281-7003
 Small Business Assistance [209] 557-6446

Central Region Office [559] 230-6000
 Complaint Line [800] 870-1037
 Small Business Assistance [559] 230-5888

Southern Region Office [661] 326-6900
 Complaint Line [800] 926-5550
 Small Business Assistance [661] 326-6969

2004 Governing Board

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Vice Chair

Supervisor Thomas Mayfield, Stanislaus County

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 Councilmember Dan Prince, City of Ripon

Clerk to the Boards

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