

News Release

5/18/04



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

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New Smoke Management Program Begins Operations Today

A new Smoke Management Program developed by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and utilizing state of the art technology begins today. 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.

The concept for the new Smoke Management Program was developed by Air District staff to better serve area farmers while reducing smoke intrusions into urban areas. The system uses interactive voice-recognition technology and meteorological data to determine if, and how much, burning will be allowed. With the new Smoke Management Program, public exposure to smoke will be significantly reduced while farmers and land managers will have more flexibility in their burning.

Under the old system, the District determined “burn” and “no-burn” days for each of three large regions comprising the Valley air basin. Under the new program, the air basin is divided into more than 100 smaller zones. District staff monitor localized meteorological conditions to determine how many emissions will be allocated to each zone. An advanced computer program keeps track of those emissions and permits 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.

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.

For more information on the new Smoke Management program visit sms.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.