

## **Dairy wins final county OK, lawsuit possible**

By Ameer M. Thompson, Tulare Advance-Register

Lindsay dairyman Rob Hilarides had his last appearance before the Tulare County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, but he may still have to face a day in court before he can build his more than 9,000-cow dairy.

Hilarides' dairy will be at Road 188 and Avenue 242, just west of Lindsay. He will build the dairy with a farmstead cheesemaking facility on 1,428 acres of land where the Lindsay Olive Co. used to have its brine ponds.

The vote to approve the dairy was unanimous.

Caroline Farrell, an attorney for the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment, said her group will ask neighbors what they want to do about suing the county over the permit the supervisors gave final approval to Tuesday. The center is also considering taking action against the county for violating a settlement agreement with the group.

"We have always said it has been a struggle to get the county to comply with the settlement agreement," Farrell said.

The center tried to introduce evidence that one neighbor who had signed a consent form to having the dairy across the street really didn't know what he was signing.

Hilarides and his lawyer said that claim was unsubstantiated and the board agreed.

The board's decision came after about 20 minutes in closed session, during which supervisors said they got legal advice, and after giving lawyers about an hour to prepare a written statement replying to the new evidence introduced by Farrell.

After the decision was made final, the Hilarides family posed for a picture beneath the vote tally board, with all five "Yes" lights illuminated, for the family scrapbook.

"We're thankful to be at this point," Rob Hilarides said after the meeting. "Hopefully, this is a good thing for Tulare County and the 80 applicants waiting for dairy permits."

Hilarides will have to wait 30 days before he can build. After he receives his permit, he will be able to build unless, as part of a lawsuit, an injunction is granted, Hilarides' attorney David Albers said.