

## Full tank unearthed at fire

Item does not look like it leaked an oil-like substance, officials say.

By Jennifer Fitzenberger, The Fresno Bee, February 11, 2003

Firefighters pulled a 6-foot-long tank filled with an oil-like substance from the Archie Crippen Excavation junk fire in southwest Fresno.

None of the substance appears to have leaked from the tank, found about 5 p.m. Sunday buried deep in the 25-foot-tall, 4.8-acre smoldering pile.

If it is oil, it could contaminate ground water if it spills, interim Fire Chief Joel Aranaz said. But the tank appears stable, he said.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will test the substance this week. "We're kind of leery as to what it is until it's tested," Aranaz said.

The tank is one of several found in the pile of wood, asphalt, concrete, plastic, carpet, automobile parts and other debris. Crippen has said the pile mostly is wood.

Firefighters unearthed five boiler tanks and a 10,000-gallon tank late last week. They either were empty or filled with a gray or black granular substance, Aranaz said. The larger tank was about 15 feet into the pile.

Excavators hit the tank Sunday while gouging burning pieces of junk.

"When you hit metal, you can tell," Aranaz said.

He said it looked like a "torpedo filled with some sort of oil." Firefighters placed it on top of the pile alongside the other tanks.

Officials hope to have the fire contained this week, but it's tough to pinpoint an exact date because firefighters keep finding hidden hot spots. The fire has burned about a month.

## Farmers, ag officials talk pollution permits

Discussion acts as preview to farm show, which opens today

By Ameer M. Thompson, Visalia Times-Delta, February 11, 2003

TULARE -- One thing is clear when it comes to air quality and agriculture -- things are going to change.

Agriculture is going to lose its exemption from Title V of the federal Clean Air Act. Title V restricts emissions from stationary sources, such as diesel-run irrigation pumps, by requiring a permit. Confined animal facilities, including dairies, could also be required to get permits. The deadline for this to happen is May 14.

"[Farmers] need to be aware of it," said Cynthia Cory, director of environmental affairs for the California Farm Bureau Federation. "Huge changes are coming down the pipe."

Cory, along with Michele Dias, state Farm Bureau attorney, spoke at an air and water quality conference Monday at the International Agri-Center in Tulare. The event was part of the warm-up to the 2003 World Ag Expo, which begins today.

Although, Cory and Dias told farmers attending the conference that they must be prepared, they couldn't offer specifics on what to prepare for. The state Farm Bureau is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and lawmakers to iron out the specific requirements.

"The Farm Bureau has to get involved [in writing the rule] or else the environmentalists will write it," Dias said.

Also, the state Farm Bureau has filed a lawsuit to block the EPA from ending agriculture's exemption. In May 2002, the EPA settled with environmentalists who sued, claiming agriculture should not be exempt from Title V.

The federal rule states that a permit is required for a stationary source that has the potential to emit 10 tons per year or more of any hazardous air pollutant or 25 tons per year or more of any

combination of hazardous air pollutants. It is possible that any farmer with a diesel irrigation pump may fall under the rule, Dias said.

"I don't think the EPA has a clue as to what is on a farm," she said. "I don't really think they have thought this through."

Dias said it isn't fair to apply what the potential for polluting is when diesel irrigation pumps only run during certain months of the year. The potential for pollution is based on running a pollution source 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Also, farmers don't know how the EPA wants them to measure what their pollution potential is, Cory said.

"We are dealing with this legally and politically," she said. "Things could change tomorrow. We don't want to give out specifics until we know for sure what the EPA will accept."

More details may be available in the next two to three weeks, Cory said.

"We don't know what to think of it yet," David Cardoza, a Tulare farmer, said after the presentation. "It seems to be pretty bad, though."

Richard Junio, a Tipton farmer, agreed that it is hard to get a grasp on what is expected of him. "Because nothing is set in stone yet," Junio said. "It gets confusing."

Tulare County Farm Bureau President Nancy Pitigliano said farmers should have learned from Monday's conference that they need to "get with the program."

"For too long the general ag community has said, 'As long as I don't fill out an application, no one will know I'm here,'" Pitigliano said. "That's not the truth,"

The county Farm Bureau is going to schedule seminars to help farmers fill out the permit applications once the criteria are confirmed.

In the meantime, Cory said, it is critical for farmers to document everything from fuel use to water use, so they can have the information to prove how much pollutants their operation emits.

"It will help," she said, "in the long run."

## Cities near deal over dairy buffers

By BRYAN SWAIM, Bakersfield Californian correspondent, February 10, 2003,

City officials in Wasco and Shafter are coming close to an agreement on new dairy buffer-zone boundaries to submit to county supervisors.

County supervisors rejected the cities' initial proposal nearly one month ago. That proposal would have prohibited new dairies from being built within three miles of city limits and rural schools.

County supervisors said the proposal was "arbitrary" and would have overly restricted new dairy developments.

The new proposal is expected to tweak some of the questionable boundaries from the initial proposal while still keeping a three-mile radius in most areas.

Currently, new dairies must apply for a conditional-use permit and their plans are subject to a public hearing.

According to Shafter City Manager John Guinn, a permit allowing for "some" consideration in locating dairies close to residential areas creates a problem.

"There needs to be a certain area where you could just say, 'You can't build a dairy here,' no consideration," Guinn said. "The notion of 'some consideration' creates anxiety and ends up costing the taxpayers money."

The issue of buffer zones became a concern in December when supervisors approved the 2,800-cow Vanderham dairy near Shafter.

Wasco officials used topographical data when creating a draft of new proposed boundaries, responding to what some dairy industry representatives called a vague initial proposal.

"I think our two significant concerns are odor and groundwater contamination," said Wasco City Manager Larry Pennell.

It's also difficult to balance residential development and agricultural need, Pennell said.

"Our issue is really a matter of odor, dust and how close the operation should be," Guinn said.

"You wouldn't want to put one (a dairy) next to an urbanized area."

Although it will be at least a week before county supervisors make any decision on new boundaries, some supervisors say population growth and a sluggish economy make the issue too complicated for simple boundaries.

"They basically took a lot of county out of the dairy product," said supervisor Don Maben.

"It's a tough issue. Each dairy has to be evaluated on its own merits. You might have a dairy that requires a six-mile buffer zone."

According to Guinn, the dairies are needed, just not so close to home.

"We're not opposed to the dairy industry. We just want a reasonable buffer between residential zones," he said.