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Blaming the victim not a winning argument

By Lois Henry, Californian Columnist

(Following is an excerpt from the column)

Speaking of manure, I got an update on what's happening with manure at the City of Bakersfield's green waste facility on Mount Vernon Avenue.

They had stopped accepting it because of a new rule by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District that would have required expensive tarping or construction of a fully enclosed building for composting.

I wrote about the problem in April and the air district contacted Kevin Barnes, head of Bakersfield's solid waste division, to try and work something out.

"The air district is willing to let us segment off a small section for manure composting if we give them a plan on how we'll mix the compost to reduce VOCs," Barnes said. VOCs are volatile organic compounds emitted from various sources such as decomposing organic matter. VOCs mix with other pollutants and heat to form ozone, one of the valley's main pollution nemeses.

Barnes is working on a wood-chip-to-manure recipe to see what works best.

"The air district is positive we'll have it back soon," he said of manure.

That's good news for local horse stables, that had to find other ways to dispose of the manure, including dumping it on farmland, which released just as much VOCs without helping make a good useable product -- compost.

"Sometimes things need a nudge in the right direction," Barnes said of the previous story on this issue. "And that was a good one."