

State awards \$8 million to help harness biogas at Kern dairies

By John Cox, staff writer

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Two Kern County dairies will be outfitted with technology for turning cow manure into renewable energy with the help of \$8 million in state grant money.

The California Energy Commission voted Wednesday to give an outfit calling itself American Biogas Electric Co. \$4 million to retrofit Lakeview Farms Dairy in Bakersfield and another \$4 billion to do similar work at West Star North Dairy in Buttonwillow.

Work at Lakeview will involve installing a covered manure lagoon "digester" that converts methane biogas into electricity, according to the commission. The job involves preparing a 1-megawatt generator platform that can be expanded to process biogas from neighboring dairies.

The West Star project calls for the installation of a double-cell, covered manure lagoon digester, the commission reported. The quantity of wastewater that can be processed there can vary.

The grants are the latest by the commission to promote renewable energy production based on manure produced at Central Valley dairies.