

Valley air has clean streak

It's shaping up to be one of the cleanest smog seasons in years

By Mark Grossi

[The Fresno Bee, Sunday, Sept. 4, 2005](#)

The summer of 2005 might well be remembered most for Fresno's three-week streak of triple-digit heat, if not for this startling news:

The San Joaquin Valley is having its cleanest smog season ever.

It's startling because summer heat -- especially a long streak -- usually turns the Valley skyline into a murky mess that spikes federal health violations like no other place in the country. Not this summer.

The Valley has fewer than 65 violations in early September, a time when it is usually pushing 90. There's a chance this year that the area will have fewer than 84, the record low number set in 1998.

For perspective, 65 violations would be utter failure in Ventura, which has seen only six bad days this year. But here under the brownish haze, where 116 violations is an average year, experts call it astounding.

"It's like we fell off a cliff, but in a good way," says Scott Nester, planning director of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

"This is hard to explain. We had many rules coming from the 1990s that may be showing results now. There are higher gas prices. Maybe people are driving less."

No simple explanation in itself accounts for the change, but there is one major factor, Nester and others say: The stormy spring weather held down smog early in the season.

When the big heat did arrive, the lung-burning smog peaks didn't happen as they have in the past.

"Our meteorologists are all kind of astonished," says Evan Shipp, district supervising meteorologist. "Given the high-pressure systems we've had, we just didn't see the ozone levels you would expect."

The X factor might be community awareness and action, some say. Fresno, for instance, spent almost \$14 million for 69 natural gas-powered refuse vehicles that run cleaner than diesel-powered models. More than half of the fleet operates on cleaner-burning natural gas.

Josette Merced Bello, president of the American Lung Association of Central California, says public awareness of air pollution has increased.

Her organization has a program to warn people at schools about the day's air quality with various colored flags. Now hospitals appear interested.

"Saint Agnes Medical Center wants to be the first hospital to implement the program as part of its patient education and wellness efforts," she says.

Angelica Torres thinks the message has reached Parlier, a smog trouble spot for years in Fresno County. Torres helps raise the air-quality flags at schools in the Parlier Unified School District.

"We've got parents calling and asking about it," she says. "Kids are noticing. I think people are more cautious about air pollution now that they know what's going on."

Yet 65 violations still is wildly beyond any definition of clean air.

To have healthy air under federal law, an air basin is allowed only three violations in a three-year period. The Valley had nearly 370 violations from 2002 to 2004 -- several dozen more than the notoriously smoggy Los Angeles area.

The media have noticed, and the Valley has emerged in a national spotlight for bad air.

The eight-county area, ranging from Stockton to Bakersfield, had more smog violations than any other place in the country since 1999. That was the year the Valley replaced the South Coast Air Basin as the country's smog king.

Now, for the first time in six years, the South Coast will take back the crown. It has almost 80 violations so far this year.

"We've had a warm summer," says South Coast spokesman Sam Atwood. "We're pretty close to last year's total at this point, so we're not having an unusual year."

The Valley is No. 2 this summer, and the Antelope Valley/West Mojave Desert area is third with 51 violations.

Take a closer look at South Coast and the Valley. South Coast has almost 16 million people, who drive more than 330 million miles daily. The Valley's 3.5million residents drive about a third of the mileage by comparison.

Why is the Valley in the same smog league with South Coast?

Along with the usual suspects -- swiftly expanding cities, dirty diesel school buses and others -- there are surprising pollution sources. Authorities consider dairy cows the biggest source of one smog-making gas called volatile organic compounds.

But the Valley's topography and climate set it apart from most places in the country. Mountains on three sides sometimes trap polluted air for days, creating the perfect incubator for ozone, the main ingredient of smog.

Ozone forms best in hot, sunny weather. The invisible corrosive gas, which attacks the lungs, skin and eyes, is a brew of nitrogen oxides from such sources as cars and volatile organic compounds from dairies, paint fumes and gasoline.

One in six youngsters in Fresno County has asthma. It is among the worst childhood asthma rates in the country, prompting air activists to often say this area suffers from a health crisis. Smog can trigger asthma attacks, bouts of bronchitis and other lung ailments.

This year, the weather briefly provided relief, as breezy storms steadily passed through California in spring. Smog violations usually start in April, sometimes March. This year, the first violation came on May 24.

On June 17, just a few days before summer officially began, the high temperature was 76 degrees in Fresno. The ozone level for some June days was as low as it was in February.

By June 30, the mercury climbed quickly to 101 in Fresno. Only nine days in July would fail to reach 100 degrees. The whole Valley sweltered.

Air monitors recorded 24 violations of the health standard in July. In other words, smog season was in full bloom, simmering each afternoon above the standard for 19 consecutive days.

Yet the smog concentrations were not peaking as high as in the past.

Curiously, on some days, the only violations were in the mountains of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, which are downwind of urban and freeway traffic.

Officials explained the highest heat sometimes causes an updraft that punches through a layer of air, called the inversion layer, which usually traps pollutants near the Valley's floor. With the layer breached, air passes to the foothills and carries pollutants.

"Once it gets up there, it tends to stay around for a while," Shipp says.

So, on July 25, two monitors in Sequoia-Kings Canyon registered violations while the air was fine in the Fresno-Clovis metropolitan area, which has more than 500,000 people.

Now, in September, the question remains: Will this become the cleanest summer ever? Maybe, but Central California's smog season is far from over.

Last year, the Valley had 15 violations in September and seven more in October.

No matter what happens, air district officials are pleased with what appears to be progress.

"We had an improvement in the air last year, and we weren't expecting it to continue this year," says district Planning Director Nester. "Maybe we're reaching a critical mass of some kind in our emissions reductions.

"But you have to remember how much depends on weather. Next summer, we could go the opposite direction if the weather doesn't cooperate."

Southland once again smog capital of U.S.

Kerry Cavanaugh, Staff Writer

[Los Angeles Daily News, Friday, Sept. 2, 2005](#)

Despite a relatively mild smog season so far -- and continuing efforts to cut pollution -- Los Angeles is likely to take back the title of smog capital of America from Houston and the San Joaquin Valley.

So far, the Southland has logged 76 smoggy days under the nation's new, more stringent ozone standards -- nearly double Houston's 41 dirty days and more than the San Joaquin Valley's 61 smog days.

With a month left in the smog season, which runs from May through September, the air is still cleaner than 2003 when the region suffered the worst smog season in recent years. But it's not as clean as 2004 -- the best showing since air pollution records began being kept.

The region's smog level has remained essentially flat for the past several years after two decades of pollution-reduction efforts that cut the number of smog days from nearly 200 to the current level. The growing number of cars and trucks on the area's clogged roads, increasing traffic at the ports and consumer products such as aerosol sprays and paints are among the top sources of pollution today.

"We're hoping we're going to see an improvement in the end. I'm pretty confident we won't see numbers like we saw in 2003," said Joe Cassmassi, senior meteorologist with the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

Most of the bad-air violations occurred in Santa Clarita, San Bernardino and Riverside, where pollutants are blown inland and cook in the high heat.

And that's particularly troubling because researchers have found that children growing up in smoggy areas are more likely to develop asthma and to have underdeveloped lungs, a condition that can lead to increased risk of respiratory diseases and heart attacks later in life.

"With 76 days you're talking about two months of the year with bad air. Every day with bad air we're concerned about asthma attacks, premature deaths, school absences and lung damage to children," said Bonnie Holmes-Gen, assistant vice president of government relations for the American Lung Association of California.

In recent years, the South Coast region, Houston and the San Joaquin Valley have shared smog titles.

At the end of the 2004 smog season, Houston had the most days -- 22 -- exceeding the nation's old ozone limit, which measured ozone levels over an hour.

The old limit was designed to protect people from unhealthy spikes of ozone, the main ingredient in smog. It's caused when emissions from tailpipes, aerosol sprays and industrial sources react in sunlight to form ozone.

High levels of ozone irritate the lungs and can cause wheezing and difficulty breathing.

Meanwhile, last year the San Joaquin Valley had the most days -- 82 -- exceeding the nation's new ozone limit, which measures ozone levels over eight hours and is designed to protect against health problems associated with breathing low levels of ozone over a long period of time.

But metropolitan Los Angeles has had the most number of smoggy days in both categories this year.

With one more month to go, the region has had 27 days when ozone exceeded the old one-hour standard, and 76 days when ozone exceeded the new eight-hour standard.

"It's nice not to be known as the smog capital of the United States," said Kelly Keel with the Texas Commission on Air Quality.

Houston's improvement is probably due to a rainy, cooler summer and a number of new pollution controls on power plants and industrial facilities that took effect within the past year

In the San Joaquin Valley, where dairy manure and motor vehicles are the main polluters, air quality officials hope they're seeing the beginning of a decline in ozone levels.

The vast agricultural valley has only had six days over the old one-hour standard and 61 days over the new eight-hour standard -- both significantly less than previous years.

Supervising Meteorologist Evan Shipp said the San Joaquin Valley has had a record number of days over 100 degrees, but ozone levels have not risen as expected.

"That may be a sign that emissions reductions we've had may be helping," Shipp said

Valley could set record for clean air days this year

[Merced Sun-Star, Sunday, Sept. 5, 2005](#)

San Joaquin Valley residents are breathing a bit easier this summer.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District said the region has had only 65 federal clean-air violations so far. That's below the 116 violations reported in an average year.

It's also despite a three-week streak of triple-digit heat that typically turns skies a murky brown.

In fact, the Valley could be on track to break the record-low number of clean-air violations of 84, set in 1998.

"It's like we fell off a cliff, but in a good way," says Scott Nester, the district's planning director.

There's no simple explanation for the cleaner-than-usual air. Stormy weather in the spring that cleaned the air early in the season could play a part.

"This is hard to explain. We had many rules coming from the 1990s that may be showing results now. There are higher gas prices. Maybe people are driving less," Nester said.

San Joaquin Valley having cleanest smog season ever

The Associated Press

[in the S.F. Chronicle, Sunday, Sept. 4, 2005](#)

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) - Residents of California's San Joaquin Valley are breathing a bit easier this summer.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District says the region has had only 65 federal clean-air violations so far. That's below the 116 violations reported in an average year.

It's also despite a three-week streak of triple-digit heat that turns skies into a murky mess.

Officials say the valley could be on track to break the record-low number of clean-air violations of 84, set in 1998.

There's no simple explanation for the cleaner-than-usual air. Stormy weather in the spring that cleaned the air early in the season.

Scott Nester of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District says it's also possible that people are driving less because of high gas prices. He also speculates pollution-control rules from the 1990s may be showing results.

LA air so bad, valley's is better

City of Angels leads pack to become '05 smog capital of U.S.

By KEN CARLSON - BEE STAFF WRITER

[Modesto Bee, Saturday, Sept. 3, 2005](#)

The San Joaquin Valley is close to losing its title as the most smoggy region in the nation.

Under the nation's most stringent ozone standard, Los Angeles has logged 77 smoggy days this year. The San Joaquin Valley, which has led the nation in smoggy days for six consecutive years, has recorded 61 days exceeding the standard. Houston, the third highest, has logged 41 days with excessive smog.

Smog is a persistent air pollutant in some regions of California from April to October. By the end of the season, Los Angeles is likely to have the most days exceeding the nation's eight-hour limit for ozone, the chief ingredient in smog.

The San Joaquin Valley's air has been cleaner this year than in 2004, when it exceeded the eight-hour limit on 109 days.

Valley air quality officials and business leaders are encouraged to be losing the stigma of having the most smog in the nation. It probably won't relax restrictions on industries, however.

"I think it takes a little bit of the media attention off, from a national perspective," said Jan Ennenga, executive director of the Manufacturers Council of the Central Valley.

Evan Shipp, supervising meteorologist for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution District, said the valley has had a record number of days over 100 degrees, but ozone levels have not risen as expected.

"That may be a sign that emissions reductions we've had may be helping," he said.

The eight-hour monitoring for smog is considered significant because of the potential lung damage from breathing ozone over an extended period.

The valley still exceeded the eight-hour limit 24 days in July and 24 days in August, with the most violations in Fresno and Kern counties.

The valley has exceeded the one-hour limit eight days this year, compared with 37 days in 2003.

Barbara Harmon, chairwoman of the Merced/Mariposa County Asthma Coalition, said she doubts that the air was significantly cleaner this year.

"I'm sure we have made improvements," she said. "But it's kind of a joke that anyone who lives in the valley who has an allergic respiratory problem never had it anywhere else."

The Los Angeles Daily News contributed to this story.

Cow-guts pile ground to dust, washed away

Potential health hazard sat for two days near school

By BLAIR CRADDOCK - BEE STAFF WRITER

[Modesto Bee, Sunday, Sept. 4, 2005](#)

A heap of spilled cow guts, which sat stinking for two days across from an elementary school, could have been treated as a hazardous-materials spill and potential environmental crime, California Highway Patrol officials said Saturday.

Instead, the cow guts just dried up gradually and were washed away Saturday by firefighters.

"There was nothing recognizable about it, just dust," said engineer Brian Whitcomb of the Modesto Fire Department.

The guts fell off a truck about 4 p.m. Thursday, according to workers from a nearby mechanic's shop. The stinking pile sat at the corner of busy Crows Landing and Kendee roads, being ground into the pavement by passing cars.

That corner is across from Shackelford Elementary School and a block south of Modesto Tallow Co., a rendering plant that mostly turns animal carcasses into bone meal. Officials at Modesto Tallow have denied the parts spilled from one of their trucks.

CHP officials said they were not notified of Thursday's spill in time to respond to it as a hazardous-materials incident.

"Had we been made aware of this, it would have been a top priority call for us," Sgt. Ted Melden of the CHP's Modesto office said Saturday.

"We checked our logs from noon on Thursday to this afternoon," said Officer Tom Killian of the Modesto CHP office. "We had yet to receive a call from the Sheriff's Department or any citizen with regard to that spill."

He said a reporter's call to the CHP about the incident was made after closing hours to an office phone.

Melden said CHP officers were busy elsewhere Thursday and Friday, and were not driving along Crows Landing Road to see the cow guts.

It can be difficult to determine who is responsible in such cases, he said, but the CHP has an investigator in Modesto to handle them.

Cladis Sanchez, 35, works at her sister's taco truck near the corner where the spill occurred. "It was intestines, and stomachs," she said, in Spanish. "Two big heaps of them.

"I didn't know who to call," she said. That's because of her recent bad experience trying to get officials to remove another carcass nearby, she said.

"Last week, a dog was killed by a car, and we called Animal Control. It happened on a Friday night." Sanchez said she called Saturday and again Monday: "It was rotting. ... They finally came on Wednesday."

Juan Flores, who works at a market nearby, also remembered that incident.

"There are people who come to eat at those tables," Flores said, indicating the picnic tables by his market and the taco truck. "Imagine, with that there for three days? It's not pleasant."

At a mechanic's shop next to the taco truck, workers said Thursday they had made calls to Modesto Tallow and the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department to complain about the cow guts.

But at the Sheriff's Department, Sgt. Mike Parker said deputies don't recall such a call. "Obviously, the public did not believe it was much of a threat, because we didn't receive any calls," he said.

Melden said the CHP is willing to respond to animal-parts spills on the roadways it patrols, and the county's Department of Environmental Resources also has a hazardous-materials team.

Telephone numbers for the agencies are: 525-6700 for the Department of Environmental Resources, and 545-7440 during business hours for the CHP's Modesto office. The CHP also receives 911 calls made on cellular phones.

Cow guts still not cleaned off road

Sheriff's sergeant says he's not sure who's responsible for getting rid of the mess

By TODD MILBOURN - BEE STAFF WRITER

[Modesto Bee, Saturday, Sept. 3, 2005](#)

As of Friday afternoon, nobody had cleaned up the cow guts that spilled a day earlier onto Crows Landing Road in front of Shackelford Elementary School in Modesto.

Flies continued to swarm around intestines and hooves that were being smashed into the pavement by passing traffic. Strips of hide blew down the street. The putrid odor lingered.

The spill occurred at 4 p.m. Thursday, according to witnesses, across from the school and a block south of Modesto Tallow Co., a rendering plant that mostly turns animal carcasses into bone meal. Officials at Modesto Tallow have denied the parts spilled from one of their trucks.

Workers at an auto shop nearby said they called Modesto Tallow and the Stanislaus County sheriff's office about the spill shortly after it happened.

Sgt. Mike Parker said he wasn't sure whose responsibility it was to clean up the spill, which occurred on the county's side of Crows Landing Road.

"If parts were still on the road, my assumption is somebody would call the tallow works and they would clean it up," he said. "It's also something that could've gone to (state) Highway Patrol."

A call to the CHP was not returned Friday.

In 2003, Modesto Tallow paid \$114,508 to settle a lawsuit brought by the Solano County district attorney that accused the company of routinely spilling blood and animal parts onto roads.

The company also is facing a lawsuit by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District over the company's chronic failures to comply with air quality standards or pay fines.

Nacho Rodriguez, a Crows Landing mechanic, said he was disappointed no one would clean up a spill so close to an elementary school -- or take responsibility.

"If this were another part of town, you know they would've had this blocked off," he said. "This is little Mexico; they look down at people over here."

Cattle parts fall off truck

Spill happens near Modesto Tallow Co.; plant refuses blame

By TODD MILBOURN - BEE STAFF WRITER

[Modesto Bee, Friday, Sept. 2, 2005](#)

Walking home from school Thursday, Bethany Benjamin encountered a grisly scene.

Dead cow parts -- intestines, hooves and a black-and-white hide - were strewn across a southbound lane of Crows Landing Road, cooking in the afternoon sun.

The parts had fallen off a truck a block south of Modesto Tallow Co., a rendering plant that turns animal carcasses into bone meal. A company official denied that the offending truck was Modesto Tallow's.

"It's nasty," said Bethany, 10, holding her nose as she walked along the sidewalk. "It gives me really bad headaches."

Her father, Leslie Benjamin Jr., said the spill happened about 4 p.m. when a truck at the intersection of Crows Landing and Kendee roads stopped quickly, sending dead parts overboard and nearly splattering him with blood.

The father described the truck as having a white cab and red bed, similar to those driven by Modesto Tallow Co. He said he did not see a logo on the truck but that it came from a frontage road near the plant.

Ozzie Mojica, a man claiming to head Modesto Tallow's trucking division, arrived on the scene and said the truck couldn't possibly be Modesto Tallow's.

"We only have one truck that goes south" on Crows Landing Road, said Mojica, wearing a shirt with a Tulare Trucking logo. "And that truck carries chicken" parts, not cow remains like those attracting flies on the pavement.

A man who answered the phone at Stanislaus County's other rendering plant - Darling International on Carpenter Road, about 10 miles away - said the plant was closed for the day and officials would not comment.

While it's not certain whose truck caused the spill, Modesto Tallow does have a history of leaky trucks.

The Solano County district attorney sued Modesto Tallow in 2003, claiming company trucks routinely spilled blood and animal parts onto roads, creating public health and safety hazards, according to public records.

Modesto Tallow paid \$114,508 to settle that case.

Meanwhile, Modesto Tallow is facing a lawsuit by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, which accuses the company of routinely violating air quality standards, failing to pay fines and running the plant without turning on required odor-control equipment.

The lawsuit, filed last month in Stanislaus County Superior Court, asks a judge to force Modesto Tallow to clean up its act or face closure.

The 88-year-old plant, notorious for its putrid odors and dismal environmental record, has been a source of growing frustration for residents of the mostly low-income neighborhood near Shackelford Elementary School. Residents have filed more complaints against the company this year than ever before, according to the air district.

Modesto Tallow is owned by Modesto Holding Co., an investment group that includes James B. Reeder, John E. Pearson and William A. Shirley Jr. of Dallas, and Jeff Podesto of Modesto, whose family operated the plant for decades.

Shirley, a politically connected businessman, is involved with dozens of companies in Texas, including Pascal Enterprises, which operates several rendering plants throughout the country. Shirley, through an attorney, has refused for weeks to comment about Modesto Tallow's practices.

On Thursday, owners of a nearby auto repair shop said they called Modesto Tallow and the Sheriff's Department to inform them of the spill, shortly after 4 p.m. As of 7:30 p.m. the parts had not been cleaned up.

Small town will not remain tiny for long

More people, traffic will come with college

By GARTH STAPLEY

[Modesto Bee, Sunday, Sept. 4, 2005](#)

MERCED - A new university brings a lot of smart people to an area, hundreds of jobs, thousands of homes, higher land values and loads of bragging rights.

It also creates more traffic and air pollution, chews up farmland and makes it harder for people to afford the new homes.

The good and bad of the newest University of California campus stand for all to see as an accelerated model of the Central Valley's pride - and growing pains.

What is happening in Merced, some experts say, is a shadow of what will come to many communities as they brace for unprecedented growth.

"The problem is having a vision that's big enough," said Carol Whiteside, president of the Great Valley Center, a think tank and advocate for the huge valley - about 475 miles long, from Redding to the Tehachapi Mountains - with little Merced near the middle.

"What we have to do is envision not tomorrow, but 20 years from now," Whiteside said. "Our shortcoming has always been not having that vision."

Speculators began lining up after learning the Merced area - a relatively unimportant disc on the valley's backbone, Highway 99 - would be home to the state's first new UC campus in 40 years. The campus is about five miles from downtown. Merced leaders are moving the city limit in that direction and hope to eventually absorb the university.

In 1970, Merced's population was 22,670. Today, it's 73,610, according to the state Department of Finance. City leaders predict the population will more than triple to 240,000 -- larger than Modesto's current population of about 207,000 -- in 20 years.

A study released in June predicts Merced County's population will surge 68 percent in two decades, from 244,700 to 399,100.

The city issued 32 percent more building permits during the first seven months of 2005 than it did during the same period last year.

Merced's building boom

Construction is so hot that the Modesto-based Building Industry Association of Central California opened a satellite office in Merced in June. The number of building permits issued in Merced County some months eclipses that of Stanislaus County, which has nearly 505,000 residents.

"There is an incredible amount of interest in area developers trying to position themselves for the UC campus," said Steve Madison, the association's executive director. "A lot of folks are looking for land and trying to stake out and hold onto it, to see if it's profitable."

Already moving ahead is Bellevue Ranch, which envisions about 5,000 houses "starting in the low \$300,000s" and apartment units, as well as stores, schools and offices. Marketing materials trumpet its prime location on 1,365 acres "just minutes from the UC Merced campus."

Woodside Homes isn't far behind, with plans for homes on 440 acres south of Bellevue Ranch.

County supervisors have given a preliminary nod to the gargantuan University Community on more than 2,000 acres just south of the campus, which could become home to 30,000 people. Construction on the first of more than 11,000 homes could begin in two years.

How much more can Merced handle?

Jack Lesch, the city's development director, said builders are eyeing annexations on every side of the city. Together, they would add more than 8,000 acres to Merced, which now has 14,300 acres.

"Those are just the largest (annexations)," he added.

His office is embarking on a general plan update, which would identify Merced's growth plan for the next 20 years. The study is expected to take two years.

Deidre Kelsey, a county supervisor, said the most worrisome unknown is how the city and county will divide tax proceeds when the land is absorbed into Merced. Negotiations over revenue sharing stalled months ago, she said, as campaigns for City Council heated up.

Another concern, Kelsey said, is the sticker shock her constituents face when looking to buy a home.

Though housing prices were comparatively low in years past, Merced County is fifth on a list of the country's least affordable places in terms of its residents' ability to pay.

Families earning the median income of \$44,800 per year could afford only 4.7 percent of homes on the market in Merced County in the second quarter of this year, according to the National Association of Home Builders. The median home price was \$315,000.

Loss of farmland

As buildings go up, farmland acreage goes down.

"I don't think you'll find anyone on the (Merced County) Farm Bureau Board who is not supportive of education," said Diana Westmoreland Pedrozo, the bureau's executive director. "But we continue to worry about the impact on productive farmland.

"You can't just put the blame on UC Merced," Pedrozo added. "What we're seeing is poor state planning. The Bay Area has policies that attract jobs and supply no housing for their employees."

County leaders, meanwhile, are considering whether to require builders to provide compensation for eating up farmland, possibly by paying fees or setting aside open space.

Space was just what Nat Woodhouse, 76, was looking for when he came to the valley 40 years ago. He settled on three acres looking over open, sun-browned pasture stretching nearly as far as the eye could see, just over the hill from what is becoming a major university.

"These folks claiming that we're giving up valuable ag land, in my opinion, are in left field," said Woodhouse, a retired bank employee who also owned a private land appraisal business. "All this property has been doing for the last 25 years is grazing cattle."

He used to have horses, ponies, cattle and sheep on his land, towered over by a 100-year-old eucalyptus tree planted by pioneers. Now that his children are grown, he plans to split it into three one-acre parcels - for homes, of course.

A neighbor already split his four-acre parcel four ways, and another halved his, Woodhouse said. "Everyone's splitting as fast as they can," he said.

After he sells, he'll move. Maybe to the mountains, he said.

Stephanie Witt, 42, is a relative newcomer, having moved to a ranchette near the campus seven years ago. Her husband, a builder, might find employment close to home for decades to come.

"I know what it's like to live in a little university town," said Witt, who attended the University of Oklahoma in Norman, its shady streets lined with red-brick homes.

But she said she isn't crazy about the increasing traffic -- a hallmark of growth.

Merced, despite its lofty ambitions, retains a small-town traffic pattern. Its three north-south arteries are bisected by rail lines, and waiting for trains is a common occurrence. What was once a 10-minute trip across town, can now take double that - if you're lucky enough to miss the trains and catch most of the green lights.

Now imagine adding 1,000 students per year for 25 years, not to mention faculty, janitors, food workers, groundskeepers and the like.

Campus a bit outside town

The campus is about five miles from downtown, and university officials are trying not to swamp the city by housing a majority of the students on the campus. They're also creating a bus system to shuttle people to and from downtown.

"That reduces a lot of trips that (otherwise) would be on the road system," said Steve Rough, the county's public works supervising engineer.

His office is studying the proposed Campus Parkway, which would stretch south to connect with Highway 99 at a future interchange where it intersects with Mission Avenue. The 4.5-mile expressway is expected to cost at least \$60 million - and its initial phase wouldn't even reach the campus.

Construction on the interchange should begin this fall and take about three years, said Jesse Brown, director of the Merced County Association of Governments.

His office jockeyed to capitalize on the building boom by persuading area leaders to adopt regional transportation impact fees charged for each new home.

All agencies except Livingston agreed, and a fund began collecting the money this month. It should take in \$91 million in 20 years, much of which can be spent on improving roads and building new ones.

UC isn't only reason for growth

UC Merced has helped draw the attention of state and federal leaders, who committed money for roads. Still, Brown said, "We know that what resources we have are not adequate to take care of all the growth in Merced County."

All that growth, in Merced County and beyond, can't be blamed on the university, said Michael Teitz, a senior fellow with the Public Policy Institute of California. It's coming regardless of UC Merced, he said.

His studies suggest the eight-county Central Valley will add 1.7 million people in two decades, bringing the region's population to almost 5.5 million.

People shouldn't be surprised if the campus takes longer to develop than many imagine, he said.

"Though some builders, perhaps optimistically, are pushing up a lot of stuff in the immediate vicinity, this is a slow process," said Teitz, who advised UC officials in the campus's development as a special emeritus professor.

"People go to (the University of) Cambridge in England and say, 'What wonderful grass,'" he added, referring to the institution established in 1209. "The guy will say, 'It's easy; just keep rolling it for 300 years or so.' That's also true of academic development."

Clean-air advocate leaving

Fresno physician David Pepper to head a San Francisco clinic.

By Barbara Anderson

[The Fresno Bee, Saturday, Sept. 3, 2005](#)

David Pepper, a Fresno physician and clean-air advocate who spoke frequently about the health consequences of air pollution in the central San Joaquin Valley, is leaving the city to head a clinic in San Francisco.

Pepper starts his job as medical director at the Mission Neighborhood Health Center in San Francisco on Oct. 1.

Pepper grew up in the Bay Area, and the job there allows him to be close to family. But the Valley's polluted skies factored into his decision to leave Fresno after 16 years, he said Thursday: "I don't want to be breathing this air anymore."

Kevin Hamilton, a clean-air advocate, credited Pepper with helping to call attention to the Valley's smog and soot pollution problems.

"It's the loss of a personal friend here locally and the loss to Fresno overall of a physician activist in the community who helped shape policy toward public health and air quality in this community for the last five years," said Hamilton, a Fresno respiratory therapist.

Hamilton, Pepper and two other Fresno physicians formed the Medical Advocates for Healthy Air, an organization that joined with Latino Issues Forum and Earthjustice to bring lawsuits against the federal government and developers over sprawl and other clean-air issues in the Valley.

Pepper's advocacy sometimes put him at odds with officials at the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, but Tom Jordan, air quality project adviser, said air officials listened when Pepper spoke.

"While we may not have always agreed, we appreciated his views and positions," Jordan said. "And his perspective on things will be missed in the Valley."

Pepper was a staff member at University Medical Center in Fresno and an associate clinical professor at University of California at San Francisco's medical-education program in Fresno.

He provided medical oversight for the asthma education and management program at Community Medical Centers.

The doctor's passion about the Valley's air quality sprang from a personal concern: One of his teenage sons suffers from asthma.

But Pepper said his clean-air advocacy began after he met Hamilton and the two began working together at the asthma education program.

Hamilton is the asthma program manager.

"Treating asthmatics led to the realization that Fresno has a huge problem and possibly there was a link to air pollution," he said.

Pepper said he would like to remain involved in the research aspect of air quality in the Valley, but others in the medical community will need to step forward.

Rey León, senior policy analyst at Latino Issues Forum in Fresno, said Pepper was one of the few doctors to take an active role in improving the air quality in the Valley.

"And it's unfortunate we have to lose him," he said. "We need more doctors from the Valley to step up and recognize this as a critical issue and we need them to become engaged on this issue as Dr. Pepper was."

California Senate rejects Schwarzenegger's air board chair

By DON THOMPSON, Associated Press Writer

[in the Fresno and Modesto Bee, S.F. Chronicle and other papers, Friday, Sept. 2, 2005](#)

SACRAMENTO - The California Senate on Thursday rejected Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's choice to head the state Air Resources Board, saying her close ties to the energy industry made her a bad fit for an agency that has wielded wide influence on the nation's clean-air laws.

The party-line 24-14 vote in the Democrat-dominated Senate means Cindy Tuck must step down as chairwoman of the board within 60 days. The Republican governor named her to the post six weeks ago over opposition from environmental groups.

The air board's sweeping regulations on vehicle emissions and other pollution controls have set precedents for other states and forced industries to adapt.

"California is the No. 1 state in the country with an air pollution problem," said Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, D-Oakland, who pushed for Tuck's removal.

The agency's leader, he said, "needs to be a clean air champion."

Tuck had wide support from business groups she represented for 20 years, mostly in leadership roles with the California Council for Economic and Environmental Balance. The group represents industry and organized labor in trying to minimize the costs to business of environmental regulations.

The governor has tried to build a green agenda since taking office in California's 2003 recall election. He has made several appointments that have been lauded by environmental groups and has opposed Bush administration policies on road building in national forests. He also has his own ambitious plans to address global warming and coastal protection and to create a "hydrogen highway" for pollution-free vehicles.

Tuck declined comment after the vote. But in testimony before a Senate committee Wednesday, Tuck swore she would push Schwarzenegger's clean air and greenhouse gas reduction goals.

"I did not pursue this position to represent the business community," Tuck said, pledging to be "a leader for clean air."

That wasn't enough for Democratic senators who said her background representing groups that have opposed clean air regulations damaged her credibility. Both sides agreed Tuck was otherwise well-qualified.

"I see a person who has opposed every major piece of legislation to improve air quality in California," said Sen. Sheila Kuehl, D-Santa Monica. "If that's her record, I'm not impressed."

The board, part of the California Environmental Protection Agency, is charged with reducing air pollution and toxic contaminants. It is supposed to take into account the effects on the state's economy when considering regulations, which is the area Tuck's former employer tried to stress.

Schwarzenegger and business groups, joined by Republican senators, said Tuck's career as a licensed environmental engineer and attorney who helped craft environmental legislation made her a solid choice to head the agency.

"Regrettably, the Senate today has denied California the service of a valuable public servant," Schwarzenegger said in a statement. "With more than 20 years dedicated to developing our state's air and water quality laws and regulations, Cindy Tuck was the right person to lead California's efforts to improve our air quality."

Democratic Senate leaders forced an early confirmation vote instead of waiting until Tuck had served nearly a year, which often is how the Legislature handles action on appointees.

They said they had to act quickly because Schwarzenegger broke a 40-year tradition of appointing people with science or regulatory backgrounds to lead the air board. Senators and environmental groups said Schwarzenegger was warned in advance that appointing Tuck would bring sharp opposition.

"This is just a political game," said Sen. Jim Battin, R-Palm Desert. "Radical environmentalists want to defeat her to further their political agenda."

Schwarzenegger spokeswoman Julie Soderlund also blamed politics for the defeat.

Democrats and organized labor are opposing several of Schwarzenegger's initiatives in a November special election, and more than 70 environmental leaders earlier this week endorsed Democratic state Treasurer Phil Angelides for governor.

With Tuck's defeat, Schwarzenegger will name a new leader for the agency "as soon as possible," Soderlund said.

Tuck's selection took several months and came after another candidate withdrew from consideration, said California EPA Secretary Alan Lloyd, who preceded Tuck as air board chairman and was praised by environmentalists during his tenure.

On Thursday, he criticized senators "who failed to give Cindy an opportunity to prove herself in this important position."

California Chamber of Commerce President Allan Zaremborg called her rejection disheartening. In a statement, he said Tuck was "someone who would protect California's air quality while also keeping an eye on our state's ability to create jobs and grow the economy."

Senate rejects air board nominee

S.F. Chronicle Sacramento Bureau

[San Francisco Chronicle, Friday, Sept. 2, 2005](#)

Sacramento -- The state Senate Thursday rejected Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's nominee to head the state board that enforces air quality laws.

Schwarzenegger nominated Cindy Tuck as chairwoman of the California Air Resources Board just two months ago, but her tenure appeared doomed Wednesday when a key Senate committee voted against her confirmation.

Before her nomination, Tuck served as a lobbyist for the California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance, an industry-backed group that frequently opposed tough anti-pollution laws. Democrats cited Tuck's record as a lobbyist for the group as justification for quashing her nomination.

The 24-14 vote against the confirmation was strictly along party lines, with Democrats carrying the majority.

"We nipped Tuck," quipped Sen. Carole Migden, D-San Francisco, after the vote.

Republicans complained Tuck had not been given a courtesy normally extended to gubernatorial appointees to spend a year in the position demonstrating their ability before their confirmation hearing.

She now has up to 60 days to vacate the post. An administration spokeswoman said it was not known how long she would remain or how soon Schwarzenegger would nominate another replacement.

"Regrettably, the Senate today has denied California the service of a valuable public servant," Schwarzenegger said in a statement released by his office.

Clean-air dust-up over forklifts

Farmers and dealers complain they had little input into costly rules sought by state officials.

By Jennifer M. Fitzenberger -- Bee Capitol Bureau
[Sacramento Bee, Saturday, Sept. 3, 2005](#)

A single forklift can pollute as much in eight hours as 700 new passenger cars -- a fact that has the state air board developing regulations to clean up the heavy equipment.

The regulations could affect thousands of gas-powered forklifts throughout California. But forklift dealers and farmers, who generally have older fleets, say the regulations pose an undue burden and state officials are leaving them with few options.

"None of us are opposed to bringing equipment into compliance and helping the air quality, but it should be for all the units going forward and not penalize the units that have been in place for years," said Audie Burgan, owner of J.M. Equipment Co. Inc. in Fresno.

At a meeting last week, state lawmakers scolded California Air Resources Board officials, saying that forklift dealers had been left out of the loop as the rules were being developed, and that farmers were given false hope that a popular state fund might help them buy newer, cleaner machines.

"No disrespect intended, but this is a big screw-up for this being such a huge surprise," Assemblywoman Barbara Matthews, D-Tracy, told state board officials. "Everything is starting to come down on the heads of agriculture."

Officials said they didn't realize that dealers would take such a heavy financial hit and pledged to work with them.

"They are willing to do everything in their power to minimize the impact on industry," said Catherine Witherspoon, executive officer of the board.

The new rules would affect gas-powered, spark-ignited equipment. Most of those machines are forklifts, but certain sweepers, scrubbers and airport ground-support equipment also would be regulated.

Roughly 100,000 forklifts exist in California, about half of them with spark-ignited engines. The other half--electric and diesel-powered forklifts -- would not fall under the regulations. The forklift rules would put emission limits on fleets beginning in 2009. Large fleets would have to meet more stringent averages than midsize fleets. New forklift engines would have to be built to a higher air-quality standard. The changes could remove 13 tons of hydrocarbon and nitrogen oxides a day from California's air by 2010 -- the equivalent of taking half of the state's motorcycles off the roads.

Hydrocarbon and nitrogen oxides combine in sunlight to form ozone, which can reduce lung function and aggravate asthma.

"We're going after not only new engines, but we're also asking that equipment already in the field also be dealt with," said Tom Evashenk, manager of the Zero Emission Vehicle section of the state air board.

The rules would be a bit different for farmers, who typically keep forklifts longer than other business owners because they use them sporadically - just a couple of months a year during busy seasons. Regulations would give additional time to growers.

But farmers say they would have to replace, not fix, most of their forklifts because many of them are very old. Forklifts built before 1990 are difficult to retrofit, but newer models can be fitted with a device that costs about \$3,500 each to make them compliant.

At least 70 percent of forklifts used in agriculture were built before 1990 and some date back to the 1940s. New forklifts can cost as much as \$30,000 apiece. Growers estimate it would cost the agriculture industry a total of \$47 million to replace its oldest forklifts.

Early discussions with regulators led farmers to believe they would be able to tap into the state's Carl Moyer Program to buy new forklifts. The program provides incentives for growers to get rid of high-

polluting diesel engines. But farmers recently learned that forklifts might not qualify for Carl Moyer funds. They say it's not fair for the state board to make a rule and not include a funding source.

"Where do you get the funds? The funds have got to be with the rule," said Manuel Cunha, president of the Nisei Farmers League in Fresno. "The impact on my industry and the small dealers will be devastating."

Dealers, who sell and rent forklifts by the hundreds, say they will have to retrofit or replace many of their older machines because no customer will want to buy or rent a noncompliant forklift.

Burgan's business has a couple of thousand forklifts. About 500 would not comply with the new rules. Retrofitting all of them would cost \$1.75 million. Burgan said he can't pass the whole cost on to the customer because the marketplace wouldn't sustain it.

"That's a substantial hit to our bottom line," Burgan said. There are about 50 dealers statewide, about 15 of which are in the Valley. Burgan said the rules could put some companies out of business. Dealers are upset because they say state officials didn't discuss the proposed regulations with them early in the planning process, when they could have helped negotiate the rules.

Manufacturers sold noncompliant forklifts as recently as November without dealers knowing about the impending rules, said Assemblyman Mike Villines, R-Clovis. He said dealers found out just in the past few months.

"They should have been negotiating with them from the beginning," he said.

The board is scheduled to take up the forklift matter Sept. 15 in Diamond Bar.

Forklift facts

- There are 100,000 forklifts in California
- Emissions from one forklift can equal that of 700 passenger cars over eight hours
- Proposed state rules for gas-powered forklifts could remove 13 tons of pollution per day by 2010
- Post-1990 forklift models could be retrofitted to comply for \$3,500 each
- Replacing older agricultural forklifts could cost \$47 million

Source: Air Resources Board

Pombo: 'We'll be calling this cheap'

Congressman sees gas prices taking off

By Dennis Wyatt, Managing Editor

[Manteca Bulletin, Friday, Sept. 2, 2005](#)

Congressman Richard Pombo wasn't exactly in an "I told you so mood" given the tragedy unfolding in the Gulf States. But the Tracy Republican who chairs the influential Committee on Resources and has been pushing for increased North Slope oil drilling couldn't resist a prophetic little dig at his detractors as he saw the Exxon gas sign while walking along Yosemite Avenue by In-n-Out Burgers Thursday morning.

"We'll be looking back at this in a few weeks and we'll be calling this cheap," Pombo said as he glanced at the sign selling unleaded gasoline at \$3.09.9 per gallon.

Pombo believes it is essential the United States reduce its dependence on foreign oil. He noted the emergence of China as a major importer of oil plus the fact the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina disrupted the Gulf where 25 percent of this nation's oil production is located underscores how vulnerable America is to energy shortages. It's not just oil either. Pombo has been trying to increase domestic production of all energy sources. He noted that there has been a huge increase in the importation of another strategic energy source -- liquified natural gas.

Even so, Pombo who drove a Lincoln Town Car because he had passengers on Thursday although he is more at home in a pick-up truck, sounds more like the typical Manteca, Lathrop, and Ripon motorist that is feeling the pain at the pump. He thinks the quick rise in California oil prices is essentially a crock.

"The Gulf situation didn't impact California production," Pombo said. "Prices shouldn't have gone up as soon as they did here."

Yet in the past 48 hours the average price of gasoline in Manteca has soared just over 30 cents to mirror the rest of the Golden State.

Pombo noted that the oil companies do trade supplies to reduce costly transportation. But even so he believes something is amiss. The congressman, though, stopped short of calling it price gouging. Instead, he emphasized there are reasons why domestic oil supplies are so fragile.

"California is at 100 percent capacity in its refineries," Pombo said. "There hasn't been a oil refinery added in this country for over 30 years."

That would have little effect on California anyway since the Golden State gas stations must sell reformulated gasoline that burns cleaner. Pombo said adding refineries is primarily a state issue thanks to the tough environmental laws.

The absolute opposition that environmental groups have to building new oil refineries is the same wall that Pombo is running into overseeing the Resources Committee. Pombo believes increased oil production on the North Slope is a necessity. That doesn't mean he is against finding alternative fuel sources or pushing for increased efficiencies.

His detractors, however, have tried to paint him into such a box.

Pombo is at the top of the hit list for environmental groups throughout the country. The dairy farmer turned Tracy councilman turned congressman will tell you that they conveniently twist his positions so he can become the perfect bogeyman for their cause.

None of his environmental critics, for example, seem to get excited about hypocrisies that exist in federal laws governing clean air, energy use and free trade.

"They (truckers from Mexico) gas up before crossing the border and make it to Fresno and back without burning cleaner fuel." Pombo said.

The language of the Northern American Free Trade Act virtually renders California's tough clean law worthless as Mexico truckers using dirty fuel can drive in and out of the nation's No. 1 area for foul air as deterred by the federal government -- the southern San Joaquin Valley -- and makes it worse. Meanwhile, California trucking firms must meet higher standards that in turn increase their costs of doing business.

At the same time, the federal government is threatening to cut off all federal transportation dollars to the valley if the region doesn't clean up its air.

HURRICANE KATRINA: A Disaster's Repercussions State probes gas prices

Attorney general worries about gouging

David R. Baker, staff writer

[San Francisco Chronicle, Saturday, Sept. 3, 2005](#)

California's attorney general began an investigation Friday into gasoline price gouging in Hurricane Katrina's wake, as San Francisco's average price for a gallon of regular gas passed \$3.

With prices soaring throughout the state, officials also weighed temporarily changing the blends of gasoline made in California's refineries, a step that could increase supplies but add tons of pollution to the air each day.

The moves came even as two of the 10 Gulf Coast refineries knocked out by Katrina staggered back to life, although neither was ready to resume normal production. And several pipelines connecting the gulf to the Midwest and the East Coast reopened, raising hopes that this week's spot shortages would ease.

In California, Attorney General Bill Lockyer warned local oil companies and service station owners not to take advantage of the disaster. Although the state does not rely on the Gulf Coast for crude oil or

gasoline, the average price for regular gas has jumped 15 cents since Katrina charged ashore on Monday, hitting \$2.95 Friday.

"Hurricane Katrina has broken families, devastated communities and destroyed lives," Lockyer said in a written statement. "To unjustly profit from tragedy is unconscionable. I hope this investigation does not find that such greed has afflicted oil companies and gas station operators in California. "

Lockyer's office will subpoena documents from refiners and station owners in the next few weeks, looking for evidence of collusion or unfair business practices.

The California Energy Commission will collect consumer complaints of gouging on its Web site -- www.energy.ca.gov -- compile them in a report to the governor and forward them to the attorney general's office. The attorney general's office also an e-mail address for complaints at gaspricinghotline@doj.ca.gov.

Lockyer will try to apply an anti-gouging law that limits gasoline price increases to 10 percent after a state of emergency has been declared.

That could prove difficult, however, because California has not declared a state of emergency, and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger downplayed the idea Friday.

"Right now, there's no reason to do that," he said at a news conference in Los Angeles. "I always hate to see those prices going up. It's terrible. But one has to be very careful how you react."

Schwarzenegger also doubted that Katrina had been the main factor in the state's price increases.

"I don't think it has much effect," he said. "It's just because of the demand."

The Western States Petroleum Association, a trade group for refiners and oil companies, said its members will cooperate with Lockyer's investigation. Spokeswoman Anita Mangels noted that many government offices, including Lockyer's, have investigated the gasoline market in recent years without finding evidence of wrongdoing.

"There's no reason to think the outcome of this investigation will be any different," she said.

Many San Francisco drivers, however, blame the steadily rising prices on the oil industry, not on Katrina. The city's average price of a gallon of regular hit \$3.01 Friday, the first time it passed the \$3 milestone.

"I personally think oil companies manipulate the prices, no doubt," said Ian Iljas, 54, of San Francisco as he doled out \$58.75 to fill his tank at a Chevron station on Lombard Street. "When you watch the news, you see that oil companies are making huge profits."

After months of soaring prices, starting well before Katrina, the prospect of \$3 gas no longer startles many Californians. Drivers don't like it, but neither are they surprised.

"It's not \$6 a gallon, so I guess it's not that bad," said Amanda Schnell, 27, of San Francisco. The climbing prices have prompted her to cut back on driving, and her fiance carools to his job in Richmond to save money.

"It definitely affects how much we drive," Schnell said.

As the Labor Day weekend began, California officials said Friday the state has ample gasoline supplies for the holiday. But they also want to add to those stocks.

The California Energy Commission and the California Air Resources Board are exploring the possibility of temporarily changing gasoline blends as a way to boost supply. The state uses different blends for summer and winter, switching to cold-weather fuel on Nov. 1. But some of the ingredients that suppress air pollution in the summer blend are in short supply because of the hurricane.

California has larger supplies of the winter blend's chemicals, so switching fuels early could increase its gas supply by 5 to 10 percent, said Joe Desmond, chairman of the energy commission.

But switching early would increase the amount of volatile organic compounds spewed by cars in warm weather, adding as much as 90 tons per day, said Dimitri Stanich, a spokesman with the Air Resources Board. Those compounds help form ozone and add particulate matter to the air.

Desmond said the change's impact on air will be considered as the two agencies discuss what to do. "We share the same concerns," he said.

Spare the Air

[Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register, Friday, Sept. 2, 2005](#)

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has declared today a Spare the Air Day.

The district alerts residents when air quality is expected to reach unhealthful levels.

When a Spare the Air Day is called, residents are asked to curtail activities that cause air pollution for the next 24 hours.

Information: (800) 766-4463.

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Electric cars can stay

[Modesto Bee, Business, Monday, Sept. 5, 2005](#)

Without fanfare, Toyota has agreed to let customers continue driving about 1,000 discontinued electric vehicles that were a precursor to the popular Prius gas-electric hybrid. The auto company's decision is a victory for a small but devoted band of electric car drivers, who say automakers never gave the cars a chance to succeed in the mass market. Several automakers produced electric vehicles in response to 1990 air quality regulations requiring that 10percent of all new cars sold in California by 2003 produce no tailpipe emissions. But after persuading judges to whittle away the regulations, automakers that had leased the vehicles to consumers began reclaiming and destroying them, saying it wasn't feasible to continue servicing vehicles that never caught on.

Developers and farmers try to get along

By Lynn Doan and Shannon Darling, Staff writers

[Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register, Saturday, Sept. 3, 2005](#)

When fourth generation farmer Brian Blain gets ready to harvest the 10 acres of walnuts around his east Visalia home, he hits the streets.

Instead of dragging out equipment, he first walks the streets of nearby neighborhoods and knocks on doors, warning his neighbors of what he is going to do.

"The weather is nice and people go to work and leave windows open, and we go and create this big cloud of dust," Blain said.

The walnut harvest, which begins this week, involves shaking the giant trees that have been collecting dust all summer.

Blain said he also doesn't spray pesticides on the last rows of trees near subdivision and spreads pecan shells on the roads to keep dust down.

It's a way farmers can ease the clash between development and farming.

But farmers aren't the only ones trying, developers say.

Whenever he's planning a subdivision near farmland, Bob Dowds of Mangano Homes in Visalia said he meets with the county's agricultural commissioner and adjacent farmers to address concerns.

"Whenever you have a subdivision next to agriculture, there's a definite potential for conflict," Dowds said.

With the county's right to farm ordinance, homebuyers are duly notified that they're living in an agricultural area, Dowds said. But the Manganos make a more conscious effort to accommodate residents and farmers alike, he said.

For example, the developers are in the planning stage to build 200 homes on the Sierra View Golf Course south of Visalia, an area surrounded by farmland.

After meeting with farmers, Dowds said, the company agreed to require a 100-foot minimum back yard between the homes and agriculture.

He said the plans also call for trees to be planted between the houses and farmland to block any dust during harvesting.

Christine Ballecer, marketing manager for Centex Homes, said the company works with adjoining landowners before planning a subdivision near farmland.

"We work with them on what's most appropriate for their crops," she said. "In some situations, we put up walls. In other situations, we leave a margin of land."

Ballecer said Centex Homes is "very conservative" when it comes to building near farmland.

For example, at a Centex Homes subdivision at Riggan Avenue and Demaree Street, developers built a greenbelt and trail to divide rows of walnut trees from homes.

"It gives it a beautiful greenbelt that isn't only aesthetically pleasing, but it's also a buffer zone for dusting," Ballecer said.

Sue Lafferty, land manager of Ennis Homes, said she doesn't know of any builders who develop without fences.

"It's pretty much expected now," she said. "A lot of them will do trees, others might build a block wall a foot or two higher, and if we know the farmland's going to stay for awhile, we'll make the lots back up a bit deeper."

Lafferty said some developers will also limit their homes to one story if they're up against farmland.

"That way, they're not getting that extra dust or sprays or noise coming over," she said.

County supervisors said they, too, are doing their part to protect farmland while handling population growth.

County Supervisor Allen Ishida, who grows citrus south of Lindsay, said he and other supervisors are intent on preserving agriculture but also need to find a way to handle growth.

"We know growth is coming. We can't close our eyes to that growth. And we are going to lose some land to developers," he said.

Earlier this month, the Board of Supervisors got to work on the county's general plan for the next 25 years, which will determine where the board directs future population growth.

Supervisors expressed concern that prime agricultural land in cities is being phased out as the demand for housing grows.

"If agriculture isn't going to be our No. 1 industry, then what is? Because I don't see anything taking its place," Supervisor Connie Conway said. "I'm not trying to be an alarmist, but we have some rich farmland and a tradition of farming."

Ishida and Supervisor Steven Worthley suggested during a planning meeting this month that the county's general plan direct more growth to unincorporated communities, where poorer soil lies.

"If you look at Visalia, it still has some of the best soil in the Valley," he said. "Then, you go to Strathmore, and their soils are relatively poor."

But, Ishida said, there's just one question: Would you want to live in Strathmore?

"People want to live in large cities, and they're going to continue to grow no matter what," he said. "We can't say people are going to live in Tooleville, but if people want to live there, we're going to give them that chance."

Unfortunately, Ishida said, preserving prime agricultural land is largely out of the county's hands.

"You can generally tell where the best soils are for agricultural purposes because they're planted in walnuts trees, which are around Visalia and Tulare," Ishida said. "And look where all the construction is."

So, if anyone needs to worry about preserving farmland, Ishida said, it's the cities.

"I think the cities are going to have to look for higher densities, building up and making smaller lots," he said. "I think it's about time that Visalia got a skyline."

Judicious Pollution Activist Becomes Judicial

An attorney who became an expert in air quality and helped put a stop to major violations is happy to be named a Superior Court judge.

By Deborah Schoch, Times Staff Writer

[Los Angeles Times, Monday, Sept. 5, 2005](#)

Some environmentalists try to make their case with emotional appeals. Some resort to angry rants.

But when Gail Ruderman Feuer rose to speak in court or before public officials, she was invariably low-key: a calm presence with an understated suit, a pleasant voice, an engaging smile.

It could take a few minutes to notice that this Harvard-trained environmental attorney was methodically laying out arguments that undercut those of some of California's most august industries. In that pleasant voice, she could cut through the bluster of an unprepared attorney or public official like a Henckels knife through butter.

In the last three years, she has helped expose environmental shortcomings in two massive projects at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and may have changed forever how the nation's two largest seaports deal with air pollution.

"She's clearly one of the brightest in the firmament of air pollution lawyers that are practicing in this country," said Mary Nichols, head of the UCLA Institute of the Environment and a nominee for the L.A. water and power board.

So allies and foes alike were stunned in late July when Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger named Feuer, 45, a Superior Court judge. Her colleagues joke that it was a victory for polluters, as one of the state's most effective environmental attorneys was silenced.

Feuer was sworn in Aug. 22 in the same courtroom where she successfully argued a lawsuit against the Port of Los Angeles. Her children draped the black robe over her shoulders. She began presiding over her own courtroom Thursday.

She has a simple explanation for why an attorney known for passionate activism would choose to leave the fray in mid-career for a new post requiring impartiality.

"I love fighting for causes I believe in, but not everyone can have an attorney to fight for them," she said. "I thought that if I could bring fairness and justice into the courtroom, I could make a difference one case at a time."

In a profession known for long hours, Feuer earned a reputation for working late and balancing an intense career with family.

Her cellphone always on, she would discuss environmental issues while she drove her son, Aaron, 14, to a science fair, or daughter Danielle, 11, to a soccer game.

"I can think of many occasions, we'll be discussing something related to air quality -- usually a very complicated, difficult subject -- and then she'll take a moment, turn and deal with a family matter and then we'll be back discussing a complicated subject," said Peter Greenwald, senior policy advisor for the South Coast Air Quality Management District, which Feuer has both supported and opposed in court.

Feuer lives in the Fairfax district of Los Angeles with her husband, former Los Angeles City Councilman Mike Feuer, and their children in a Spanish-style home they are renovating.

One recent Saturday morning, she tried to reflect on her life while nursing a mug of coffee on the side patio, a quiet enclave of plants and white latticework. But a contractor interrupted with questions. Then her husband asked her advice when the wrong locksmith arrived.

She grew up in Flushing, Queens. Her mother was a teacher; her father owned a rental car agency and a Dodge dealership. Feuer majored in economics at the Albany campus of the State University of New York, but her favorite class was nuclear physics. "I loved learning how to build a nuclear plant," she said with a slight grin.

She met her husband at Harvard Law School, and the two moved to Los Angeles, where she became a state deputy attorney general, serving in the environmental section.

In 1993, she became a senior attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council, becoming engrossed in some of the state's most important air pollution issues.

Diesel exhaust in particular caught her attention. The state had just declared it a toxic air contaminant because it can cause cancer. Soon, she was engaged in a landmark effort to reduce diesel fumes from trucks that serve the main distribution centers for the region's major supermarket chains. Most of those centers were in lower-income neighborhoods, putting residents at risk.

The campaign began with around-the-clock monitoring of diesel levels at the Vons distribution center in Santa Fe Springs. Todd Campbell, who was then with NRDC, recalled how Feuer would arrive after a day's work to stay overnight in a sleeping bag, watching an air monitor and communicating by walkie-talkie with others on the project.

"Here was this person who was revered in the environmental community, spending her extra hours with us," said Campbell, now at the Coalition for Clean Air. "I still remember getting e-mails at 2 or 3 in the morning. That was her signature. She's a dynamo."

With the monitoring data, Feuer and her colleagues sued the supermarket chains, which eventually agreed to start switching to cleaner-burning engines.

Feuer followed the same pattern of tenaciousness and compromise in her more recent battles, such as when she represented residents angered by the failure of the Port of Los Angeles to address escalating diesel emissions from ships, trains and trucks.

She persuaded an appellate court panel to halt construction on a port terminal planned for China Shipping until the port completed the required environmental review. Then, she and the port's attorneys reached a compromise, allowing construction to continue in return for the port's agreement to spend \$50 million to control air pollution.

The landmark pact put Los Angeles in the forefront of efforts to reduce pollution when increased imports are stirring concerns in port cities nationwide.

Her opponents, many who hold her in high esteem, see her willingness to seek a middle ground as a trait that bodes well for her new career as a judge.

"She was someone you could go to and try to come up with a reasonable compromise," said Rick Zbur, a partner at Latham & Watkins, which has the largest environmental practice in the country and often represents businesses. "There are many folks out there on both sides of this that aren't willing to compromise, ever, and often that means that bad policy is made."

Barrister to bench

- Feuer earned a bachelor's degree summa cum laude in 1981 from SUNY Albany and a law degree cum laude in 1984 from Harvard Law School.

- While on a conference call in 1993, trying to negotiate a clean-air agreement, she went into labor with her daughter, Danielle.
- California Lawyer magazine named her one of the state's top 25 lawyers in 2000, noting her role in two precedent-setting legal settlements to improve air quality in the Los Angeles area.
- As a judge, Feuer is barred from discussing legal matters with former clients and the Natural Resources Defense Council. She has begun in traffic court and won't preside over an environmental case in the near future. "Not unless they hit a tree," she quipped.

[Bakersfield Californian, Editorial, Sunday, Sept. 4, 2005:](#)

It definitely pays to have a vision -- and implement it

Hindsight is 20/20, goes the saying. Thanks to community activists the future of the Bakersfield metropolitan area fortunately has a Vision 2020. A recent review by The Californian of the goals of Vision 2020 -- started in 2000 -- showed that in five years much progress has been made in advancing toward those goals.

After a series of public forums organized by a grass-roots Chamber of Commerce-backed group, a 100-page document was put together listing hundreds of improvements that should be considered.

Many times documents mapping out a plan of action end up collecting dust in a file -- but not the Vision 2020 plan.

Dozens of ideas from the Vision have been adopted by the city and county.

Sheryl Barbich, one of the ambitious go-getters who organized Vision 2020, is pleased with the results so far.

"I think it's fantastic that a community can come together and come up with the same plan of what we want our community to be and then have it implemented," she said. "So many people have come together to get things accomplished, and that's fabulous, just fabulous."

One of the goals was to have quality education. So the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office implemented better training for new teachers and state tests helped create accountability.

Larry Reider, county schools superintendent, notes: "Vision 2020 has continually supported the collaboration of education, business and government on strategies that allow a student to graduate from high school and be academically prepared for a career, career training or college. Strategies like these are vital to the success of our community."

Quality of life -- including education -- was a main theme of the Vision 2020 document. This led to combatting crime by asking the Bakersfield Police Department and the Sheriff's Department to work to find the underlying causes or risk factors for area crime.

Since 2000, the BPD has held several community forums in neighborhoods to get residents' input. The Sheriff's Department received a grant for a root-cause crime analysis coordinator and the BPD has a crime analysis unit.

With summer days often in the 100-degree range, another goal was to increase tree shade canopy by 30 percent and the number of trees in Greater Bakersfield from 1 million to 3 million by 2020.

The Tree Foundation has helped plant thousands of new trees and taught hundreds of people how to keep them healthy.

Vision 2020 encourages mixed use development downtown that includes a diverse mixture of housing, retail and commercial uses.

The number of blighted areas is decreasing thanks to a massive community cleanup effort and increased enforcement of city and county codes.

Much progress has been accomplished toward a revitalized downtown with a planned canal-side park surrounded by commercial businesses and true urban housing.

Work needs to continue to obtain 2020 goals of [cleaner air](#) and a system of highways to meet community needs. A total of \$725 million put in the Federal Transportation budget by Rep. Bill Thomas, R-Bakersfield, will allow freeways and roads to be built and repaired in half the time than thought possible -- over a 10-year span.

Revised city and county General Plans are also needed to make it easier to obtain the goals of 2020.

Organizers of the futuristic plan have enough spunk to keep the heat on until all the Vision 2020 goals have been achieved. They have gotten off to an impressive start.

[Modesto Bee, Editorial, Sunday, Sept. 4, 2005:](#)

We honor and appreciate agriculture, but we're not anybody's cheerleaders

By MARK VASCHÉ - BEE EDITOR

The story and photo in Friday's Bee were enough to turn your stomach, or maybe worse if you happened to be eating breakfast while reading the paper.

The thought of dead cow parts -- intestines, hooves and hide -- falling off a truck and rotting in the sun on Crows Landing Road was absolutely disgusting.

The image of residents of south Modesto - including children at Shackelford School -- having to cover their noses and hold their breath while passing by was upsetting.

That it happened a block from the Modesto Tallow Co. was downright maddening.

A company official says it wasn't to blame, but an eyewitness account of the spill seemed to point directly to Modesto Tallow, a rendering plant notorious for its putrid odors and dismal environmental record.

I'm sure Todd Milbourn's story and Bart Ah You's photos will draw responses from readers, including some who feel The Bee is giving Modesto Tallow and agriculture in general a bum rap.

An e-mail to that effect came my way last month from Betta Kaiser, who called The Bee's continuing coverage of the situation at Modesto Tallow "offensive."

"The plant was there first. If the protesters can't bear it, then they should move, or install expensive filtration systems in their homes, not force the plant to do so."

An even stronger attack came in a letter we ran in the paper a few weeks ago from William Torrens, who accused the paper of "muck slinging" in its coverage of "perceived environmental issues with agribusiness. Negative coverage has condemned the largest cheese plant, the tallow plant, orchards, row crops (because of dust), and now the wine industry."

Torrens went on to accuse The Bee of condemning agribusinesses because they don't advertise, while favoring home builders and real estate firms who are major advertisers.

In essence, both Kaiser and Torrens were saying that The Bee was being unfair to agriculture.

Well, with all due respect and with a tip of the cap to one of our top commodities, that's plain nuts.

Agriculture has been and continues to be the San Joaquin Valley's economic engine. We've been blessed with the richest soil in the world, we lead the nation in ag production, and our crops - from milk to chicken to almonds to wine grapes - are known and envied around the world.

We've told those success stories again and again and again in The Bee. We've editorialized again and again and again on the need to protect and preserve agriculture while growing and diversifying our economy. And we'll continue to do all that.

That said, a newspaper's job is not to be a cheerleader -- for agriculture or anything else.

A paper's job is to provide news and information that people need to make intelligent, informed decisions, in their daily lives and as they participate in the democratic process. That includes reporting on the issues, problems, challenges and opportunities facing our communities and region.

Our valley -- and its men, women and children -- have some pretty serious problems and challenges, from air and water pollution to low income levels to an inadequately skilled work force to traffic congestion to ... well, the list goes on and on.

Is agriculture solely to blame? Of course not.

Has agriculture contributed to the situation? Yes.

Does agriculture have problems that need to be addressed? Definitely.

Will ignoring the problems by not reporting or reading about them make them go away? Duh.

We'll continue to cover agriculture as the heart and soul of the valley that it is.

We'll definitely continue to tell the success stories of the men and women who work the soil, process the crops and bottle the wines.

But when a cheese company breaks the law and contaminates the aquifer, when a tallow plant spews sickening odors, when dust raised by farm equipment contributes to dangerously high asthma rates, and, yes, when there are concerns voiced over air pollution caused by cows ... when those issues arise, we'll tell our readers about them as well.

And we'll do the same thing as we cover development, education, government and everything else.

It's what we've always done, and what I hope we'll always do.

[Modesto Bee, Editorial \(Short Takes\), Saturday, Sept. 3, 2005:](#)

The bloody pile of animal parts that spilled out of a truck Thursday on Crows Landing Road was disgusting enough, but what was worse - no one had cleaned it up by late Friday. It was a classic case of everyone disclaiming responsibility, including Stanislaus County, in whose jurisdiction it sat, and Modesto Tallow Co., which insisted it wasn't their mess. A witness said Thursday the offal came from a truck similar to those used by the firm.

We agree with the neighborhood resident who said this would never have been left to stink and get strewn down the roadway in wealthier parts of town. Just like other sections of town would never have been left with the stench of a persistent odor violator.

[Commentary in the Orange County Register, Saturday, Sept. 3, 2005:](#)

Katrina reveals our folly

Environmentalists, NIMBYs have blocked new oil refineries for 30 years

By Adrian Moore

Adrian Moore, Ph.D., is Vice President of Research at Reason Foundation (www.reason.org)

With oil and gas production in gulf states at a standstill in the wake of devastating Hurricane Katrina, oil prices hitting a record \$70 per barrel, and an average gasoline price of over \$2.60 a gallon, the Bush administration has decided to tap the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

The move comes amid numerous predictions that gas prices will shoot up over \$3 per gallon throughout California this Labor Day weekend. Bloomberg News reports that Katrina forced the temporary closure of at least eight refineries, responsible for as much as 10 percent of the nation's oil production.

The ongoing fallout from Katrina sheds light on our woeful energy policies, demonstrating that we are so vulnerable that even a temporary shutdown of oil refineries in one corner of the country will have a huge impact on gasoline prices across the country and in California.

Why? Supply and demand. And not simply the supply of oil we get from the Middle East, Venezuela, and others.

A new oil refinery has not been built in the United States since 1976. During that time, our gasoline use has increased over 25 percent. The nation's 149 existing refineries have been running at maximum capacity trying to meet record demand and, as a result, not only do we import oil, we actually have to import 10 percent of our daily gasoline from refineries overseas.

So when Hurricane Katrina or a refinery fire or anything else causes even just a few refineries to shut down for awhile, there is absolutely no excess capacity nationwide to make up the difference, and prices at the pump skyrocket.

For the wealthiest, most powerful nation in the world this is a ridiculous situation that will only get worse as our insatiable demand for gasoline keeps growing and refinery capacity falls further behind in the coming years.

Just a few new refineries would alleviate the problem and help keep our gas prices lower and steadier.

But getting an oil refinery built is next to impossible, hence the 30-year construction drought. There will always be environmental activists who fight any new proposed refinery, regardless of where it might be located and how environmentally safe it is. And our environmental rules give them the upper hand.

The environmental impact-report process mobilizes the "not in my back yard" elements to oppose any proposed refinery, but it does not mobilize people or groups who are looking at national energy needs. You wind up with a very lopsided discussion where potential problems are thoroughly and perhaps overly represented, but the only group pointing out the benefits of the refinery is the "evil" oil company asking to build it - even though every automobile driver would benefit.

Consider the example of Arizona Clean Fuels, which has been trying to build a small refinery outside Yuma for almost 10 years. It took five years just to get air-quality permits. Now they hope to be operational in 2010, 15 years after they started the project.

President Bush recently signed a new energy bill that tries to make it easier to build new oil refineries, especially in areas with high unemployment - where the new jobs would likely be welcome. And yet, special-interest groups decried the provision as an environmental and public health injustice, arguing that these communities won't want refineries but won't have the political power to fight them off.

The opposition to building new refineries ignores the dramatic technological improvements that have been made since an oil refinery was last constructed here in 1976. New, clean refineries emit far less pollution than older refineries, with new scrubbers and design changes that dramatically reduce sulfur and other emissions. And at the same time our ability to model and map emission characteristics and distribution lets us choose the best locations for new facilities - where they will have the least possible impact on people and the environment.

Even as gas prices have soared beyond \$2.50 per gallon in many parts of the country, Americans have not stopped driving. We might tighten our budgets elsewhere to make up for the added expenses, but we show no signs of giving up our cars. At some point, we need to admit our dependence on gasoline and add the capacity and refineries that will help lower gas prices.

Our environmental review process needs to embrace local concerns and impacts, but it can't facilitate the "not in my back yard" resistance that completely derails plans for any new refineries.

Hurricane Katrina has revealed an ominous weakness in our energy policy. If we don't start building refineries and adding capacity to handle our growing gas needs, it won't take a natural disaster to send gas prices soaring even higher.

[Fresno Bee, Letter to the Editor, Friday, Sept. 2, 2005:](#)

Casinos' impact

Your editorial Aug. 27 on locating casinos is completely off-base. What more rational place, based on prudent land use, to locate casinos than where existing or easily acquired infrastructure and major transportation access exist?

You seem to advocate, through ignorance, that casinos be located in rural areas. The rural areas upon which many Indian lands exist are located in the foothill areas of the Sierra Nevada. These areas are historically water-short, fragile ecosystems that also serve as critical source watershed providing the Valley with much needed high quality water.

To introduce major impact "Las Vegas"-style mega-casinos into this water-short and transportation-poor area, along with the vast increase in population that would result, would compromise this area beyond belief.

Multi-lane highway access would, by necessity, be constructed, creating more air pollution and destroying the existing designated scenic highways. Major additional groundwater use in a troubled water area would be devastating to existing residents. The foothills are now within the boundaries of the recently legislated Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

And by the way, the "all-out, Las Vegas gaming in California" horse has left the barn.

Gary L. Temple, president
Sierra and Foothill Citizens Alliance, Prather

[Bakersfield Californian, Letter to the Editor, Monday, Sept. 5, 2005:](#)

Look for the positive

It seems the public relation's person is back for Bakersfield Mayor Harvey Hall and Sen. Dean Florez.

Hall's picture has been taken scarce since he got the big increase for his monopoly ambulance service. Florez was almost two weeks without that smirky picture in the paper.

Heaven help us if he wins another election. Let me name the ways. He's against human waste, which fertilizes the farmer's crops with less odor and brings money to the county on which it is dumped

He is against dairies because of odor and pollution; against cars because of pollution; against buildings bringing in more people and on and on.

Nothing has been proven that the waste is detrimental. We've used it for years with no adverse effects. Can't he find something positive to do?

-- LENORE CURTIS, Bakersfield

[LA Times, Letter to the Editor, Sunday, Sept. 4, 2005:](#)

Switching to Biodiesel Is Cheaper and Healthier

"Fans of Diesel Dream of a Return to California of the Fuel-Efficient Cars" (Aug. 28) relates the lamentation of those who want to buy diesel cars and light trucks in California, and capture the perceived values of these vehicles (and the newest federal tax incentive to buy them).

But it fails to mention the relationship of diesel use and disease, most notably lung diseases such as asthma. In fact, The Times has run stories in recent months describing the link between the extensive use of diesel fuels at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, diesel locomotives and the high levels of diesel truck traffic along the 110 and 710 freeways with health problems suffered by the residents in those areas.

Switching to biodiesel is cheaper than buying new engines or converting existing vehicles to other petroleum fuels or ethanol. It is a solution that can happen quickly, and it will reduce our trade deficit immediately while redirecting the wealth we are now sending overseas to our own heartland.

At the same time, it will reduce air pollution for those living near ports, freeways and warehousing and commercial centers.

Tim O'Connell, *Westchester*

[Modesto Bee, Letter to the Editor, Monday, Sept. 6, 2005](#)

Hybrid not pertetual motion machine

Regarding the letter "Good reasons for driving a hybrid" (Aug.29): Sigh. Where to begin? While the technology shows a lot of promise, the writer does her own cause no good by telling half-truths and making misleading statements.

You can't generate energy from "the rotation of the wheels" while also using energy to turn the wheels. The battery must absolutely be recharged via the gasoline engine. Otherwise, the writer is describing a perpetual motion machine.

Eventually, gasoline engines in hybrid cars will only recharge the batteries, and that will be a major improvement. The car will weigh less, cost less and be more reliable. It will have only one drive train (electric), and the small, efficient gasoline engine will only come on when the battery charge is getting low.

The American people are not necessarily in love with gasoline. We just want real cars to drive, not Honda Hairshirts and the like. Personally, I look forward to that faster, smoother, less-polluting hybrid of the future.

STEVE WALLACE, Salida

[Modesto Bee, Letter to the Editor, Sunday, Sept. 4, 2005](#)

Conserve scarce natural resources

I'm shocked by the claim expressed in a pro/con package ("Is the world running out of oil?" Opinions, Aug. 14) that the Earth isn't running out of oil. Studies I've read show that one U.S. family consumes more goods, devours more energy and generates more pollution and waste than 25 Third World families.

Earth is losing the war that developed countries wage against its natural resources. If you could see the air you're breathing, pollution would become a top priority.

We can make wiser choices as consumers. Use conservation to solve this crisis of dwindling oil. If we reduce demand, we wouldn't need to drill in Alaska or engage in nation-building in the Mideast.

Be smarter than those who've led wrongly. Choose daily to reduce pollution and waste; leave the legacy of a cleaner planet for your grandchildren and posterity.

SALVATORE SALERNO, Modesto

[Modesto Bee, Letter to the Editor, Saturday, Sept. 3, 2005](#)

Cows don't pollute like cars

Are the dairy cows polluting the air as much as they say? Take a small, four-cylinder gasoline-powered car running with one person in a garage with all the doors shut. Next door, in another garage, put one person and 10 cows -- no, make it 20 cows -- all alive and all the doors closed. Let's see who walks out alive 10 hours later.

Put me in the garage with all the cows. The person in the garage with the car won't be walking out.

RICHARD STUYT, Escalon

Editor's note: Cows and cars are responsible for creating different kinds of pollution. Cars emit carbon monoxide; cows emit volatile organic compounds, which are responsible for forming smog.