

## **Electric trucks sold to Frito-Lay**

By The Record

Stockton Record, Thursday, March 22, 2012

STOCKTON - Electric Vehicles International announced Wednesday a pilot program with Frito-Lay North America in which the snack company will purchase five EVI all-electric, medium-duty trucks for use in Northern California.

The design offers a 90-mile range between charges, a top speed of 65 mph and is intended for use in fleets where vehicles follow regular routes and return to base at the end of their rounds.

Privately held EVI's headquarters and primary manufacturing facility are in Stockton.

Mike O'Connell, senior director of fleet capability at Frito-Lay, said his company and parent PepsiCo regularly test new transportation systems and technologies to improve performance while also trying to minimize environmental impacts.

"The EVI electric vehicles give Frito-Lay another promising option to help meet our long term goal of being the greenest fleet in North America," he said in the release.

Frank Jenkins, vice president of sales and marketing for EVI, in the release credited Frito-Lay for being a leader in the adoption of zero- emission delivery vehicles.

Company officials said in a news release the deal follows the test of such a vehicle, built on a Daimler Freightliner M2 truck chassis and incorporating EVI's electric power train, on a delivery route in Alameda.

## **Kings County goes green to cut costs**

Hanford Sentinel, Thursday, March 22, 2012

Kings County has launched several projects in recent months that will save energy and money.

County crews have installed more than 2,800 lights and 300 ballasts, casting a brighter glow on office workers. The new lights are also significantly more energy efficient, saving the county much needed cash on its utility bills.

Another projects included installing hundreds of occupancy sensors that automatically shut off lights in rooms when there is no activity. The county also has hired a contractor to replace 21 existing HVAC units on county-owned buildings with modern and efficient units.

"I wasn't sure we could utilize just the grant monies to complete the lighting and HVAC upgrades, but we decided to try to do as much as time and grant monies would allow," said Gerry Showers, Kings County building maintenance superintendent. "I have exceptional staff members in my maintenance department, and they once again proved it by completing the lighting installation of 2,800-plus tubes and 300 ballasts in house.

"We also went out for competitive bids on replacing 21 HVAC units and the installation of approximately 300 light sensors. We have utilized all the grant monies and did not have to match any funds, and the projects finished on time and under budget. I want to thank the grant administrator and staff for their work with us on the EECBG and the opportunity for us to save our tax payers money by us utilizing the grant monies."

What this means to the average taxpayer is significant savings to county coffers through lower utility bills. The energy efficiency retrofits when complete will save the County about 235,747 kilowatt hours of energy per year. This roughly equates to a savings of about \$28,290 a year.

And that's a big deal in these troubled economic times.

Another big deal is that the entire project isn't costing the County a dime. The money that makes the project possible comes from an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The program is administered through the U.S. Department of Energy and the California Energy Commission.

Kings County joined with 35 other cities and counties in the region to form the San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy Partnership, which is led by the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District with the assistance of the nonprofit San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy Organization. The Partnership administers the more than \$4 million in grants and provides technical assistance to local governments.

## **Controversial strawberry pesticide pulled from US**

By Gosia Wozniacka, Associated Press

In the Modesto Bee, Sacramento Bee and other papers, Wednesday, March 21, 2012

FRESNO, Calif. -- A pesticide used primarily in the strawberry industry is being pulled from the U.S. market by its Japanese manufacturer, a surprising move that comes after harsh criticism from environmentalists and farmworkers who claim the chemical is toxic and may cause cancer.

Tokyo-based Arysta LifeScience Inc. said late Tuesday that it was immediately suspending the sales, marketing and production of all formulations of the fumigant Midas, or methyl iodide, in the U.S.

The company said the decision was based on the product's economic viability in the United States.

Since it was approved in 2007 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, methyl iodide has seen little use across the nation. California's \$2 billion strawberry industry, which produces more than 90 percent of the nation's strawberries, has shunned its use, in part because it carried severe restrictions on use near schools and residential areas.

Methyl iodide had been widely seen as a replacement for another fumigant, methyl bromide, which is being phased out under international treaty because it depletes the Earth's ozone. Some growers are currently using up their supplies of methyl bromide, while others have switched to fumigants such as chloropicrin and metam sodium as alternatives.

Methyl iodide, which is injected into soil, kills bugs, weeds and plant diseases. It was also used by some growers of tomatoes, peppers and other crops.

California regulators approved its use in December 2010 despite opposition from a wide range of scientists, environmental and farmworker groups.

Those scientists concluded that use of the fumigant would result in acute public health risks because tests on rats and rabbits have shown that exposure to the chemical causes thyroid cancer, miscarriages and damage to the nervous system. [Scientists also found it can pollute air](#) and water.

Environmentalists and public health advocates have been pressuring Gov. Jerry Brown's administration to reconsider state approval of the fumigant. An Alameda County Superior Court judge was expected to rule soon on a lawsuit by environmentalists who asked the state to vacate that approval.

Arysta officials said methyl iodide was applied "without a single safety incident" on 17,000 acres across the southeast - a tiny fraction of U.S. farmland - since it was first registered five years ago.

Only five applications - all under five acres - took place in California since the state registered the pesticide. That included a single strawberry farmer using the chemical on a small test site.

Arysta officials said the company will continue to maintain the federal Midas label registered with the EPA.

California Department of Pesticide Regulation spokeswoman Lea Brooks said that as of Wednesday, the chemical is no longer registered in California. The company said it will also assess whether to maintain registration with 47 other states.

Environmentalists who clamored to get the chemical off the market hailed the unexpected decision to end sales and said it came just in time for spring strawberry season.

"This is a pleasant surprise and a huge victory, especially for rural residents and farmworkers across the country," said Paul Towers of Pesticide Action Network. "Arysta saw the writing on the wall and chose to pull their cancer-causing methyl iodide product."

It's unclear how the company's decision will affect the pending lawsuit.

The strawberry industry was also surprised by the decision, said Carolyn O'Donnell, communications director for the California Strawberry Commission. Growers are concerned, O'Donnell said, about the implications of methyl iodide being pulled from shelves while methyl bromide is being phased out.

Part of the reason growers might have been reluctant to use methyl iodide, O'Donnell said, is because the regulations were so strict.

"People like to live where strawberries like to grow," O'Donnell said. "A lot of times, because of that, the rules excluded a lot of the acres from being fumigated."

In recent years, the commission has poured more than \$12 million into university research to look at alternatives to fumigation, such as crop rotation, eliminating soil pathogens by using natural sources of carbon and sterilizing soil with steam.

And earlier this month, the commission and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation announced a research partnership looking for alternatives to fumigants. The \$500,000, three-year project is will focus on growing strawberries in peat, tree bark or other non-soil substances that are disease-free.

[Fresno Bee Blog, Wednesday, March 21, 2012:](#)

## **Air district offers commercial gardeners free electric equipment**

By Mark Grossi

Any gardeners out there looking for a quieter, air-friendly leaf blower? The local air-quality police are offering you quite a freebie. And it's not just for leaf blowers.

Commercial gardeners can get electric tools, such as blowers, mowers and trimmers, from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District this year. It's a \$500,000, one-year experiment to see how the tools stand up in daily use.

It may not sound like a major campaign, but the district's experiment is a response to a big hassle in many neighborhoods.

Many residents don't like gasoline-powered leaf blowers, which are loud and dirty, though they are not a major villain in the Valley's nationally known air problems. Many opponents think they should be banned.

Electric leaf blowers cut out the ozone-making gases, oxides of nitrogen and volatile organic compounds, as well as tuning down the noise.

Tiny particle pollution from leaf blowers would still be an issue but there are practices that can make it less of an air-quality problem. For instance, workers could avoid leaf-blower use around schools when children are outside or in the area.

The district has \$500,000 to buy electric lawnmowers, edgers, trimmers, bush cutters, blowers and chainsaws. These zero-emission tools are not widely used in the commercial gardening business, say air district leaders.

Any commercial gardener can apply here. Or call (559) 230-5800.

The category includes private gardening businesses, public agencies, school districts and hospitals within the eight-county boundaries of the district, which range from Stockton to Bakersfield.

Environmentalists and some residents have long complained that leaf blowers are loud, dirty and a low priority for air-quality cleanup in the Valley.

