

News Release

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For Immediate Release



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

TO:
Local News Sections

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New rules prohibit some agricultural burning

As harvest time winds down, the Valley Air District reminds farmers that some agricultural waste can no longer be burned. As of June 1, 2005, state law and District rules prohibit the open burning of most field crops and pruning, as well as burning for weed abatement.

The following agricultural crops are banned from open burning:

Field Crops:

alfalfa, asparagus, barley stubble, beans, corn, cotton, flower straw, hay, lemon grass, oat stubble, pea vines, peanuts, safflower, sugar cane, vegetable crops, and wheat stubble.

Pruning:

apricot, avocado, bushberry, cherry, Christmas trees, citrus, dates, eucalyptus, kiwi,, nectarine, nursery pruning, olive, pasture or corral trees, peach, persimmon, pistachio, plum, pluot, pomegranate, prune, roses.

General Weed Abatement:

Berms, fence rows, pastures, and grass.

Pruning from almonds, apples, chestnuts, feijoas, figs, grapevines, jujubes, pears, pecans, quince, and walnuts may be burned until June 1, 2010 with a valid agricultural burn permit issued by the Air District with approval on the day of the burn. Burning rice stubble is also allowed through June 1, 2010, but the amount of burning rice stubble will be reduced by 30 percent beginning June 1, 2008. Burning weeds along surface waterways is also allowed until June 1, 2010. Orchard removals and tree stumps may be burned through June 1, 2007. Burning anything without a permit is a violation of Air District rules and subject to a fine.

Open burning is a significant source of air pollution in the San Joaquin Valley, responsible for more than 10 tons per day of particulates and more than 15 tons per day of smog-forming chemicals.

Farmers may choose from several alternatives to burning for disposal of agricultural waste. For example, waste such as stumps, trees and prunings can be chipped or shredded into a usable mulch or soil additive, or hauled to "biomass-fueled" power plants, where they are burned in enclosed facilities with air-pollution controls to produce electricity. Most weeds and stubble can be tilled under the soil.

The Valley Air District covers eight counties including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern. For more information, visit www.valleyair.org. Or, call the nearest District office: Modesto (209) 557-6400, Fresno (559) 230-6000 and Bakersfield (661) 326-6900.