



Dairy CARES Report

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San Joaquin Valley air officials considering changes in landmark dairy emissions rule

Less than three years after the San Joaquin Valley air quality officials adopted landmark air regulations for dairies, they are moving to make some changes.

Adopted in June 2006 and collectively known as Rule 4570, these were the nation's first comprehensive regulations of emissions from dairies. They are also a great success story of how air quality officials, scientists and dairy families cooperated to **reduce air emissions by nearly 30 percent** and help improve valley air quality – **without** driving dairies out of business and costing the valley jobs and economic activity.

Rule 4570 was the result of cooperation of dairy operators and air quality officials on several fronts. First, all parties recognized the importance that each industry in the valley “do its share” to clean the air. Everyone quickly recognized that decisions about how to go about reducing emissions needed to be grounded in and guided by science. Unfortunately, this science was largely lacking when it came to dairy air emissions.

To address the lack of information, the California Air Resources Board and the San Joaquin air district, university researchers and air district scientists developed emissions estimates through a program of cutting-edge research that put California firmly in the lead on the science of dairy emissions. Dairy organizations provided substantial financial support to assist help get the job done as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Armed with better information, CARES member organizations participated in numerous public meetings with air district officials and other stakeholders. The result of this debate was a list of strong dairy management options that sharply reduce emissions, but maintained critical operational flexibility for dairy operators. This approach allowed dairy operators to select from a list of proven management practices, and to custom-design their own site-specific emissions control strategy to fit the needs of both the dairy and the air district.

With new changes being considered to Rule 4570, it is important that we remember the successful model of cooperation and science that led to rule as it exists today. Air quality in the valley has improved, but the air district reports that there are still many days when federal health-based standards for ozone and fine particulate matter are exceeded. For this reason, the air district is conducting an ongoing, systematic review of its existing regulations, looking for more ways to reduce emissions from the sources it already regulates.

As part of this effort, the district will begin public workshops in March to consider changes to Rule 4570. This comes as no surprise – the air district announced its intentions

to revise this rule and many other air quality rules in its strategic plan (known as a State Implementation Plan) more than two years ago.

Among the changes being considered, according to a preliminary staff report from the air district: applying Rule 4570 to smaller operations (currently only dairies with 1,000 or more cows are covered under the regulations). Those already under the rule may also be asked to either conduct additional management practices, or to conduct these activities more frequently to further reduce emissions.

CARES and its member organizations will remain closely engaged as the process moves forward. Since the original adoption of Rule 4570 in 2006, more has been learned from ongoing research. We will review the latest science on emissions and what dairy operators have learned as they've carried out their management practices. Some practices work even better than we thought they would; others might need adjustment. Through cooperation and sound science, CARES member organizations will once again work closely with the air district – so that dairy families can continue to be leaders in both economic and environmental sustainability.

With the proper approach, dairy families will continue to do their part to keep valley air clean, while providing nutritious, high-quality dairy products for people across California and the nation, and jobs and economic benefits for all Californians.

CARES is a statewide coalition supporting economic and environmental sustainability for California's dairy industry. CARES members include the Alliance of Western Milk Producers, Bank of the West, Bar 20 Dairy Farms, California Dairies Inc., California Dairy Campaign, California Farm Bureau Federation, Dairy Farmers of America-California, Dairy Institute of California, Hilmar Cheese Co., HP Hood, Joseph Gallo Farms, Land O' Lakes, Milk Producers Council, Turlock Dairy & Refrigeration, Western United Dairymen, and others. For information about CARES, visit our web site at www.dairycares.com, write dairycares@aol.com or call 916-441-3318.