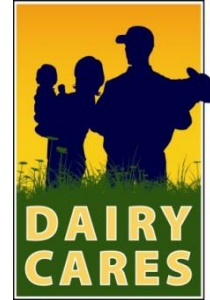


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## Dairy Cares Newsletter

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[DairyCares.com](http://DairyCares.com)

# Dairy families doing their share to help as San Joaquin Valley air quality improves

There's no question that air quality regulators have a tough job to do in the San Joaquin Valley. Surrounded by mountains on three sides, the valley is almost perfectly designed to block out prevailing winds and trap pollution. Long, hot summers make the problem worse, "cooking" the basic ingredients of smog until they can form ozone, which irritates lung tissue and threatens our health.

So even though far less pollution is created in the valley per square mile than in the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay areas, the valley has to work as hard or even harder to meet federal air quality goals.

In this tough situation, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has a remarkable record of success. According to the District's 2010 "Report to the Community" ([www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org)), the summer and fall season of 2009 was "one of the cleanest of recent years" for meeting federal standards for ozone, and "the summer of 2010 was the cleanest on record in the Valley, continuing the 20-year trend."

The air district is quick to share the credit for improved air with those who are making it happen:

“As a result of the extraordinary investments by businesses and municipalities in the San Joaquin Valley, and the efficient and effective public policy established by the Valley Air District Governing Board, air quality continues to improve in the Valley,” the report states.

### **How dairy families are working for cleaner air**

Much like other valley businesses, California dairy families are doing their part to clean the air. Most air emissions from dairies are entirely natural and consist of small amounts of alcohols and similar compounds that evaporate from animal feed (silage), which can be corn, wheat, oats or other similar materials. While these compounds are essentially harmless at ground level and emitted in relatively small amounts on the dairies, the cumulative effect of 1,400 dairies in the valley is thought to contribute slightly to ozone formation in the atmosphere, especially on very hot summer days.

Because of this, the air district has taken the extraordinary step of requiring dairies to obtain operating permits that include requirements to adopt management measures to reduce emissions.

Importantly, California dairies are the only dairies in the world to be regulated to reduce these types of smog-forming emissions. The regulations, first adopted in 2006 and known collectively as “Rule 4570,” have since resulted in more than a 25 percent reduction of emissions from valley dairies, helping to support the valley’s trend toward cleaner air.

### **New regulations mean smaller dairies must seek permits by April 21**

Although its regulations were already the toughest in the nation, the air district last year adopted additional measures to change Rule 4570. The biggest changes were:

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- Requiring permits for dairies with more than 500 cows (previously only dairies with 1,000 or more cows were required to seek Rule 4570 permits), and
- Applying additional regulations related to storing and handling feed, because of new information identifying these as the most important source of dairy emissions.

### **Last-chance workshops April 12 and 13**

Working in cooperation with the air district, the California Dairy Quality Assurance Program has been holding workshops around the valley over the last several weeks to assist dairy producers in applying for the new or revised permits. All dairies with more than 500 cows are required to apply for permits by April 21 (because of the revisions to the rule, even those who currently hold air permits under Rule 4570 must submit new applications). Producers who missed the March workshops have a “last chance” to attend these free workshops April just before the deadline:

- Tulare County Ag Center Auditorium, Tuesday, April 12, 2 to 4 p.m.
- Stanislaus County Ag Center, Harvest Hall, April 13, 10 a.m. to noon

### **Further reductions expected**

The new air quality regulations are expected to further reduce emissions from California dairies. The cost to implement the improved management practices has been estimated at more than \$60 million annually, representing yet another significant investment in cleaner air. While air quality is likely to be a challenge in the valley for decades to come, dairy families are doing their part, today to continue the trend toward cleaner air, while producing a safe, sustainable, nutritious and affordable food supply for millions of Americans.

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