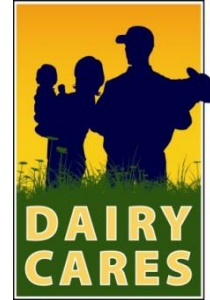


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Dairy Cares Newsletter

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Science, values join forces as dairy groups mark continued commitment to air research

Dairy farmers have long understood their important responsibility to steward the land and natural resources such as air and water. Conservation, preservation, re-use and recycling are fundamental values among farm families, many of whom have operated sustainably on the same land for generations.

While these values are an essential foundation, good dairy farm management decisions also depend on having reliable information. That's why dairy organizations from across the western U.S. gathered this month in Boise, Idaho to continue their years-long push for improved science and management strategies for dairies.

Held every two years since 2005, the Western States Dairy Air Quality Symposium has become a tradition in which dairy leaders, the nation's leading scientific researchers, and regulators discuss the latest research and opportunities.

This year's symposium featured landmark studies on particulate matter (dust) and other emissions from cattle feedlots and dairies, the latest information on greenhouse gases, and discussions of realistic approaches and solutions for estimating and further mitigating these emissions. Leading university and U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists from Texas, Michigan, Iowa, California, and Washington presented results of their latest work.

Several larger themes have emerged during these biennial gatherings, with important lessons learned:

- Early assumptions about emissions from livestock operations have often been wrong, pointing to solutions that might have been wasteful and ineffective;
- Livestock-related emissions are highly variable and complex, varying seasonally, even daily, with changing weather and climate, and are heavily influenced by design and management of facilities and animal types – there is no “one-size-fits-all” way to measure emissions;

- Management practices are often the key to reducing emissions, and must be customized and flexible to account for the highly variable conditions under which livestock are raised. That means that farmers – informed by the latest research – must be active partners in implementing practical, workable and cost-effective solutions, while scientists must continue to work closely with farmers to identify practical solutions.

Today, we can say that much has already been accomplished due to the collaborative approach evidenced by events like the Boise symposium. California dairy families began working with regulators and researchers more than a decade ago to identify opportunities to reduce emissions. As a result, dairy families have reduced farm emissions more than 25 percent over the last decade as a result of improved management practices that are also practical and cost-effective.

These air quality advances are part of a larger California dairy sustainability effort that also includes initiatives to improve animal well-being, protect water quality and reduce their carbon footprint. Consumers of California-produced dairy products can rest assured that the affordable, nutritious and delicious products they enjoy daily are produced by families that treat sustainability as a core value and continue to work hard to gather the facts they need to make that value a reality.

Dairy Cares is a statewide coalition supporting economic and environmental sustainability and responsible animal care. Our members include Bar 20 Dairy Farms, California Cattlemen's Association, California Dairies Inc., California Dairy Campaign, California Dairy Research Foundation, California Farm Bureau Federation, Dairy Farmers of America-Western Area Council, Dairy Institute of California, GHD, Inc., Hilmar Cheese Co., Joseph Gallo Farms, Land O'Lakes, Merck Animal Health, Milk Producers Council, Ruan Transport Corp., Western United Dairywomen, Yosemite Farm Credit and others. For information, visit DairyCares.com or call 916-441-3318.