



CENTER ON RACE, POVERTY & THE ENVIRONMENT
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MEGA DAIRIES: BIG BUSINESS, BIG PROBLEMS

Animal Factories, Air Pollution & Your Health

Dairies are big business, but did you know that huge animal factories – often with over one thousand cattle – are one of the **largest contributors to air pollution?** Air pollution smog and particle pollution can be made up of acids, organic chemicals, metals, soil and dust particles.

The California Air Resources Board estimates that annually 14,000 – 24,000 **premature deaths** are attributable to long-term exposure to fine particle pollution. Fine particle pollution is known to cause lung and heart problems, triggering heart attacks and irregular heartbeats.

- In the past 10 years, the average dairy herd in California has grown from less than 400 milk cows to over 700 milk cows. The national average for dairy herds is 60 milk cows.

The American Lung Association 2009, State of the Air, reports:

- San Joaquin Valley counties of Kern, Tulare and Fresno rank as the third, fourth, and sixth **most ozone-polluted counties** in the entire U.S.
- For long-term exposure to fine particle pollution, Kern, Tulare, Kings and Fresno counties rank first, fourth, seventh and eighth most polluted counties in the U.S.
- Fine particle pollution makes the **San Joaquin Valley one of the most polluted air basins** in the U.S. This type of pollution is a problem in winter, when fine particles emitted from diesel trucks and particle pollution form in damp, cool air through a reaction with ammonia, NOx and VOCs (volatile organic compounds). **Cow, hog and chicken operations are the single largest sources** of VOCs and ammonia in the Valley.

Table: Top 5 Sources of VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds)

Category	Tons Per Day	Percentage
Confined Animal Facilities	65.4	14.4 %
Composting Green Waste	51	11.2 %
Car Emissions	31.1	6.8 %
Oil and Gas Production	27.9	6.1 %
Pesticides	23	5.1 %
All Sources	454.1	100 %

Sources: San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution District

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