

Reducing Air Pollutants from Operation of Mobile Agricultural Equipment in the San Joaquin Valley



Federal law requires California – and all states in the nation – to meet health-based air quality standards and to develop and implement plans to meet those standards. Reducing air pollution from mobile agricultural equipment in the San Joaquin Valley is necessary to meet federal compliance deadlines for ozone air quality standards.

The California Air Resources Board (ARB or Board) is in the early stages of developing strategies to further reduce air pollutant emissions from mobile agricultural equipment such as tractors, combines and harvesters. These strategies will include a continued reliance on financial incentives from United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), state, and local sources. These monies are expected to fund near-term equipment upgrades and replacements, and longer-term approaches, such as a trade-down program, to maximize the use of the cleanest advanced technologies available for mobile agricultural equipment.

Why ARB is considering agricultural equipment in the San Joaquin Valley now?

Emissions from mobile agricultural equipment are among a number of significant sources of air pollution in the San Joaquin Valley and reducing these emissions is necessary to meet federal ozone air quality standards. ARB incentive programs and regulations are already reducing emissions from a wide variety of diesel engines in the San Joaquin Valley, including trucks, buses, trash trucks, construction equipment, and fixed commercial generators and pumps. However, to meet federal air quality planning requirements, a transition to the cleanest technologies will be needed over time. A plan to demonstrate how that transition will occur must be developed and submitted to United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) in 2015.

How is ARB gathering important information about agricultural operations?

ARB is meeting with agricultural organizations, growers, producers, dealers, processors and rental/leasing companies covering a wide variety of agricultural commodities to learn about the diverse agriculture industry and how mobile equipment is used, maintained and replaced.

What types of equipment is ARB staff learning about?

Diesel equipment 25 horsepower or greater that is self-propelled, such as tractors, harvesters, combines, balers, swathers, sprayers, forklifts and all-terrain vehicles. Understanding the relative contribution of various equipment is part of the development of the most efficient and effective program.

What is being considered by ARB?

First, ARB staff will work to fully account for the voluntary actions by the agricultural industry to reduce emissions through participation in incentive funding programs that accelerate the use of cleaner technologies. We will also work cooperatively with other government agencies and stakeholders to identify additional sources of funding for the industry. ARB will also take action to ensure that the federal government gives California full credit for the investments already made to clean up mobile agricultural equipment through the development of a credit rule. Agricultural organizations working with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, ARB, USDA-NRCS, and U.S. EPA, have signed a Statement of Principles that allows for a mechanism to be developed that will provide industry with credit for the investments already made to clean up mobile agricultural equipment. ARB's action makes formal the written agreement already reached among the agencies. Finally, in conjunction with our 2015 plan, ARB staff will work with the agricultural industry to develop a longer-term strategy to increase the use of the cleanest engine technologies that have been proven to work effectively as they become available.

What is next for the public process?

All regulations are developed in an open public process that provides many opportunities for public comment. Through this process, ARB staff will provide details on the current amount of pollution from mobile agricultural equipment, including how these estimates were developed, as well as information on draft incentive and regulatory proposals with their emission benefits and costs. Workshops are currently planned for both spring and fall of 2013, with additional workshops held as needed. ARB staff plans to propose a credit rule for Board consideration by end of 2013.

How do I get involved?

We encourage all stakeholders to get involved. If you would like to receive the workshop notifications and updates, join ARB's e-list at: www.arb.ca.gov/listserv/listserv_ind.php?listname=inuseag

Where can I find additional information?

For more information, see: www.arb.ca.gov/ag/agtractor/agtractor.htm

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