

History of Citizen Motions to Ban Manure Spreading/Spraying during Air Inversions in Yakima County

1. In 2011 the Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency (YRCAA) presented a *Pilot Project for the Air Quality Management Policy and Best Management Practices for Dairies*. YRCAA asked for public comments and received 23 comments from individuals and groups. There was moving testimony regarding the impact of dairy air pollution in the Lower Yakima Valley (LYV). (See Attachment 1). Since that time the YRCAA *Air Quality Management Policy and Best Management Practices for Dairies* has been approved (2013) and rescinded (2019).

2. In early 2013 a group of citizens submitted a petition with fifty signatures that asked YRCAA to “adopt a regulation, pursuant to its authority under the Washington Clean Air Act, to prohibit all dispersal and land application of manure and effluent during any burn ban.” (See Attachments 2, 3 & 4) Citizens presented a list of over 100 pieces of research that document adverse health effects due to air pollution near concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). (See Attachment 5)

In July, 2013 the YRCAA Board of Directors voted to reject the petition. A narrative description of that biased YRCAA follow-up was provided to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in a 2016 Civil Rights complaint and that narrative is provided in Attachment 6. Careful reading shows that protection of the environment and public health took a back seat to the economic needs of the dairy industry. Dairymen were in the driver’s seat.

3. During these petition discussions, the Washington Dairy Commission solicited a legal opinion that stated there is no substantial adverse public health effect (Attachment 7). This commission also sponsored a supposed literature review from Dr. Nicole Embertson of the Whatcom Conservation District that opined, “. . . there is no validity to disallowing manure application during times of burn bans.” (Attachment 8). Dr. Embertson’s document was filled with half-truths and outright fabrications. The Friends of Toppenish Creek refuted her errors but the YRCAA took no action. (Attachment 9)

4. In 2016 The Friends of Toppenish Creek asked the WA State Dept of Health and the Yakima Health District for the best professional guidance regarding the health impacts from spraying manure into the air. The YHD postponed answering. (See Attachments 10 to 14) and nothing happened.

5. In 2017 The Friends of Toppenish Creek and the Community Association for Restoration of Environment (CARE) submitted the petition to ban spreading and spraying manure during inversions again. The YRCAA rejected the petition in October, 2017 (See Attachments 15)

6. In 2018 a new Medical Director was hired at the Yakima Health District. FOTC was encouraged and conversed with Dr. Everson and YHD Environmental Director Holly

Meyers. (Attachment 14). Again nothing happened. The experts in Washington State are unwilling to provide guidance on the impact of spraying manure into the air when the air is unhealthy or hazardous to breathe.

7. In the fall of 2018 the air in Yakima County was hazardous to breath. This event happened during harvest. Workers continued to bring in the crops. LYV dairies continued to spray manure into the hazardous ambient air.

The Washington State Department of Health, the Yakima Health District and the Washington State Department of Ecology refuse to protect the men and women of the Yakima Valley who live with poor air quality and work in the fields when the air is hazardous to breathe. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has a certain amount of oversight regarding implementation of the Clean Air Act. The Friends of Toppenish Creek respectfully ask the EPA to do the right thing and protect us from unscrupulous people who put profit ahead of human lives.

Sincerely,

The Friends of Toppenish Creek