

YRCAA Email March 29, 2025



Jean Mendoza

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To: Board Position 2, Board Position 3, Board Position 4 & 18 more [Details](#)

Air Quality in South Yakima County

Dear YRCAA Board Members,

If you have not visited the Lower Yakima Valley and the dairies in that area, please do. See suggested itinerary below. Nothing can replace seeing milk cows crammed into barns or living, eating, and sleeping in their own filth. Nothing can replace smelling the stench from the manure of 90,000 milk cows that permeates the air.

I submit that it is part of your job as YRCAA board members to know what is going on in south Yakima County. You all, as the YRCAA board of directors, are in the best position to address problems in this area. Odor is not inconsequential. Odor comes from ammonia, hydrogen sulfide and volatile organic compounds, some of which are carcinogens.

The YRCAA inspectors are trained to rate odors in the ambient air. They should be rating odor in the air within the City of Sunnyside and along dairy fence lines. If they file ratings less than 2, they are lying. They should be filing ratings of 3 or 4 near the dairies.

I intend to bring this to the attention of the WA State Dept. of Ecology and others who are involved in enforcing the Climate Commitment Act that says people who live in overburdened and underserved communities are entitled to equal protection from pollution under the law.

Thank you.

Jean Mendoza

Suggested Itinerary

East from Zillah on East Zillah Drive – See the Dairy Cluster

South on N Liberty Road – See lagoons in a draw between Kirks and Carpenter

West on Carpenter to Beam Road

South on Beam to Van Belle

East on Van Belle to Nichols Road

South on Nichols to Outlook – See SMD Dairy

East on Outlook Road to Fordyce – See heifer pens

North on Fordyce to Van Belle – See DBD between Fordyce and Chute

East on Van Belle to Maple Grove Road

North on Maple Grove to East Merz – See SS Dairy

Back south on Maple Grove to Old Yakima Valley Highway

East on Old Yakima Valley Highway to Waneta Rd

South on Waneta to Tear Road

East on Tear Road to Hornby Road

South on Hornby Road to Stover Road – See Klompe Frieslandia

West on Stover Road to Waneta Road

North on Waneta to Alexander Road

West on Alexander Road to Sunnyside Mabton Highway – See Port of Sunnyside

South on Sunnyside Mabton Highway to Mabton and State Route 22

East on SR 22 - see Veldhuis Dairy

Back to Mabton

South on Boundary Road

South on Glade Road – See Calf Ranches

Back to Sunnyside

Back to Zillah via Old Yakima Valley Highway

YRCAA Odor Rating Scale

In an effort to quantify the intensity of a particular odor, YRCAA staff may use the following scale to assign a numeric value, which corresponds to the appropriate description, to the odor:

0 - No detectable odor;

1 - Odor barely detectable;

2 - Odor distinct and definite, unpleasant characteristics recognizable;

3 - Odor strong enough to cause attempts at avoidance;

4 - Odor overpowering, intolerable for any appreciable amount of time.

The intensity of an odor is one of the criteria YRCAA compliance officers use to determine if an odor constitutes a violation. The other criteria are:

- Transport - if the intense odor extends beyond the property of the source;
- Duration - how long the intense odor persists beyond the property of the source;

- Frequency - how often the intense odor is present beyond the property of the source; and
- Impact - if the intense odor unreasonably interferes with another person's use or enjoyment of property beyond the property of the source.

Intense odors (a value of 3 or greater), if persistent or repetitive, are generally considered unreasonable, and thus, a violation if it transports beyond the property of the source and unreasonably interferes with another person's use or enjoyment of their property.

Best practices of several "observations" from upwind, downwind and side locations at several different times are typically used, at property boundaries or near sites of complaints. All observations are noted by location, time and intensity and type of odor observed.

NOTE: YRCAA field agents responsible for odor complaint response undergo an initial odor sensitivity evaluation. New field agents are then accompanied by an experienced agent for a period of time that provides developmental experience in evaluating odors. This period enables the agency to develop consistency among staff in evaluating odors.