# Groups petition Oregon to regulate dairy emissions

Capital Press

A coalition of 22 environmental, public health and animal welfare groups is petitioning Oregon regulators to adopt new rules targeting air pollution from large-scale dairies.

The petition, filed Aug. 17 with the state Environmental Quality Commission, seeks to create a dairy air emissions program that would apply to farms with 700 or more mature cows, which the federal Environmental Protection Agency defines as a "large" operation.

Under the program, proposed and existing dairies would be required to obtain an air quality permit and curb harmful emissions. They include ammonia, methane, hydrogen sulfide and particulate matter, among oth-

Opponents argue the proposal is misleading, and would include family farms that can ill afford more costly regulations.

Emily Miller, staff attorney for Food and Water Watch, estimated the proposal would apply to 91 dairies in Oregon. That is 39% of all Grade A dairies and have 84% of all cows.

"For too long, the state has sat idly by while Oregon mega-dairies have been spewing toxic pollution into the air,





Threemile Canyon Farms/Contributed Photo

Threemile Canyon Farms is Oregon's largest dairy, with 70,000 cows about 15 miles west of Boardman along the Columbia River. A coalition of 22 environmental, public health and animal welfare groups is petitioning Oregon regulators to adopt new rules targeting air pollution from large-

wreaking havoc on our natural resources, climate and communities," said Miller, the petition's lead author. "This head-in-thesand approach must change."

The commission has 90 days to respond.

Confined animal feeding operations such as dairies are jointly regulated by the state's Department of Agriculture and Department of Environmental Quality.

However, the agencies are only responsible for ensuring the manure handled by CAFOs does not contaminate surface or ground water.

As early as 2008, a state-convened Dairy Air Quality Task Force recommended a dairy air emissions program in its report to ODA. Fourteen years later, Miller said, almost nothing has been done.

"Meanwhile, these operations keep getting bigger and bigger, and keep emitting more pollution into Oregon's atmosphere," she said. "This program is long overdue."

Food and Water Watch's analysis of state and federal data shows dairies with more than 2,500 cows in Oregon collectively release more than 17 million kilograms of methane every year, equivalent to the emissions from 318,000 cars.

Miller said not only are methane emissions exacerbating climate change, but pollutants can also cause health problems for employees and nearby communities. She said more than onethird of all dairy cows in the

state are in Umatilla and Morrow counties.

The largest dairy, at Threemile Canyon Farms, has 70,000 cows about 15 miles west of Boardman along the Columbia River.

Mary Anne Cooper, vice president of public policy for the Oregon Farm Bureau, said the petition is a new tactic from groups that have long opposed large dairies.

In 2017, legislation was introduced in the state Senate directing the EQC to establish a dairy air emissions program.

That bill, SB 197, died in committee.

Cooper said dairies have already voluntarily adopted best management practices to minimize air emissions, such as a methane digester built at Threemile Canyon Farms, which is used to generate electricity and renewable natural

The petition, Cooper said, claims to address so-called "mega-dairies," yet the threshold of 700 or more cows is "very much family-scale operations in this state."

"You cannot support a family on a couple hundred milk cows," she said. "Their costs already exceed what they're getting on the market for their product."

Between added costs due to inflation and the passage of a state law mandating farmworkers be paid overtime, Cooper said it has already been a difficult year for producers.

"This (air emissions program) will have a real impact on people and on families," she said. "We have an industry with such tight margins. They're already trying to figure out how to accommodate a number of new regulatory burdens this year alone."

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# 103 Announcements

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Sunday, Aug. 28th, 10am 318 Columbia Ave NW Boardman, OR

Lots of must see items. Heavy equipment, western memorabilia, and yard art. Check for pictures at www.facebook.com/ FordsAuction Contact us for estate sales and consignments. Licensed and bonded in

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Yard Sale: Fri, Sat & Sun. August 26th, 27th & 28th. Furniture, household miscellaneous, 1915 Singer sewing machine, stamp collection, saddles, side saddle. Friday start at 10am-7pm. 211 E Main, Pilot Rock, OR. Up on the hill, by the high school.

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Public notices inform citizens about the activities of government bodies -such as budgets and public hearings, upcoming meetings and elections —sc that citizens can make their opinions known before an action is taken or a rule or law is made. They also include information about foreclosures, unclaimed and forfeited property, estate claims and probate notices. summons, and calls for bids



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# 401 Garage/Yard Sales

# **CHARITY GARAGE SALE:** Thurs-Sat,, August 25-27th 8am-5pm

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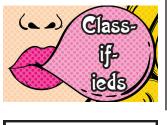
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