

## **FEATURE - FARMING AND AIR QUALITY ISSUES**

INTRO: Agriculture's affect on air quality can be a contentious issue. The U-S-D-A's Bob Ellison has more on a government panel's efforts to address agricultural air quality. (1:43)

FARMING AND RANCHING CAN PRODUCE ODORS AND DUST THAT MIGHT BE ANNOYING TO PEOPLE WHO LIVE CLOSE BY. BUT ARE THOSE ODORS AND DUST HARMFUL TO PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT? THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S AGRICULTURAL AIR QUALITY TASK FORCE ANSWERS THOSE QUESTIONS BY MONITORING AND REVIEWING RESEARCH ON ALL AGRICULTURAL AIR QUALITY ISSUES.

Gary Mast, Deputy Under Secretary, Natural Resources and Environment:

We've begun to focus on air quality for agriculture. So that is why it's very important because rules and regulations are being made that can very much affect agriculture. And we hope to find out a lot more science on what is going out there on the farm.

IN NINETEEN NINETY SIX, CONGRESS DETERMINED THAT MANY STUDIES BLAMING AGRICULTURE FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF AIR POLLUTION WERE BASED ON ERRONEOUS DATA.

Gary Baise, USDA Air Quality Task Force: That is the purpose of this committee, is to examine the science and many of the regulations put out by E-P-A and also lawsuits that are filed against agriculture interests to determine whether or not the science is accurate.

AT ITS MOST RECENT MEETING THIS SPRING IN SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH THE AIR QUALITY TASK FORCE ONCE AGAIN LOOKED AT CASES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

Baise: What this committee has attempted to do is evaluate the science to be able to give agriculture a scientific basis to point out that there is not a public health problem. There might be a nuisance problem, but what many people are concerned about is there being a public health problem.

THE CHIEF OF U-S-D-A'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE CHAIRS THE TASK FORCE. THE AGRICULTURE SECRETARY USES TASK FORCE ADVICE, OVERSIGHT AND RESEARCH REVIEWS TO ENSURE THAT ERRONEOUS DATA IS NOT USED IN AGRICULTURAL AIR QUALITY REGULATIONS. TASK FORCE FINDINGS ARE ALSO USED TO IMPROVE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES. FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.