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Light Rain, 50°
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Extended forecast

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Kids' Day
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AGRICULTURE

Saturday, May. 01, 2010

Tour takes in green farm tech

Bee Staff Reports

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The dairy cows at Fiscalini Farms showed off their contribution to the clean-energy movement Wednesday.

The farm west of Modesto was among the stops on a tour showing how manure and other waste can supplant fossil fuels.

The tour was organized by Sustainable Conservation, a San Francisco group that works with farms and other businesses. The contingent included people from business, government and environmental groups.



Modesto Bee - John Fiscalini (light blue shirt) talks about his new system for turning dairy cattle manure into electricity. It includes digestion by anaerobic bacteria in large tanks, including the one behind the tour group. The Fiscalini farm

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At Fiscalini, which is known for its cheese, owner John Fiscalini talked about the system that extracts methane from manure and burns it to produce electricity for the Modesto Irrigation District. The system, which started running last June, is the first in Stanislaus County.

Methane is considered one of the most potent contributors to climate change; burning makes it much less harmful.

The group also visited Hilmar Cheese Co., where it saw a milk truck powered by methane from dairy manure.

In Turlock, the group saw a city-owned vehicle fueling station that uses compressed natural gas but could be converted to methane from biological sources.

Near the Altamont Pass, the tour stopped at a landfill where methane is extracted from the rotting trash and turned into fuel for garbage trucks.

"(The tour) really showcased the investment that progressive people and companies and municipalities are making in the future," said Allen Dusault, a program director at Sustainable Conservation.

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