

## Dairy Farmers Say DWP Power Lines Led to Juiced Milk

LAW by Amanda Bronstad

California cows may seem happy in ads, but the farmers aren't. A group of California and Utah dairy farmers has sued the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power for \$100 million, claiming its electrical generation and transmission equipment was harming their cows.

The farmers say that the cows have died, caught diseases, become less fertile and produced low quality milk since the Intermountain Power Project began transmitting electricity in 1987.

The suit, filed in L.A. Superior Court this month, says underground power lines "allow the current and electricity to invade surrounding farms and properties and create a danger of exposure and actual exposure to this hazardous electrical current." It alleges negligence, liability, trespassing, fraud and other claims and seeks damages related to lost product revenue, lost contracts, lost land value and veterinary bills.

Suzelle Smith, a partner at Howarth & Smith PC in L.A. representing roughly 20 dairy farmers, said many were recruited from other states after the transmission lines and power plant were in place.

"The ground will conduct electricity like a wire," she said. "This is not a way to build a power plant, particularly when you have dairy farms in the area."

She said most of the affected cows are in Utah near the power plant. But a grounded transmission line coming into California has also affected California cows, she said.

Eric Moses, a spokesman for the City Attorney's office, said the DWP operates, but does not own, the transmission lines or power plant.

"We will prevail on the case," Moses said. "There have been other cases that are similar to this that have been rejected on summary motion in the courts."

The Intermountain Power Project consists of a 1,600-megawatt electricity generating plant in Utah, a 490-mile transmission line to California and a station in Adelanto that converts DC power to AC power for L.A. consumers, the suit says.