

# Cows' deaths lead to toxic find

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An old natural gas well leaking toxic hydrogen sulfide was discovered Tuesday afternoon while a Sheriff's officer was investigating the death of 19 cows in the Flora Vista area.

The cows' death wasn't attributed to any leaking hydrogen sulfide or sulfur dioxide from the well located about a mile west of the Flora Vista bridge on Southside River Road, said Kevin Simpson, county fire marshal.

The livestock inspector said they died of what they were sick of before," said Simpson.

The cows were sick before they were shipped from the Navajo Agriculture Industry Products farm, Simpson said.

Simpson said concentrations of the two toxic gases were found at the well site. No one was injured in the investigation or cleanup.

A Sheriff's officer had been called Tuesday afternoon to investigate the dead cows and discovered the leaking well, Simpson said.

Hazardous materials teams from the Farmington Fire Department and the Hart Valley Volunteer Fire Department were called to the old well, Simpson said.

Water from the well had moved up to 100 yards away and was on its way to the nearby Animas River, Simpson said.

Crews dammed the flow (Simpson's office plans to work with Oil Conservation Division officials to plug the well and locate the owner, Simpson said.)



Chris Henderson staff photo

Farmington Fire Department Deputy Chief Bill Robertson (left) and a firefighter look over samples taken by Farmington's hazardous materials team at a chemical leak on Southside River Road Tuesday.