October 31, 2014

NEBRA’S INVOLVED...

Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) fall conference Nov. 7 in Amherst, MA

JETCC workshop on biosolids dewatering on Dec. 2.

CHECK IT OUT...

- Co-digestion of food scraps at Los Angeles County is profiled in this MSNBC video (starring former NEBRA Board member Jamie Ecker).
- Virginia news article on farmer appreciation of biosolids recycling.
- Debunking biosolids myths is the topic of this new quasar fact sheet.

North East Residuals & Biosolids Conference

…it’s over...

Thanks all the fine presenters and organizers!

Presentations now available for download.

Maine DEP Proposes Biosolids Rule Changes

Public hearing November 6th in Augusta

In mid-October, Maine’s Dept. of Environmental Protection proposed regulatory updates of some of its solid waste management rules. While many of the proposed changes are editorial and minimal, there are potential impacts on the management of biosolids and other residuals.

Most significant is a change to Chapter 418, Appendix A, which lists numerical guidance standards for trace chemicals in biosolids, "replacing Appendix A (Screening Standards for Beneficial Use) with values of constituents listed in the "Maine Remedial Action Guidelines for Sites Contaminated with Hazardous Substances", revised May 8, 2013 (“Maine RAGS”). The Maine RAGS are current risk based standards developed by the Department in collaboration with the Maine CDC.... Replacing the existing Appendix A in this way will make the screening standards of Chapter 418 consistent with existing standards and will ensure that the most current risk based values are being applied. Specifically, the proposed screening standard is 'one-half the concentration of a RAGs listed..."
Welcome New NEBRA Members:
BIOFerm Energy Systems
Brown and Caldwell

SPONSORS of www.nebiosolids.org
- WeCare Organics
- Agresource
- Eastern Analytical, Inc.
- Synagro Northeast
- Northern Tilth
- CDM Smith
- Resource Mgmt, Inc.
- NEFCO
- Stantec
- Casella Organics

THANK YOU!

EVENTS...
- Nov. 18 - Baltimore. High Quality Biosolids, a MABA seminar focused on technologies & processes to make better products. Details.
- Nov. 18, 1:30 pm Eastern. Webinar: Land Application of Biosolids, offered by Virginia Tech. Details.

Welcome New NEBRA Members:

Whole Foods Market Continues to Ignore Biosolids Sustainability

In mid-October, the "natural grocer" Whole Foods Market rolled out its new standards that must be followed by growers providing produce and flowers for sale at Whole Foods; it includes a ban on use of biosolids. This past summer, mayors and other leaders of several major U.S. cities that provide effective biosolids products to farmers, including San Francisco and Seattle (King County), sent letters to Whole Foods, urging reconsideration and discussion of the biosolids policy. A separate letter was sent by knowledgable research scientists from universities across the nation, urging Whole Foods to learn more about the scientific basis and safety of biosolids use on soils.

As King County's letter noted about biosolids: "Benefits include decreased reliance on energy-intensive synthetic fertilizer, healthy and productive soils, increased carbon storage in soils, reduced erosion, and increased soil water retention. The benefits of biosolids appear to align with the core values..., as well as the science-based index Whole Foods developed to..."
measure performance on important elements of sustainable agriculture. The use of biosolids would rate very highly on many of your measures, including soil health, biodiversity, waste recycling, energy, and climate.

Despite these respectful outreach efforts, so far, Whole Foods has refused to enter into substantive discussions. NEBRA had one short discussion with Whole Foods representatives last winter, during which it was clear they had a lack of knowledge about biosolids. Additional offers to meet in person, provide tours of biosolids programs, and provide additional information were refused. (Matt Rogers, quoted in the article linked above, wrote: "We don't need any further information at this time.")

As the letter from King County said, "We have a common interest in sustainable communities and agriculture. Science has shown us a remarkable synergy between biosolids, soils, and agriculture. Whole Food's environmental ethic has earned great respect and it is for this reason we urge your company to carefully consider the facts and research behind biosolids use and continue to allow your non-organic suppliers the option of using biosolids. We would welcome any further discussion regarding this matter."

Microconstituents - More Information

- On October 29, NEWEA held a Microconstituents specialty conference at which research scientists and policy people from around the region presented and discussed the latest findings on microconstituents in the environment. Ned Beecher of NEBRA presented at literature summary on the presence, fate, and impacts of microconstituents in biosolids (download from left side of nebiosolids.org).
- Recently, the Royal Society published a special journal edition on pharmaceuticals in the environment. Details are here, including videos summarizing some of the research.