

BIOSOLIDS NEWS

News and Information from the Virginia Biosolids Council • April 2010



Biosolids are applied to a field in Bedford County.

“Go beyond the regulations”

Biosolids Council adopts practice code

The Virginia Biosolids Council has adopted a voluntary Code of Good Practice to provide guidance for recycling biosolids in Virginia. The Code was approved unanimously by the organization’s board of directors at its annual meeting in December.

According to Rhonda Bowen, president of the Council, the Code is supported by all of the organization’s members, which generate, land apply and compost the majority of biosolids used in Virginia.

Bowen said the guidelines “seek to capture current best practices by biosolids generators, land application companies and compost manufacturers and encourage them to go beyond the regulations” to build good relations with the communities they serve.

Each member has pledged to communicate the Code to its employees and strive to implement its principles throughout its operations.

The Code encourages members to establish their own performance objectives that support the following goals:

- Protecting the environment
- Minimizing adverse social impacts
- Promoting education and awareness

Bowen said current industry practices and federal and Virginia biosolids regulations, as administered by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), provide a high level of protection for public health and the environment. These regulations cover both the

production and testing of biosolids at water treatment facilities and the land application of biosolids on farm fields and forests. An additional layer of protection is provided in the field by DEQ inspectors and by local and regional biosolids monitors.

As evidence of this protection, during calendar year 2009 DEQ inspected 82 percent of the farms that received biosolids and only found it necessary to issue five warning letters for noncompliance with regulations. All of these problems were minor and DEQ said all were corrected and not repeated. DEQ also issued one notice of violation in late 2009. This enforcement case is ongoing.

“Given that more than 2,200 fields were applied during the period,” said Bowen, “we think this performance indicates a very high level of responsibility among our members. While we are proud of our record of compliance, we believe the Code will help us be even more proactive with our community relations.

She noted that the largest number of complaints—30 out of 85—were about odor. Minimizing impacts on neighbors during the production, transportation, storage, composting and application of biosolids is a major goal of the Code, explained Bowen. Members are urged to implement quality practices that minimize odors, dust, and dirt on roads at application and storage sites. Also recommended are transportation schedules that minimize disturbances to neighbors and training programs to improve driver safety and emergency response.



The Virginia Biosolids Council supports the recycling of biosolids in Virginia through information and education on the beneficial use and safety of biosolids. The Council is supported by municipal wastewater treatment plants, land application and composting companies and biosolids users, and is available as a resource to those who need information about the recycling of biosolids.

Code of Good Practice

Approved December 3, 2009

The Code of Good Practice, as recommended by the Virginia Biosolids Council, provides voluntary guidance to Council members for responsibly generating and beneficially recycling biosolids in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Virginia Biosolids Council members encourage establishing performance objectives that support the following goals:

- Protecting the environment by using best management practices for the generation and recycling of biosolids;
- Minimizing adverse social impacts through the use of best practices; and
- Promoting education and awareness among the public and government officials about the generation and recycling of biosolids.

Specifically, the Council encourages our members to conduct their operations using the following guidance:

Product Quality

The generation of biosolids or recycling through agricultural application or by composting should be done in a manner that minimizes odor.

Communications

The information provided to local and state officials, farmers and the general public should be clear, accurate and timely.

Quality Practices

Quality practices should be implemented to minimize impacts of biosolids generation, transportation, storage and recycling on neighbors and other stakeholders. These practices include, but are not limited to: minimizing odors, dust, and dirt on roads at application and storage sites; implementing transportation schedules to minimize disturbances to neighbors; and implementing training programs to improve driver safety and emergency response.

Continual Improvement

Continual improvement in the area of product quality, communications and information and quality practices should be realized to improve operations.

Contingency Planning

Emergency response plans should be developed and implemented to account for unpredictable events with potential consequences, such as storms, traffic accidents, and equipment malfunctions.

For more information, go to www.virginiabiosolids.com



Biosolids News is published by the
Virginia Biosolids Council
1011 E. Main Street, Suite 400, Richmond
VA 23219 • Toll-free: 877-798-0714
e-mail: info@virginiabiosolids.com