

BIOSOLIDS NEWS

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Biosolids enhance global reach of Engel Farms

Kevin Engel is a farmer. And if measured by the number of counties he farms, a big one.

Kevin oversees a farming operation based in Hanover County that now includes 17 Virginia counties and sales that extend to Japan, China and India, and ports in Morocco and Eastern Europe. In fact, about 70 percent of the soybeans, wheat and barley he grows are exported.

But Engel Family Farms remains a family operation. Started with his father, Bud, and his wife, Denise, the Engel family business now involves all three of Kevin and Denise's children – Chris, Savannah and Casey.

"The land we farm is diverse," Kevin said. "Soil types range from very sandy and sandy loam to deep red soils with high clay. Elevations vary from about 15 to 740 feet." The land he farms, much of it leased, extends from Albemarle County to Smithfield.

They grow various agriculture products—yellow and white corn, soybeans, wheat and barley. "We also grow a little milo," he said, "and canola is a new crop that we're growing." Sales of these products are to some of our country's largest agricultural companies that are then used in a variety of consumer products.

"Over time we've learned the importance of relationships, which is a core value, as well as exceptional environmental stewardship," he explained. "We believe in working hard to produce agricultural products that can feed the world ... while respecting and protecting our environment."

The relationships Kevin and his family value extend from their family to the landowners, vendors, lenders, market representatives and the communities where the farm operates.

Biosolids, he said, are used on all of the roughly 2,000 acres that Engel Farms owns, and on all of the land it leases, as long as it's permitted by the landowner.



Kevin Engel oversees a family farming operation that exports products to Asia, Africa, India and Europe.

"Anytime we move a new farm into production we try to use biosolids," he said. "I think biosolids get pH levels and organics up to a point that it really helps jump-start growth. In land that's been in production, biosolids provide a fertilizer with more organic material."

Biosolids, in a nutshell, improves a farm's productivity, he said, while also saving money by reducing the need and cost of synthetic fertilizer or other types of fertilizers or soil amendments.

"Farming is a business," he said, pointing to one of the many transportation vehicles owned and operated by another family operation—Virginia Ag Trucking. "However, it requires those of us in agriculture to continue to make sure people understand its importance in their daily lives."

"We choose to use biosolids on our farms because they provide good value," he said, "and contribute to the long-term success of our business."

VBC member named “Friend of Agriculture”

Jim Salmons, president and owner of AgNutrients, a biosolids land application contractor for Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD), was named the “2013 Friend of Agriculture” during the annual Virginia Beach Excellence in Agriculture Banquet in March. The award was presented by the Excellence in Agriculture Award Committee for Virginia Beach.

Both Salmons and HRSD are members of the Virginia Biosolids Council.

According to the Virginia Beach Agriculture Department, the mission of the Excellence in Agriculture Award Committee is to recognize individuals, families or a group who are residents, who contribute to the community, or who have made noteworthy accomplishments in stewardship, preservation, entrepreneurial activities or civic contributions.

According to the Virginia Beach news release on the banquet: “Each year members of the agriculture industry come together and promote the importance of American Agriculture.” The award is an annual celebration of agriculture, which provides virtually everything we eat, use and wear on a daily basis, and is increasingly contributing to fuel and other bio-products.



Jim Salmons, center, receives the 2013 Friend of Agriculture Award from Virginia Beach Mayor William Sessoms (r.) and Arnold Dawley, Virginia Beach Agricultural Advisory Commission.

“Americans need to understand the value of agriculture in their daily lives,” said David Trimmer, Director of the Virginia Beach Department of Agriculture. “As the world population soars, there is even greater demand for the food, fiber and renewable resources produced in the United States.”

Moody heads Virginia Association of Counties

Harrison Moody was elected president of the Virginia Association of Counties during the organization’s 79th Annual Conference in November.

Moody is Regional Director for the Southern Division of Recyc Services, Inc., a biosolids land application company based in Remington, Va. He was a founding member of the Virginia Biosolids Council and currently serves as vice-chair of the organization.

He has served as a Dinwiddie County Supervisor since 1987 and was selected chair six times during his tenure. He also served as vice chair six times.

“Harrison is a longtime leader of VACo and his vast experience in county government is an asset to the association,” VACo Executive Director James D. Campbell said. “Harrison is a proven leader and knows the issues that concern our counties. His work with the National Association of Counties also gives him a broader perspective that will serve our members well. VACo is fortunate to have Harrison Moody as its president.”



Harrison Moody

Among his many accomplishments on the Dinwiddie County Board of Supervisors is the establishment of major industry leaders in the County. Moody was instrumental in bringing in a Wal-Mart Distribution Center, an Amazon.com fulfillment center and Chaparral Steel production facility (now Gerdau Ameristeel) to Dinwiddie County.

Moody is also proud of the county’s Dinwiddie Sports Complex, which provides recreation for county citizens and also draws thousands each year for regional and national tournaments. The county also has improved its communications with citizens through its advanced website and social media presence. Moody also is an avid supporter of public education providing adequate funding yearly and support for the capital projects the school system has needed during his tenure.

Moody and wife Deborah have four sons and one daughter.

For more information, go to www.virginiabiosolids.com



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