

Land Application of Biosolids

Ten Things Virginia Local Government Can Do

1. Local governments are encouraged by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to adopt local ordinances regarding storage and local monitoring of biosolids land application. These ordinances may be established within the limits of Virginia law, and allow a local government to appoint a local monitor to test biosolids applied in the local jurisdiction, monitor the application and ensure compliance with Virginia laws and regulations. An ordinance will also allow a local government to establish limitations on biosolids storage that lasts longer than 45 days and does not occur on the farm where it will be applied. For localities with established ordinances, labor and other expenses for biosolids monitoring can be reimbursed through DEQ.
2. Understand the economic and environmental benefits of biosolids recycling on the family farms in a community.
3. Review the scientific evidence documenting the safety of biosolids.
4. If a local monitor is hired, ensure that the monitor is appropriately trained.
5. If a local government enacts a biosolids ordinance, the local monitor should accompany DEQ staff on the evaluation of a site. DEQ staff also conducts inspections at the wastewater treatment plant and evaluates the biosolids source for compliance with regulations. Participate in this process.
6. Apply for reimbursement from the DEQ, allowed by applicable state law, for the expenses associated with testing and monitoring the land application of biosolids.
7. Before any public meeting is held, request a meeting with DEQ staff, the applicator and the landowner or leaseholder regarding the permit application or modification. Public meetings are intended to address environmental, regulatory, health, agronomic and logistical application issues.
8. Carefully review land application permits, talk to the farmer and the land applier and proactively comment on an application. The DEQ must consider land use concerns expressed by a county during the processing of an application.
9. Before land application begins, participate in the development of transportation routes to and from the land application sites with the applicator. Routes should follow primary highways, should avoid residential areas when possible, and should comply with all VDOT requirements.
10. Respond proactively to complaints with support from DEQ staff and representatives of the land applier.

