

Subject: NEBRAMail

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From: NEBRA

To: Ned Beecher

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Distilled biosolids and residuals news for New England and eastern Canada

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Dr. Steve Wing

Health Effects of Treated Sewage Sludge/Biosolids

New research report released...

Earlier this week, the University of North Carolina [reported on research](#) purportedly linking health effects to treated sewage sludge/biosolids land application in the Southeast.

The UNC news release has been picked up by [radio](#), [print media](#) and [online](#). The study's abstract and a PDF of the full paper are available [here](#).

Many public wastewater treatment utility professionals and others managing biosolids are concerned about sensationalized news reports of this study. [More...](#)

MA "Sludge" Rules May Be Revised

The Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) continues to move forward on its proactive initiative to divert source-separated organics from landfills and improve the management of organics. It finalized new regulations in November (see [here](#) for documents, including responses to public comments).

Please read.
This is a
DOUBLE EDITION
NEBRAMail...
packed with
INFO YOU NEED!

CONTENTS...

- Health Effects of Biosolids
- MA "Sludge" Rules

May Be Revised

- The Challenges & Pleasures of Collecting Biogas Data
- Two Legal Victories in Defense of Biosolids
- Microconstituents - Recent Research in the News
- In Brief / En bref...

EVENTS...

April 3: Webinar MACT to Meet New EPA SSI Regulations

WEF is offering another free biosolids webinar on MACT for meeting new EPA sewage sludge incinerator regulations. [Details & registration.](#)

May 13-16: Sustainable Land Application Short Course, Univ. of FL.

This is the second year this fee course has been presented by some of the leading researchers in the U. S.: George O'Connor (UFL) & Chip Elliott (Penn State). [Register.](#) More info: gao@ufl.edu

CHECK IT OUT...

They're WRRFs...

In case you hadn't noticed, WEF has

And now, as part of MassDEP's "Regulatory Reform Initiative," the agency has proposed changes to regulatory programs including Land Application of Wastewater Sludge and Septage, the 310 CMR 32 regulations: "The proposed changes to the regulations create a presumptive renewal process for Type 1 suitability approvals for land application of wastewater sludge, and extend the allowable term for these approvals" to 5 years (from the existing 2 years). Otherwise, the proposed rule changes appear to involve minor housekeeping and text edits.

The public hearing schedule and other details are [here](#). Public comments are welcome until May 10th.

According to Deputy Assistant Commissioner Ann Lowery, "the purpose of the changes and the Regulatory Reform Initiative is part to strategically cope with the budget cuts MassDEP has suffered in recent years. Since 2002, MassDEP's budget has been significantly reduced, and staffing has been cut commensurately, from 1200 full time equivalents to approximately 840 today. During that same period MassDEP's responsibilities have increased.... regulatory reform is a high priority in the Commonwealth."

MA is working on the organics puzzle from all angles. Here is new website content providing tips on [how to divert and utilize food waste.](#)

The Challenges & Pleasures of Collecting Biogas Data

by Maggie Finn, Administrative & Project Assistant

In April 2012, after starting work at NEBRA, I was asked to start right in on the WEF Biogas Data Collection Project. My new responsibilities entailed contacting wastewater treatment plant operators state by state, across the country, to determine if they had anaerobic digestion and what if anything they were doing with the biogas produced. It really seemed like it would be easy enough, and, in reality, in the process I got an excellent introduction to wastewater treatment plants and operations across the country, a perfect orientation to my new job.



One of many fun surprises of collecting biogas data: This Tolleson, AZ plant celebrates the beauty of recovering clean water and energy from wastewater.

adopted "Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF)" as the improved term to describe a wastewater treatment plant/facility.

Biosolids - just a part of life on the farm...

A NEW romance novel set in Maine just routinely mentions biosolids as part of life on the farm.... See book information [here](#).

NRDC, the major national environmental group, posted a [fun blog about the fun of the annual Valentine's Day open house](#) at the Newtown Creek WRRF.

[Slate.com covered biosolids](#) as part of a recent series on sustainability. NEBRA and other biosolids groups are noted.

NEWS from NEBRA
[Archived copies of NEBRAMail](#) are available from the News page of the NEBRA website.

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Contacting hundreds of treatment plants across the country and asking operators, superintendents, plant managers, project managers, and public works directors about their digesters with all their challenges and successes gave me insight into who we are. Human waste is a fact of living, but call some town halls across the country and they have no idea who works at the "plant", where it is, or how to get a hold of them. There is a sort of collective amnesia regarding our waste products. [More...](#)

**Two Legal Victories in Defense of Biosolids:
York County, PA • Kern County, CA**

A York County, PA court has dismissed a legal case brought by neighbors against Synagro, a farmer, and a landowner regarding the use of biosolids on a 220-acre farm in New Freedom, PA.

This case is one of several that have happened over the years in which neighbors around land application sites have attempted to claim harm, trespass, and/or nuisance because of a landowner's use of biosolids. The court's findings and statements in this case are significant arguments in support of the agricultural use of biosolids in Pennsylvania. But, because they are well-reasoned arguments clearly stated in the court's decision, they are also instructive for other jurisdictions.

Meanwhile, a Court of Appeals in Fresno, CA supported an injunction against Kern County's biosolids ban.

[More on both cases...](#)

Microconstituents - Recent Research in the News

Notable research continues regarding pharmaceuticals, personal care product chemicals, nanoparticles, and other "microconstituents" in biosolids and what impacts, if any, they may have. NEBRA covered this topic in a [May 2001](#)

Wright-Pierce
CDM Smith
Casella Organics
WeCare Organics
Agresource
NEFCO

Resource Management, Inc.
Eastern Analytical, Inc.
Northern Tilth
Synagro



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they may have. NEBRA covered the topic in a [May 2007
Info Update](#).

While past research focused on measuring microconstituents in biosolids, the most recent research efforts are focused on impacts, especially plant uptake.

Recently, biosolids-borne nanoparticles of silver, zinc, and cesium have been a topic of concern. [More...](#)

In Brief / En bref...

Class B land application in Stowe, VT is being challenged during the re-permitting process. The Town renewing its permit for Class A biosolids and for a farm s that was used for Class B land application and, in recent years, has been a back-up option. A few concerned citizens have raised questions about the practice, especially since the farm field has become an unofficial favorite place for people walking dogs. See [local news coverage](#). The VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation has decided to hold a public hearing. It has been scheduled for April 8, 6:00 pm, in conjunction with a Selectmen's meeting.

NEBRA advances best management practices.... Ned Beecher, Executive Director, is contracted through NEBF for 8 hours/week helping the [National Biosolids Partnership](#) (NBP) as lead contact for its recognition and certification of Biosolids Management Programs/Environmental Management Systems (EMS) f biosolids. This [core NBP program](#), administered by WE involves dozens of water resource recovery facilities (WRRFs) and biosolids management programs, both public and private. Beecher notes: "I am honored to be able to work with these organizations! They are leading the way with the highest quality programs in North America for treating, managing, and utilizing biosolids." 2011-2012, Beecher helped with the training of 12 organizations developing their own tailored programs; most of those organizations are having independent aud and will likely receive recognition by the NBP this year.

North East Biosolids and Residuals Association (NEBRA)

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