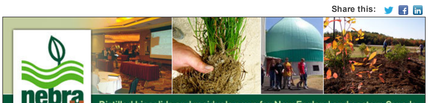

nebra mail

Distilled biosolids and residuals news for New England and eastern Canada

November 5, 2020

UPCOMING EVENTS:

November 6th -- NHWPCA Training on PFAS Sampling and Updates on Regulations for Sludge Quality.

EPA Webinar on PFOA and PFOS Problem Formulation for Biosolids Risk Assessment, November 12th starting at 12:30 pm.

NEBRA webinar on Biohubs and Other Biosolids Management Strategies in Australia, November 16th at 3 pm.

NEBRA webinar on the "State of the Regions Biosolids," Friday, December 18th at Noon.

The New England Water Environment Association's 2021 annual conference will be held virtually January 26 and 28 and February 2 and 4.

RESCHEDULED: Northeast Waste Management Officials Association Northeast Conference -- The Science of PFAS: Public Health & The Environment, to March 29th and 30th in Framingham, MA.

FOR MORE EVENTS, go to NEBRA's Events Page.

WEFTEC 2021
WEF intends to hold WEFTEC in-person, in Chicago, October 16-20, 2021, with an accompanying virtual presentation component. The deadline to submit an abstract is December 1, 2021. Submit Abstract

CHECK IT OUT

New Biosolids Position Statement adopted by WEF Board of Trustees on September 24, 2020.

NEBRA, NACWA, WEF, Northwest Biosolids, Mid-Atlantic Biosolids, the W4170 Research Committee and the California Association of Sanitation Agencies sent a joint letter to the USDA recommending they lift their prohibition on the use of biosolids in their organic certification regulation.

Opinion Piece: From Sewage Sludge, a New Perspective on the Flint Water Crisis.

Comedian John Oliver gets his wish -- see inspirational video including his "acceptance" speech when the Danbury, Connecticut water resource recovery facility is renamed the John Oliver Memorial Sewer Plant.

Kiss The Ground movie premieres on NetFlix, read all about it from our friends at BioCycle.

Researchers discover ancient water filtration system built by the Mayans, thousands of years older than the systems first constructed in Europe.

New legislation requires cigarettes sold in the Netherlands to be in a sludge-colored package as studies have shown it discourages smoking.

University of California - San Diego researchers use algae to make biodegradable flo-floes!

Department of Energy researchers are searching for cleaner jet fuel which led them to biosolids and other organic wastes as a feedstock.

New technology that can turn biosolids into hydrogen has promise.

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THANK YOU!

Looking for Content

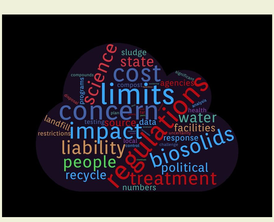
NEBRA is always looking for good content -- like **stories for NEBRAMail and topics for webinars**. We welcome articles from and presentations by members. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact the NEBRA office as we plan the 2021 Lunch & Learn schedule.

SUBSCRIBE and get *NEBRAMail* direct to your inbox!

Results of PFAS Cost Impacts Study Released at First Session of 2020 Northeast Residuals & Biosolids Conference

October 1st was the very first virtual session of the 2020 Northeast Residuals & Biosolids Conference, co-hosted by NEBRA and the New England Water Environment Association (NEWEA)'s Residuals Committee, and it kicked off with – what else? – presentations mainly related to PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances). The first presentation by Maddie Ledoux from CDM Smith summarized the results from their report titled *Cost Analysis of the Impacts on Municipal Utilities and Biosolids Management to Address PFAS Contamination*. The study was funded by the Water Environment Federation and the National Association of Clean Water Agencies in a project managed by NEBRA.

According to the new report, average costs for managing biosolids increased 37% in states where there are stringent PFAS regulations, mainly in the Northeast but also several other areas of the country where PFAS has been a huge issue. The data comes from detailed interviews with 29 entities involved in the generation, management and use of biosolids products. Read more. . .



Most commonly used words when talking about PFAS concerns.
From report by CDM Smith.

October 15 Virtual Membership Meeting

Included Tribute to Ned Beecher

NEBRA's annual membership meeting was held virtually on October 15th. The 1 hour and 15 minute long meeting on Zoom included all the usual agenda items for discussion at annual all-member meetings, including the annual financial report. However, before starting his numbers presentation where it would become apparent that NEBRA's original executive director Ned Beecher was no longer a salaried NEBRA employee, outgoing Treasurer and Board Member Andrew Carpenter gave an extended tribute to Ned and his impacts on biosolids recycling, regionally as well as nationally. The thanks were conspicuous all throughout the slideshow, including quotes from people who got to know Ned through biosolids as well as old photos of Ned and his accomplices throughout the years. Both the slides and the video clip from this portion of the membership meeting can be found on NEBRA's website.

Read more about the meeting. . .

Annual Conference Ends With Outstanding Virtual Student Poster Contest

The final session of this year's Northeast Residuals and Biosolids Conference was a virtual student poster contest organized by NEBRA's Research Committee which attracted 8 outstanding young researchers. Thanks to the judges from the Research Committee: Chair Tracy Chouinard, Andrew Carpenter, Ajay Singh, and Ned Beecher who had a really tough job in deciding amongst all the excellent presentations by the students. They did not come to an agreement until the next morning! And the winners are:

1st Place: Katherine Porterfield, PhD student, University of Vermont ($300 cash prize)
2nd Place: Eric Walling, PhD student, Université Laval in Quebec, Canada ($200 cash prize)
3rd Place: Kennedy Brown, junior undergraduate at the University of Vermont ($100 cash prize)

This year's winning posters were focused on recovering phosphorus from dairy operations, optimizing composting operations, and the potential of agricultural waste management systems to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Read more about the contest. . .

In Brief / en bref...

COVID-19 Updates

Dr. Jordon Peccia's team at Yale, who have studied biosolids some in the past, jumped quickly last spring into wastewater based epidemiology (WBE) - looking for SARS-CoV-2 RNA in wastewater as a way of identifying and tracking the virus's spread in a local community. Their research was just published in *Nature*. Detections in wastewater were found to precede by several days or a week the reporting of positive test results from individual people. According to the published abstract: "In communities facing a delay between specimen collection and the reporting of test results, immediate wastewater results can provide considerable advance notice of infection dynamics."

On a related topic, the CDC has released guidance for implementing WBE disease surveillance and promises to continually update the guidance as this is "a rapidly developing science".

Good Reporting on a Tough Subject

On October 19th, the industry periodical *WasteDive*, published a series of articles about the impacts of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that really dove into the PFAS issue, reporting on the subject from many angles. This excellent, well-rounded coverage included articles on the many challenges for landfills, the debates around incineration of biosolids, and the impacts on the organics recycling industry. *WasteDive* reporter E.V. Crunden did his research and spoke to a lot of different people about PFAS issues. You will probably recognize some of the people he interviewed for the series. To read all the articles, go here.

EPA's Recent Efforts on PFAS Research and Problem Formulation

In mid-October, EPA published a Request for Applications for biosolids research. EPA announced this new funding opportunity to identify, characterize and manage risks of known and emerging chemical pollutants found in biosolids, with per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at the top of the list. EPA will be making nearly $6 million available to private nonprofit institutions and public and private universities and colleges within the U.S. doing this kind of research. The deadline to apply is January 5, 2021. For more information, got to: https://www.epa.gov/research-grants/national-priorities-evaluation-pollutants-biosolids.

EPA held a free Webinar on October 29th on "Biosolids PFAS Research at the EPA". Presenters included Dr. Marc Mills and Mr. Ronald Herrmann of EPA's Office of Research and Development. The webinar covered the current state of the science related to PFAS in biosolids, discussed research needs and a biosolids land application field study. On November 12th, EPA will be hosting a webinar titled "Biosolids PFOA and PFOS Problem Formulation Meeting for Stakeholders". NEBRA and many of its members plan to attend. For more information and to register, go here. Lastly, EPA has updated its "PFAS Master List of PFAS Substances", now up to **9,252** chemicals.

NEWEA Webinar on Addressing CECs with Innovation

On September 24th, the New England Water Environment Association's Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CEC)/Innovation webinar series continued with a session called "Addressing CECs with innovation". The Innovation Council took the lead in organizing this one and the CEC of interest was per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The webinar highlighted four technologies at various stages of development that are in some way addressing PFAS contamination of water, wastewater and biosolids. Read more. . .

MassDEP Begins Stakeholders Process for PFAS in Residuals/Biosolids

On September 29th, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection held the first of three planned stakeholder meetings regarding limits for per- and poly- fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in residuals. At the beginning of the virtual meeting, Stephanie Cooper, Deputy Commissioner, Policy & Planning, introduced the stakeholders process and the agenda for the next two meeting will which "delve into the status of alternative approaches to establish screening values" for PFAS in residuals/biosolids. Read more. . .

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