Partnerships Addressing Land Application Challenges

Michigan Water Environment Association Biosolids Conference
Biosolids

- Michigan DEQ regulates biosolids by class, according to how much treatment they receive
- Land Application is a beneficial solution
  - Nutrients for farms
  - Environmentally friendly
The Challenge

- Concerns about land application:
  - Odors
  - Dust
  - Nutrient loss?
  - Food safety rules?
  - Public Perception
  - New processes have different regulations
  - Pressure to change/increase regulations

www.michiganradio.org
Requirements for Land Application

• Soil testing every 2 years
• Agronomic Application Rate – cannot exceed Bray P1 test of 300 lbs per acre in Michigan
• Cannot apply where endangered species or surface waters would be impacted

www.Michigan.gov/deq
But…GAAMPS Don’t Apply

• Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices provide recommendations for on-farm practices
• They only apply to agricultural activities, not to commercial activities on farms

www.Michigan.gov/mdard
Partnership Action

• MWEA Biosolids Committee brought a work group together to find solutions

• How to address public concerns and provide guidance to applicators?
Using What Works

• Held meetings with concerned citizens organized by Senator Dale Zorn and Representative Bronna Kahle
• Developed fact sheets and recommendations based on existing standards

www.owasa.org
Now Available


- Fact Sheets
  - Regulations
  - Uses
  - Different Biosolids Types
  - Phosphorus 101

- Land Application of Biosolids in Michigan: Management Recommendations
- NOT REQUIRED
  - Guidance Only!
Recommendations

• Site Selection
  – Takes residential/commercial density into account
  – Consideration for incorporation and how and when to apply

• Onsite Stacking/Storage
  – Away from roads, ditches, water
  – Complete removal
Recommendations

• Soil Sampling
  – Every 10-15 acres
  – Consider application rate if nutrient level approaches regulatory limit

• Application timing
  – Avoid weekends, holidays
  – Spread in the morning
  – Avoid wind blowing toward populated areas
Recommendations

• Barriers
  – Take advantage of treelines, fence rows, vegetation

• Avoid high-speed spinners

• Mark Sensitive Areas
  – Flag setbacks
  – Provides application guidance and assurance to neighbors
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The Big Picture

• Innovative thinking by cooperative partners can provide solutions that don’t require more regulation or legislation

• Living Documents
  – Can be amended to address new challenges
  – Additional information can be added to answer questions
The Big Picture

- This solution works if biosolids processors and applicators agree to follow it – And suggest improvements!

Photo by Steve Mahoney, MDARD
Thank you!

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