



Press Release

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Diverse Committee To Lead Biosolids Research Summit

“Involving stakeholders ... provides opportunities to gather information and to bridge gaps in understanding, language, values, and perspectives.” National Research Council (NRC), *Biosolids Applied to Land: Advancing Standards and Practices* (2002)

In line with this recommendation, the Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have brought together a diverse group of individuals to serve on the program committee for a Biosolids Research Summit. The primary goal of the Summit is to develop a research agenda that addresses research gaps identified by the NRC, as well as other research needed to ensure protection of public health and the environment.

The committee includes representatives of farming communities and private citizens, research scientists specializing in chemicals and pathogen exposure, and regulators from states and municipalities working on land application issues. These individuals represent a range of views as to the appropriateness and safety of the application of biosolids including those who are proponents for and opponents against land application.

Each program committee member has working knowledge and practical experience with biosolids; many have expert technical knowledge or research experience in a specific area. All are committed to working with a diverse range of expertise and perspectives needed to accomplish the Research Summit's goals. The program committee members are as follows:

- ? **Thomas Albert**, V.M.D ,Ph.D., one of a group of concerned citizens in a south-central Pennsylvania farming community affected by impending land application.
- ? **Nicholas Basta**, Ph.D., Professor, Oklahoma State University; expert on soil and environmental chemistry, contaminant bioavailability and toxicity, food quality, and chemicals, including methods, occurrence, risk assessment, metals, organics, and treatment.
- ? **Marci Coglianese**, J.D. Mayor of Rio Vista, Calif., where land application has been a controversial municipal issue.
- ? **Robert Hale**, Ph.D., Professor, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, College of William and Mary; expert on chemicals, especially organic chemicals in sludges/biosolids and water.
- ? **Michael Jawson**, Ph.D., National Program Leader at USDA; expert on pathogens, best management practices (BMPs), and nutrient management.
- ? **Ray Kearney**, PE, Assistant Director, Bureau of Sanitation, City of Los Angeles; expert on BMPs, treatment processes for biosolids and residuals, nutrient management.
- ? **Cecil Lue -Hing**, D.Sc, PE, President of Cecil Lue-Hing Associates; expert on plant operations, pathogens and BMPs.
- ? **Michael Rainey**, Hydrogeologist, Residuals Management Section, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services.
- ? **James Smith**, D.Sc., Senior Environmental Engineer & Chair, U.S. EPA's Pathogen Equivalency Committee, U.S. EPA; expert on pathogens and treatment practices.

- ? **William Toffey**, Biosolids Utilization Manager, City of Philadelphia Water Department; expert on treatment processes, utilization options, nutrient management, odor controls, and public outreach.
- ? **Jay Witherspoon**, Vice President and Fellow Technologist, CH2M HILL; expert on biosolids odor assessment and controls, biosolids air quality assessment, permitting, and controls; Environmental Management Systems for biosolids.

We are in the process of adding an additional committee member with expertise in epidemiology and public health issues.

The program committee will work with the steering committee to develop the format, agenda, and participant list for the Summit. The committee will invite 45-60 participants with a broad array of relevant technical expertise and practical experience regarding biosolids from state and federal agencies, academia, wastewater facilities, biosolids management companies, conservation groups, and interested citizens, including those who may be impacted by land application.

Interested observers will also have an opportunity to attend and to provide comment. An application to attend is available on WERF's website at http://www.werf.org/Press/Summit/Summit_regform.cfm through June 23. Space will be limited, so please apply early if you are interested. To ensure that observers represent the broadest spectrum of perspectives possible, registration will be limited to one attendee per organization.

The national Biosolids Research Summit will take place July 28-30, 2003, at the Hilton Alexandria Old Town in Alexandria, Va. The Summit will result in a research agenda to address gaps identified in the NRC report (<http://books.nap.edu/books/0309084865/html/index.html>) and other scientific issues related to biosolids. The summit will focus on research needs, as opposed to policy. The NRC report recommended that EPA update the scientific basis of regulations governing biosolids, improve knowledge of chemicals and pathogens, and evaluate concerns about health effects and exposure.

Biosolids are the organic matter that remains at the end of the wastewater treatment process after being broken down by bacteria and other organisms. U.S. EPA estimates that biosolids are used as an amendment or fertilizer on roughly 0.1 percent of available agricultural land in the United States.

WERF is dedicated to advancing science and technology that addresses water quality issues as they impact water resources, the atmosphere, the land, and quality of life. In carrying out its mission, WERF funds, oversees, and publishes research targeted at addressing specific scientific issues related to wastewater treatment, including such topics as treated sewer sludge and biosolids management. WERF's biosolids research includes more than 40 projects valued at more than \$18 million. Beginning this year, WERF is appropriating 3 percent to 6 percent of its annual research budget toward advancing the understanding and practical application of a new public partnering initiatives.

The Water Environment Research Foundation, a not-for-profit organization affiliated with the Water Environment Federation, addresses water quality issues with a commitment to environmental protection, economic conservancy, and enhanced quality of life. WERF Subscribers consist of wastewater utilities representing more than 60% of the U.S. sewered population and corporations sharing concerns for water quality issues.

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