



THE ALEXANDRIA SANITATION AUTHORITY'S BIOSOLIDS PROGRAM FAQ'S

What are Biosolids?

Biosolids is a nutrient-rich organic product resulting from the treatment of domestic sewage sludge in a treatment facility. The biosolids produced at The Alexandria Sanitation Authority (ASA) have gone through advanced treatment processes to kill pathogens below detectable level and to enhance the reuse potential of this product.

To what level does ASA treat your Biosolids?

ASA produces Class A, Exceptional Quality biosolids, the highest quality generated through treatment. Class A, Exceptional Quality biosolids must have low metal concentrations, and cannot contain any traces of pathogens. By conducting rigorous sampling and monitoring, and through treatment processes that have been historically proven, the EPA (<http://www.epa.gov/owm/mtb/biosolids>), the Virginia Dept. of Health (<http://www.vdh.state.va.us/EnvironmentalHealth/Wastewater/index.htm>), and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (<http://www.deq.state.va.us/wastewater>) have all certified our biosolids high quality..

How do we achieve Class A, Exceptional Quality Biosolids?

ASA has combined an outstanding pretreatment program (which controls pollutants entering the sewage system) with advanced solids treatment (pasteurization and digestion) to produce our biosolids. ASA has an approved treatment process for sludge to eliminate pathogens that cause illness. ASA began operating a facility that actually pasteurizes our sludge in a similar manner as consumable products such as milk or orange juice are pasteurized.

How do we continuously insure quality?

ASA has implemented a comprehensive sampling and testing program to monitor biosolids quality. This program goes beyond the published minimum requirements in scope and frequency to ensure that standards are maintained and the reuse of this product is environmentally sound. ASA's biosolids are monitored for both pollutant metals concentrations and pathogen levels.

Pollutant Metals - Our biosolids are tested by an independent, certified laboratory each month for metals concentrations. There are a total of 9 pollutant metals that are monitored for biosolids used on the land. ASA biosolids meet the most stringent limits, achieving the standard of “Exceptional Quality”.

Pathogen Levels - ASA has a comprehensive sampling program for pathogen levels in our biosolids. The EPA and VDH require the monitoring of Salmonella SP to prove that there are no illness causing pathogens present in our biosolids. ASA performs this intensive monitoring quarterly. This monitoring involves sampling at various points in the treatment process, and at the land application site itself. Levels of Salmonella must not be detectable.

Is all of the work performed at the treatment plant?

The treatment of sewage and the sludge generated from the process is very involved. There is additional care that is given when our biosolids are applied on the farm lands in host county’s away from the plant and City. Close attention is paid to the trucking operations, the quantity of nutrients applied to the land, and the proximity of our biosolids to insure that they are not spread next to water ways. ASA uses an independent inspection service to monitor every truck load of biosolids that we haul to use in a farmer’s field.