

performance in all areas of wastewater management including the use or disposal of sewage sludge. EMS participants involve citizens in their communities to assist in defining improved environmental performance. EMS status is awarded to participating utilities only after a rigorous review and subsequent certification by a third party. A voluntary dioxins monitoring and source investigation program, and suggestions for reducing and eliminating sources of dioxins in sewer service areas, could help contribute to reducing concentrations of dioxins in the community's sewage sludge.

The biosolids industry most likely will be implementing an EMS through the National Biosolids Partnership (NBP). The NBP is a partnership formed in 1997 with AMSA (Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies), WEF (Water Environment Federation), and EPA (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency). Through partnering with sewage sludge producers, sewage sludge service contractors such as sewage sludge land application companies, sewage sludge users, regulatory agencies, universities, the farming community, and environmental organizations, the goal of the NBP is to advance environmentally sound and accepted biosolids management practices.

Through a voluntary EMS, being developed for biosolids by the NBP, EPA continues to provide the public with educational information, based on the best science, about the recycling and disposal of biosolids. EPA strongly supports the ongoing efforts of the NBP to develop the EMS and to provide correct and timely information and community-friendly practices that could be followed via its new communications system. The EMS program supports local authorities to find ways to meet and go beyond what is required in State and Federal regulations. About 54 municipalities are now pilot-testing their biosolids EMS programs based upon a blueprint developed by the NBP.

In 2003, the first two municipal wastewater treatment authorities,

Orange County (CA) Sanitation District and the Department of Public Works from the City of Los Angeles, CA were awarded entry into the EMS Program by certification from an independent third party auditor. Several additional municipalities will be ready to undergo an independent third party audit of the EMS program later this year (2003). Municipalities involved in the voluntary EMS program are reporting benefits they have achieved. They report that their participation in the EMS program has resulted in more efficient operation, reduced odors from biosolids, less intrusive transport of the sewage sludge to land application sites, better communication, and meaningful involvement of the public. The Agency plans to continue supporting NBP activities and working with municipalities on expanding the use of EMS programs in biosolids management. Two NBP Web site addresses that present relevant biosolids information are <http://www.biosolids.org> and <http://biosolids.policy.net/emsguide/manual/goodpractmanual.vtml>.

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