

Synagro's Record

Compiled by Tyla Matteson and others

Contact: tmatteson1@mindspring.com, 804-275-6476, Citizens Against Sludge

In Virginia

1. There was a lawsuit involving Synagro's spreading 1 million gallons of hog waste material from Smithfield's lagoons. The lawsuit was filed in Surry County Circuit Court on November 22, 2006. Two families sought to stop Synagro from spreading biosolids, accusing Synagro and the Sussex-Surry LLC farm of negligence and creating a public nuisance, claiming they continued spreading biosolids despite knowing of the plaintiffs' complaints and health concerns. The lawsuit focused on the struggles of families living next to land where sludge was applied.

<http://www.nebiosolids.org/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=78&cntnt01returnid=24>

2. In February 2012, the State Water Control Board took enforcement action against Synagro Central, LLC, for violations of the State Water Control Law in the Counties of Essex, Fauquier and Goochland for improperly storing and handling sewage sludge. Sludge was running into nearby streams.

In Essex – at Deaton Farm Storage Pad, In Fauquier – at Ritchie Farm Storage Lagoon, and Goochland – at Lanier Farm Storage Pad.

In Essex, excessive levels of ammonia, E.coli, and bacterial colonies were found in several samplings done after rain events in 2009 time frame. The materials were running from a storage pad into a tributary of the Dragon Run River. The samples showed an exceedence of the "acute water quality standard".

Subsequently, Synagro was fined by the DEQ in the amount of \$65,000. Synagro paid the \$16,250 civil charge on May 3, 2012, and agreed to complete a 2-year supplementary environmental project in lieu of paying the remaining \$48,750 of the fine.

<http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Portals/0/DEQ/Enforcement/FinalOrders/SynagroIssuedOrder12.pdf>

Article in Free Lance Star on biosolids – includes Synagro fines in VA

<http://news.fredericksburg.com/newsdesk/2014/03/13/concerns-raised-about-sludge-spreading/>

Other violations and incidents

3. In Detroit in 2010, a Synagro representative admitted to bribing public officials to include chartered flights to Las Vegas, cash tucked into a pack of gum, and a case of champagne. Synagro gave \$25,000 to a relative of one elected official. Two Synagro representatives were sent to jail. One elected official was sentenced to 37 months in jail (and served 27 months, released Dec. 21, 2012).

<http://www.craigslist.com/article/20090420/FREE/904209995/largest-sewage-recycler-synagro-technologies-scrutinized-in-some#>

<http://www.freep.com/article/20100712/NEWS01/7120363/1318/Synagro-cash-was-reached-for-by-many-records-show>

4. New York – in 2008 & 2009, Synagro’s New York Organic Fertilizer was sued because of horrible odors in NYC South Bronx. Residents put on mock funerals and organized bus tours to showcase the odors. Apparently Synagro improved the smell using an odor response monitor and with new emission testing.
http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/02/05/cuomo-sues-bronx-fertilizer-company/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0
5. Riverside County, California - A Synagro operation closed down in 2008 after years of complaints, among which were headaches and loss of personal property value.
6. San Francisco, California – In 2007, Synagro gave out free compost to community gardens. It was later discovered that the compost contained carcinogens, including PCBs.
7. Synagro filed for bankruptcy in April 2013. Synagro owed the City of Waterbury, Connecticut, \$4.3 million on a sludge disposal agreement. But Synagro made provisions to only pay \$623,000.
8. Woonsocket, Rhode Island – as recently as August 2013 – Synagro Technologies was accused of illegal dumping, for improperly disposing of out-of-state dried sludge material.
9. In 2002, Synagro paid a settlement to a family when a young man, Shayne Connor, died of respiratory failure in the middle of the night, with his open window 300 feet from a sludge field. This occurred in Greenland, NH, in 1995. The settlement included a denial of wrongdoing. The link also talks about cattle mortalities, poisons found in the cow’s milk where they grazed on land where sludge was spread, and an out of court settlement in 2008 to two dairy farmers in Augusta, Georgia. (about 11 paragraphs down)
<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/10/23/waste-lands-the-risksofspreadingsewageonfarms.html>
More articles about Shayne Connor
<http://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2001/0501orlando.html>
<http://deadlydeceit.com/Human-deaths.html>

Website on dangers from applying sludge:

<http://www.sludgevictims.com/>