

Biosolids Environmental Management System Performance Report

June, 2010

HRCF Achieves Platinum Status for Biosolids EMS Certification

The National Biosolids Partnership's Environmental Management System (EMS) Tier 4 Platinum Certification represents the highest achievement in biosolids management and environmental stewardship. With this achievement, New England Organics' Hawk Ridge Compost Facility has become a model for other wastewater and biosolids treatment facilities nationwide.

The facility underwent an independent audit in February, verifying that the company has an effective biosolids EMS that supports

continuous improvement of environmental performance, exceeds regulatory obligations, utilizes good practices, and provides the opportunity for public participation.

"NEO is in an elite group. Thanks to everyone who has worked so hard to differentiate us with this recognition. This results from a great team effort. Thank you all!" says Jamie Ecker, General Manager.



Audit Results

In February, the independent audit firm, KEMA-Registered Quality, Inc., conducted its second third-party audit of the HRCF biosolids management program. KEMA verified that NEO's program continues to meet the requirements of the NBP. A summary of the audit results follows:

Strengths

- NEO's Corrective and Preventive Action process addresses incidents and events that require action, including an effective analysis of repeating causes.
- Customers, Re-sellers and Regulators are positive about NEO's product quality, communication and service.
- NEO's customer surveys are an effective way of developing 2-way communication and identifying opportunities for improvement.

Outcomes

- Increased use of Long Term Windrows has led to more mature product.
- Responsibilities and performance expectations for compost re-sellers have been defined.
- Incident reporting extends throughout NEO, enabling awareness and faster response times.
- HRCF reduced energy use by over 4% per unit of biosolids processed, resulting in lower energy costs and reducing the facility's carbon footprint.
- Corrective Action analysis led to identification and action to correct a repeating cause of hydraulic hose failures.
- NEO's EMS has received positive national and local media coverage including articles in Biocycle magazine and several regional newsletters.
- NEO surveys of customers and generators serve as a way to gauge customer perceptions and help NEO identify and address any performance issues.
- A determination of successful corrective action from Maine DEP recognized HRCF's improving groundwater quality, allowing for increased operating flexibility.



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Nonconformances

There were no major nonconformances identified in the Third Party Audit. The four minor nonconformances included the following:

- NEO's identification of critical control points and operational controls does not clearly reference legal, quality or public acceptance requirements.
- The Standard Operating Procedure for Aerated Curing was incomplete.
- Management Reviews of performance in achieving objectives have not identified the extent to which each objective is being achieved.
- Required actions and changes resulting from the July 2009 internal audit were not discussed in detail in Management Reviews.

Goals for 2010

Each year, a set of goals and objectives is developed for Hawk Ridge Compost Facility to guide continuous improvement of the Biosolids Management Program. This year's goals include the following:

- Goal 1:** Improve compost quality by implementing the Quality Management Plan and increasing the amount of compost meeting the highest quality targets
- Goal 2:** Improve environmental performance by decreasing energy consumption per yard of biosolids processed
- Goal 3:** Maintain regulatory compliance by defining necessary tasks, auditing and inspecting on a regular basis
- Goal 4:** Improve communication by making contact with all interested parties over the course of the year



Another Successful Year for Hawk Ridge Compost Facility



HRCF accepted approximately 50,000 cubic yards of municipal biosolids in 2009 and, after bulking and processing, sold almost 90,000 cubic yards of Class A compost, while maintaining full compliance with all permits.

HRCF is celebrating 20 years of operation this year, and salutes three of the original biosolids generators who are still valued customers today: the Greater Augusta Utilities District, the Kennebec Sanitary Treatment District, and the Town of Camden Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Twelve of HRCF's end-product customers are participating in a season-long survey to provide feedback on compost consistency and overall quality. Results will be used in evaluating the effectiveness of the Compost Quality Management Plan.

NEO Participates in 2010 Envirothon

NEO participated in the 2010 Envirothon State Championship held at Husson University in Bangor on May 27th. Envirothon is a natural resource problem solving competition for high school students, and it is one of the largest student environmental programs in North America.

A major sponsor of Envirothon for over 10 years, NEO also provided staffing to help judge the "Current Issue Poster Presentation" portion of the competition. This year's current issue was the importance of protecting groundwater. Other subjects tested during the Envirothon included soils, aquatics, forestry and wildlife. The winner of the Maine State Envirothon in 2010 was the team representing Jay High School, guided by teacher Rob Taylor. Pictured with the Jay Team is NEO representative John Leslie.



New England Organics, 135 Presumpscot Street, Unit #1, Portland, ME 04103
Phone: 800-933-6474 Fax: 207-781-5794 www.newenglandorganics.com