

## **A Plain English Guide to the EPA Part 503 Biosolids Rule**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Wastewater Management  
Washington, DC

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# Notice

This document has been reviewed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and approved for publication. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

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# Foreword


The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Part 503 rule provides comprehensive requirements for the management of biosolids generated during the process of treating municipal wastewater. The final rule benefited greatly from the substantial input received from the regulated and environmental communities, and especially the group of scientific experts who worked closely with EPA in revising the proposed rule. Hence, the final rule is the result of a very effective combination of public comment, scientific risk assessment, and informed risk management.

The Part 503 rule creates incentives for beneficial use of biosolids. EPA believes that biosolids are an important resource that can and should be safely used (e.g., to condition soils and provide nutrients for agricultural, horticultural, and forest crops and vegetation, and for reclaiming and revegetating areas disturbed by mining, construction, and waste disposal activities).

This guide to the final rule for the use or disposal of sewage sludge biosolids was developed to help make the Part 503 rule more understandable. While the guide is not a substitute for the actual rule, we believe that it can be a very helpful tool for the rule's interpretation and implementation. Throughout the document sewage sludge is referred to as biosolids to emphasize the beneficial nature of this valuable recyclable resource.

While this guide is consistent with the content of the Part 503 rule, it is structured in a manner intended to make information more understandable. After presenting an overview of the rule, the document provides separate, complete descriptions of the requirements associated with land application, surface disposal, incineration, pathogen and vector attraction reduction, and sampling and analysis. The guide also raises questions and provides answers that should help you interpret the rule. It also refers to additional sources of information.

We hope that you find this type of interpretative guidance useful, and we welcome your comments on how to make such information more useful as well as your suggestions about other needed materials. A tear-out comment sheet is provided for this purpose in the back of the document.



Michael B. Cook, Director  
Office of Wastewater Management

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# Acknowledgments

This document represents the efforts of several individuals. Gratitude is extended to each person involved in preparing and reviewing this guide.

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*(Comments are requested on this Part 503 rule guidance. See tear-out sheet at end of document.)*

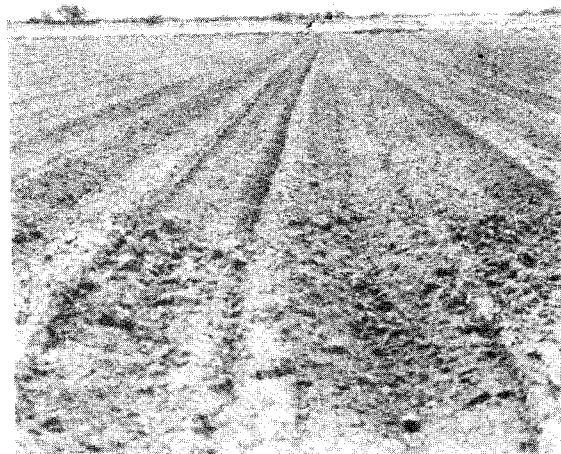
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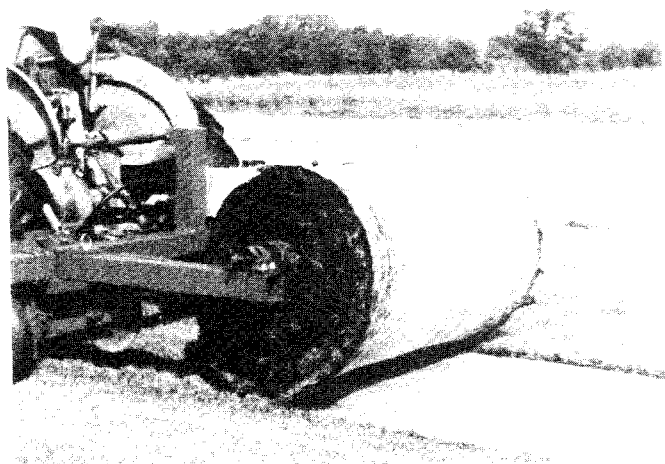
## Biosolids Are Used Beneficially in Many Ways



*Pasture in Albany, Georgia.*



*Row crops in Arizona.*



*Lightweight sod in Columbus, Ohio.*



*Flowers worldwide.*



*Ornamental garden in Denver, Colorado.*