

Biosolids Myths vs Reality

Myth: Biosolids are stinky.

Reality: Biosolids that are used by backyard or community gardeners may have a slight earthy smell. Biosolids used by large-scale farming operations may have a smell comparable to animal manure, but this odor quickly fades after the material has been applied.

Myth: Biosolids contain heavy metals.

Reality: Biosolids contain very low levels of metals. The composition of metals is actually very similar to what is already found in soils in urban areas. The levels are well below anything that would pose a risk to your health.

Myth: Dangerous levels of so-called “forever chemicals,” commonly known as PFAS, are found in biosolids, making the food grown with them to be dangerous to human health and the livestock that feeds on crops grown with biosolids.

Reality: Biosolids have trace amounts of PFAS, measured in parts per trillion, (like one second in 32,000 years), and these numbers are getting even smaller as these chemicals continue to be discontinued. At this level, exposure through farmed food is exponentially smaller than cooking with Teflon-coated pans, eating fast food, using certain brands of dental floss, or even consuming cake made from store-bought mixes.

Myth: Biosolids include untreated human waste.

Reality: Biosolids are produced during the wastewater treatment process. It is true that human waste is a primary ingredient of biosolids but by the time the biosolids are applied to farms, the poop has been treated and turned into a safe alternative to

chemical fertilizer.

Myth: The production of biosolids is bad for the environment.

Reality: The opposite is true. Biosolids are a natural and endlessly renewable resource that conserves and protects our environment. Using biosolids reduces waste, recovers natural resources, generates renewable energy, lowers greenhouse gases, and improves the quality of water in our waterways.

When it comes to the safety of biosolids, we regularly monitor them to make sure they meet the strictest federal and state health standards. Hundreds of scientific studies have shown that biosolids are a safe and a responsible alternative to chemical fertilizers.