

# Farmers sought to take sludge

LITITZ, Pa. - Farmers and other landowners within a ten mile radius of Lititz who would like to have sludge applied to their soil, are asked to contact David Anderson, Lititz borough manager, at 717-626-2044. A study is currently underway by Betz Environmental Engineers of Plymouth Meeting to determine specific quantity and characteristics of the sludge produced by the Lititz Sewer Authority Wastewater Treatment Plant. A

spokesman for the Betz firm explains some benefits of using sludge as fertilizer and soil conditioners:

Sludge is a useful by-product of wastewater treatment plants which should be properly disposed of. It can be incinerated or dried to a smaller volume and then disposed of in a sanitary landfill, but these disposal methods are costly and do not utilize the beneficial qualities of sludge. Most sludges contain sufficient amounts of the

plant nutrients nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium to produce amazing growth response in crops when incorporated into the soil. In addition to plant nutrients, sludge supplies water and humus to soils. It acts as a soil conditioner and promotes increased soil porosity for better air and water movement in the soil. Sludge also provides many of the micronutrients, such as zinc and copper, needed by crops.

Farmers and crops are not

the only benefactors from land application of sludge. Generally, it is far cheaper to apply sludge to the soil rather than incinerate or dry it. Savings resulting from simplified wastewater treatment plant design, construction and operation, can be passed on to the community in the form of lower sewer bills.

Land application of sludge is not without its drawbacks. Application of sludge to the soil must be carefully controlled in order to avoid

contamination of soil, surface water or groundwater supplies. As with any fertilizer or soil conditioner, too much of a good thing is not good. Results of the on-going, Betz Environmental Engineers study will include recommended sludge application rates and site investigations to select specific sites suitable for sludge application.

Not all fields or soils are suitable for sludge application. Soil properties, such as depth, type, slope, drainage, pH, organic matter content, and cation

exchange capacity must be evaluated prior to applying sludge. Consequently, even though a landowner may want sludge, his land may not be well suited for accepting sludge. However, a preliminary survey of soils in the area indicates there are many sites suitable for sludge application.

Interested farmers are invited to a public information presentation, 8:00 May 5, 1977 at the I. Walton Bobst Recreation Center, Lititz.

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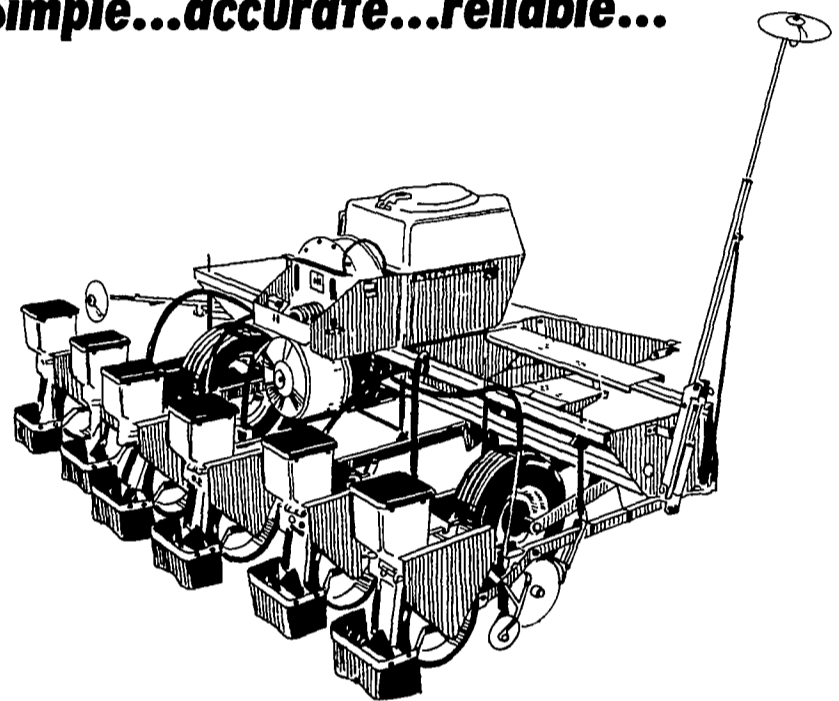
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