

Town of Luther bans spread of treated, human waste on local farmlands

by Erika Stanish
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about biosolids.

"The City of Luther was able to come to a decision, based on the facts, to ban humanure, sewage sludge, within city limits which is great for the City of Luther and huge step in the right direction," Traywick said. "This is something that there needs to be more research into the safety and until that's completely transparent, it needs to be halted and not applied to farmland out here especially near our huge aquifer where our drinking water comes from."

In a [report done by the EPA office of Inspector General](#), it says the EPA identified 352 pollutants in biosolids. It stated 61 were identified as hazardous.

"The more research I did, the more I realized this is something we really need to fight and we have to all come together," Traywick said. "The EPA only requires testing for nine to twelve contaminants. There's 250 contaminants that aren't being tested for."

"We have tested sludge that contains staph and strep. That's huge for me. My daughter got an autoimmune disease from a case of strep that attacked her brain. I'm not OK with humanure being applied on fields where we have to breathe it and it has confirmed strep in it," Traywick said.

During the Luther town meeting, representatives from the Department of Environmental Quality and Synagro Technologies, Inc. came to present and share information about biosolids to Luther board trustees.

"It was at one point that a person in the audience stood up and asked a question, because another person who had come, not from Luther, but from another town, had come and said that they had been having biosludge being put in the flood plain and land adjacent to their land and the person from Synagro said well, that's not necessarily true. We don't apply biosolids necessarily in a flood plain because there are application procedures that you have to follow like you can't put it within 350 feet within distance from a well," Mayor Jenni White said. "They said they put it all over the land and another woman stood up and said, 'So, you're saying that there are guidelines that tell you how to apply biosolids on the flood plain but then you kind of make your own decisions about how to do that at the time when you're looking at the property?' It was kind of an eye opener. I think for everybody involved. Certainly a number of us I know. It was interesting to hear that."

"This has toxic chemicals, toxic heavy metals, things in it that we don't want to be applying on our land on a massive scale. I question why Oklahoma City would not use this stuff on their parks and golf courses. Oklahoma City is one of the largest land mass cities in the world. They have plenty of land to apply this human waste on as great beneficial fertilizer if it's so wonderful, why are they putting it out here on our farmland? It's because nobody wants it!" Traywick said.

In a letter to Traywick in 2019, a representative with the EPA wrote, "Right now, the EPA cannot say that the pollutants found in biosolids will not cause harmful effects to you, your crops or your livestock. We will know more when we assess these chemicals -- something we are actively working on. You're asking important questions."

"This is a health issue for a lot of people especially if you are immunocompromised, you do not want to be near this stuff," Traywick said.

Traywick said while banning biosolids in Luther was a big victory, she's not stopping there.

She told FOX 25 Tuesday she sent letters to Oklahoma County Commissioners about banning biosolids in its county.

She's still waiting to hear back.