

# High-Tech Analysis of Low-Cost, Low-Tech Methods for Sustainable Class A Biosolids Production: Set up and Initial Pilot-Scale Data

Christa L. Meingast<sup>1</sup>, Jennifer G. Becker<sup>1</sup>, Eric A. Seagren<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

Michigan Technological University

## INTRODUCTION

- Water resource recovery facilities (WRRFs) producing Class B biosolids face growing challenges that may limit the sustainable reuse of biosolids.
- Unfortunately, many WRRFs lack the resources to apply conventional energy-intensive Class A treatment processes, or negotiate the PFRP equivalency process.
- Increased use of low-cost, low-tech (LCLT) treatment options (e.g., lagoon storage or air drying) for Class A production may be more appropriate for these WRRFs.
- However, widespread adoption of LCLT methods is currently limited by the lack of information on pathogen and indicator organism (PIO) inactivation under ambient conditions.



## PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### Project Goal

Develop a rational and universal approach for the design of LCLT Class A biosolids treatment processes in order to:

- Move past a trial-and-error approach to the design of LCLT treatment systems,
- Ultimately establish PFRP equivalency of LCLT processes on a national basis.

### Project Objectives

- Design and set up pilot-scale LCLT Class A biosolids treatment systems at two small WRRFs.
- Monitor key environmental conditions (ambient environmental conditions, biosolids storage temperature, moisture content (measured as total solids, TS), organic matter content (measured as VS), NH<sub>3</sub> content, volatile fatty acids (VFAs), Alkalinity, and pH) over the course of one or two year(s).
- Apply culture- and molecular-based methods to quantify the inactivation of PIOs (fecal coliforms (FC), coliphage, enteric viruses, and helminth ova) over time in the pilot-scale systems.

## STUDY SITES

### Gogebic-Iron Wastewater Authority (GIWA, Ironwood, MI)

- Design Wastewater flow: 3.4 mgd
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Treatment: Oxidation ditch activated sludge

### Portage Lake Water and Sewage Authority (PLWSA, Houghton, MI)

- Design Wastewater Flow: 3.1 mgd
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Treatment: Conventional activated sludge

### Class B Biosolids Treatment

- Mesophilic anaerobic digestion (MAD) of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> solids.
- Conditioned with cationic polymer.
- Dewater by belt filter press (GIWA: 25% TS, PLWSA: 16% TS).
- Stored in closed shed during winter.



## OBJECTIVE 1

### Pilot Scale Test Beds

Test beds (4' high, 4' wide, and 8' long) designed to:

- Maintain structural integrity through freeze/thaw cycles of the biosolids.
- Allow drainage water from the biosolids to be collected and disposed of properly.
- Withstand ambient temperatures.



### Seeding Biosolids

Biosolids typically do not have sufficient levels of helminth ova and enteric viruses to observe:

- ≥ 3 log reduction of total enteric viruses
- ≥ 2 log reduction of viable helminth ova
- ≥ 1 log reduction of fecal coliforms

Therefore, biosolids were spiked and placed in sentinel chambers attached to sampling stacks:



## OBJECTIVE 2

### Methods

- Three test beds are located indoors (boxes 4, 5, and 6), and three are located outdoors (boxes 1, 2, and 3).

### Environmental Conditions

- Davis Vantage Pro2 Plus Weather Stations used to monitor ambient conditions.
- In situ biosolids temperature monitored using iButtons (Embedded Data Systems) in 3 ft. high biosolids pile at depths of 0.5', 1.5' and 2.5' from the top.

### Physical/Chemical Parameters

- Pilot test beds sampled monthly via composite cores and analyzed for parameters TS, VS, NH<sub>3</sub>, VFAs, Alkalinity, and pH (Aug. '16-Jan. '17).

### Example Results

#### Environmental Conditions

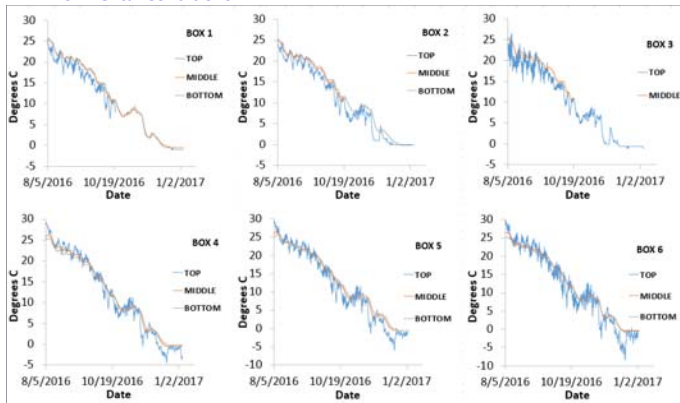


Figure 1: In Situ Biosolids Temperatures at PLWSA. Each data point represents the average of duplicate analyses

### Physical/Chemical Parameters

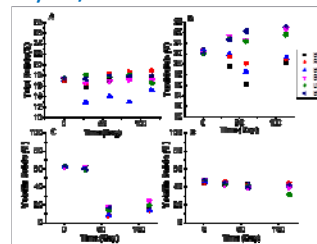


Figure 2: Total Solids at (A) PLWSA and (B) GIWA, and (C) Volatile Solids at PLWSA and (D) GIWA. Each data point represents the average of duplicate analyses.

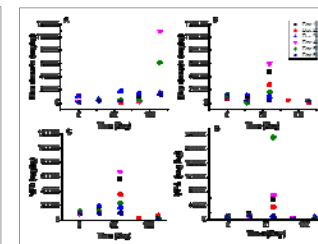


Figure 3: Bicarbonate at (A) PLWSA and (B) GIWA, and VFA at (C) PLWSA and (D) GIWA. Each data point represents the average of duplicate analyses.

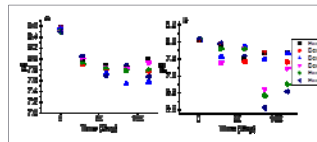


Figure 4: pH at (A) PLWSA and (B) GIWA. Each data point represents the average of duplicate analyses.

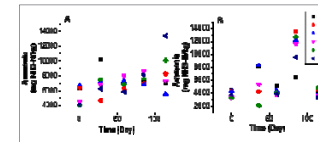


Figure 5: Ammonia at (A) PLWSA and (B) GIWA. Each data point represents an individual measurement.

## OBJECTIVE 3

### Methods

- Pilot test beds sampled monthly via composite cores and analyzed for FC and coliphage; sentinel chambers removed monthly and analyzed for ova and poliovirus (Aug. '16-Jan. '17).

### Example Results

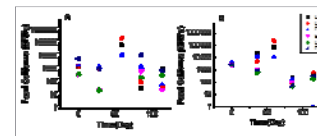


Figure 6: Fecal Coliforms at (A) PLWSA and (B) GIWA. Each data point represents an individual measurement

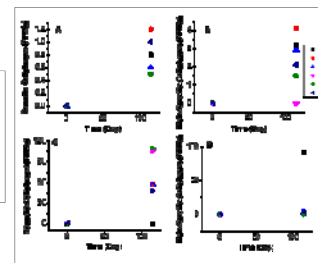


Figure 7: Somatic Coliphages at (A) PLWSA and (C) GIWA, and Male Specific Coliphages at (B) PLWSA and (D) GIWA. Each data point represents an individual measurement.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Objective 1: Pilot scale study set up.
- Objective 2: Biosolids temperature decreasing, pH decreasing, ammonia increasing (PLWSA) or no clear trend (GIWA).
- Objective 3: FC increased, then decreased; limited coliphage data indicate an increase
- The data demonstrate that changes in environmental conditions, physical-chemical parameters, and microbial populations have occurred over the course of the study; however, additional data are needed to determine the treatment efficacy.

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