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A G E N C I E S

**ANNUAL REPORT to the
SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

LAND APPLICATION of BIOSOLIDS in SOLANO COUNTY



Photo Credit: Robin Scheswohl

Prepared by the BACWA Biosolids Committee
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Introduction

With the 2020 application season recently completed, the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA) Biosolids Committee is pleased to present its annual summary report on land application of biosolids in Solano County. BACWA wishes to express its sincere appreciation to the staff of the Environmental Health Services Division of the Department of Resource Management for the continuing support of the biosolids land application program. This program allows for the effective use of biosolids as an agricultural soil amendment in the County. We believe this partnership provides a valuable resource to Solano County agriculture and provides many Bay Area agencies with an opportunity to ensure their biosolids are put to their highest and best use by making a positive impact on the environment.

This report provides information on trends in the use of biosolids resources in California and the Bay Area, an update on regional biosolids programs, and specific information on projects from individual agencies currently applying biosolids in the County. It highlights each agency's compliance with the requirement in Solano County Code, Sec. 25-400 that "Class B biosolids may only be land applied provided that the generator of the Class B biosolids is individually or as part of a consortium having a portion of their biosolids produced as Class A Exceptional Quality biosolids, converting biosolids to energy, or otherwise diverting Class B biosolids away from land spreading or landfilling (as waste or as alternative daily cover)."

This report is intended as supplemental information to the report submitted by the County Department of Resource Management staff and by Synagro, contract haulers and applicators of biosolids. It has been prepared for the Solano County Board of Supervisors in response to the Board's request for an annual update on agency activities and progress towards compliance with the goals set forth in County Code, Chapter 25. The affected agencies have coordinated the required reporting through BACWA to produce a single report for the Board.

We would like to acknowledge the assistance of your staff in working with BACWA member

agencies throughout the year, particularly Jagjinder Sahota (Program Manager), Jeffrey Bell (Supervisor), Anthony Endow, and Joshua Lee.

Municipal Agencies Applying Biosolids in Solano County

The use of biosolids as an amendment supplies valuable plant nutrients and carbon to soils which enhances the productivity and financial resilience of local farms. Each agency that applies biosolids is required to meet strict standards and provides a report annually to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to demonstrate compliance. In 2020, the following Northern California agencies transported biosolids to agricultural land in Solano County under contract with Synagro:

- City of Calistoga
- Central Marin Sanitation Agency (San Rafael, Ross Valley, Larkspur, and Corte Madera)
- Delta Diablo (Antioch, Pittsburg, and Bay Point)
- East Bay Municipal Utility District (El Cerrito, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, and Alameda)
- City of Eureka
- Fort Bragg Municipal District #1
- Ironhouse Sanitary District (Oakley and Bethel Island)
- City of Petaluma
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
 - Southeast Water Pollution Control Plant
 - Oceanside Water Pollution Control Plant
- City of San Leandro
- Sonoma County Water Agency, Airport-Larkfield-Wikiup Sanitation Zone (ALWSZ)
- Union Sanitary District
- Town of Windsor

A total of 7,003 dry tons were land applied on agricultural sites in Solano County in 2020. The portion from each agency is shown in **Figure 1**. The total quantity of biosolids applied to agricultural land in Solano County has been relatively constant over the last ten years, as shown on the next page in **Figure 2**.

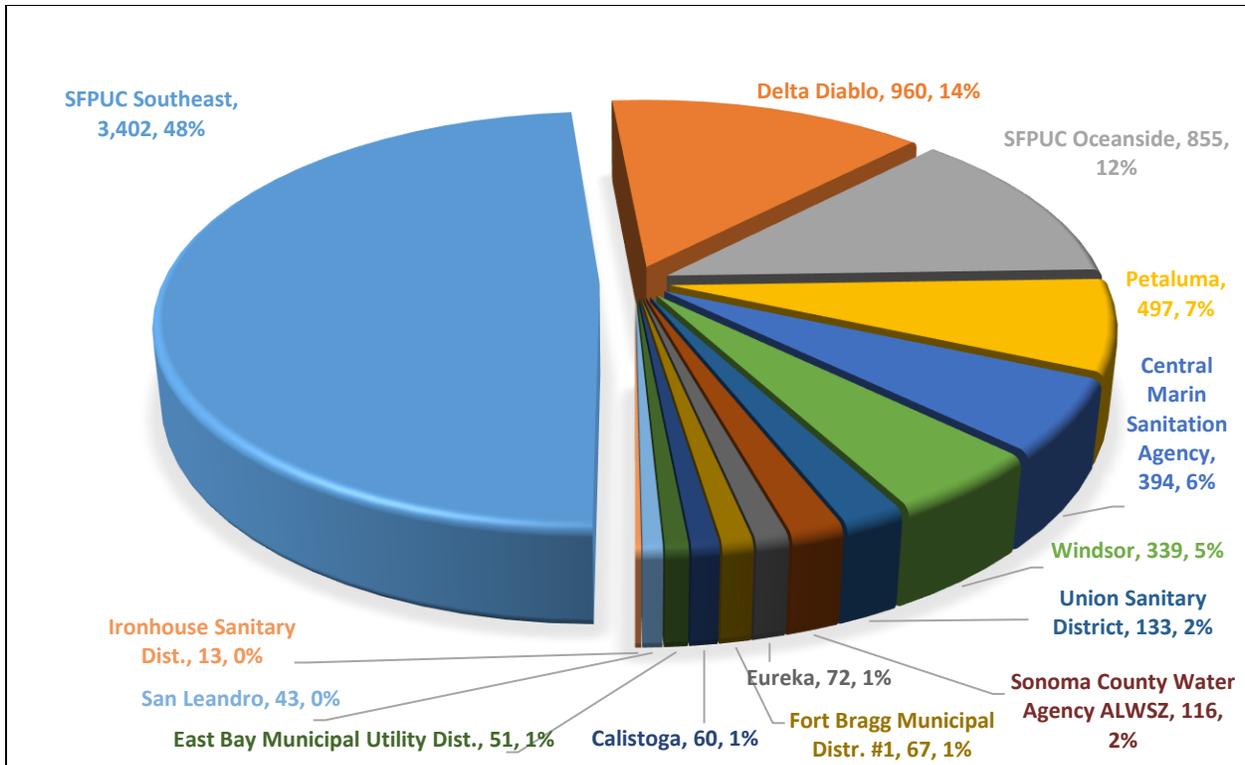


Figure 1. Biosolids (Dry Tons) Land Applied in Solano County by Each Agency, 2020
Data provided by Synagro

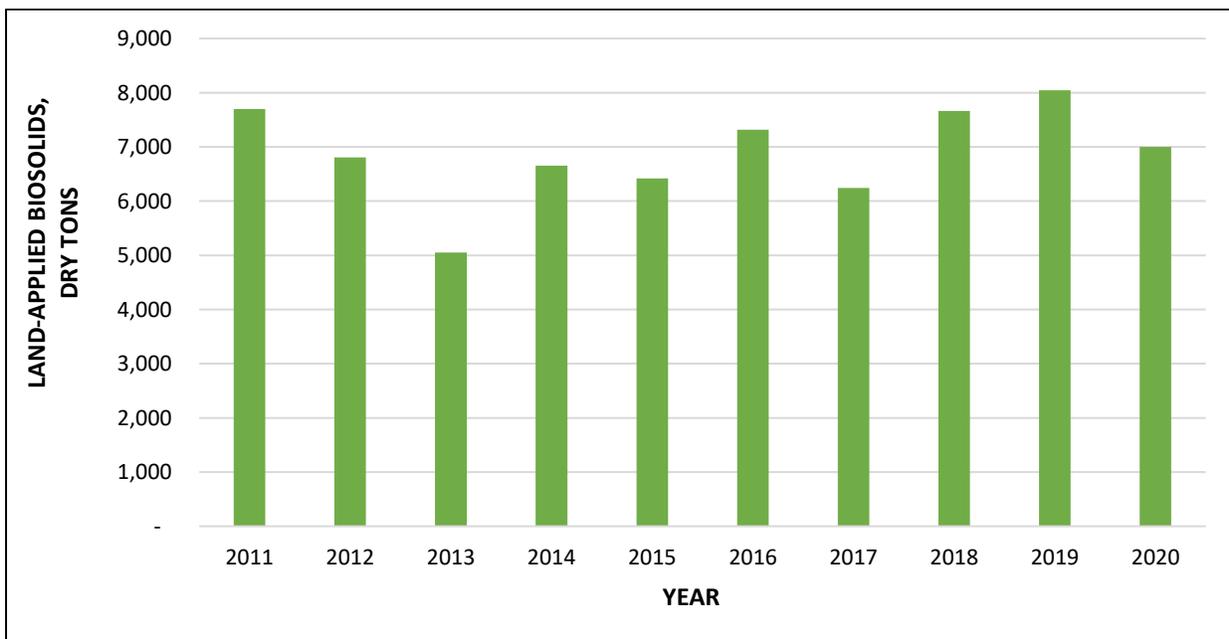


Figure 2. Biosolids (Dry Tons) Land Applied in Solano County, 2011-2020
Data provided by Synagro

Trends in Biosolids Usage in California

Wastewater agencies in California are continuing to identify and evaluate new options for biosolids reuse and recycling, including emerging technologies as well as established practices such as composting and heat drying.

Overall California Use Summary. The use of biosolids in California for calendar years 2009 through 2019 is summarized in **Figure 3**. Statewide data for 2020 are not yet available and will be included in the 2021 report. The number one use statewide continues to be land application for agriculture in the form of compost, Class B biosolids and Class A biosolids. The use of biosolids compost has increased steadily, accounting for 20% of statewide biosolids use in 2011 to 34% in 2019. Land application of Class A and Class B biosolids has held steady, together accounting for 32% of all biosolids use. Biosolids have proven to be a safe, reliable, and nutrient-rich soil amendment that offers a more cost-effective alternative to chemical fertilizers, which are increasingly expensive and energy intensive to produce.

The beneficial use of biosolids as alternative daily cover in landfills and landfill disposal are also common management practices for biosolids in California, accounting for 20% and 5% respectively of statewide biosolids use. In 2019, a significant biosolids use – 6% of the statewide total – went to backfilling of the H.M. Holloway gypsum mine in Kern County. This use is tracked as “landfill beneficial use” below in Figure 3.

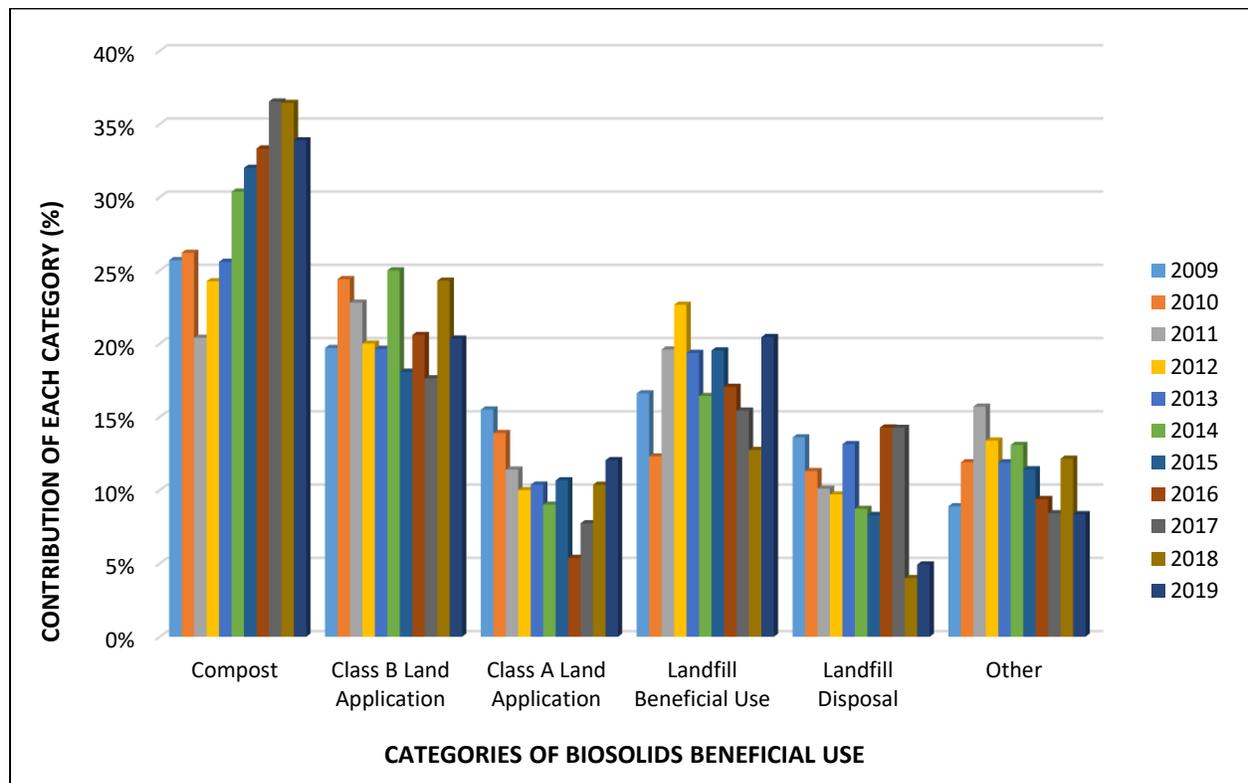


Figure 3. California Trends in Biosolids Uses, 2009-2019

Data provided by USEPA Region 9

Bay Area Trends. Looking solely at the nine county Bay Area, **Figure 4** illustrates end uses of biosolids in 2019. The primary uses continue to be landfill beneficial use, land application, and incineration, which together account for 85 percent of biosolids end uses in the Bay Area. Compost, landfill disposal, and surface disposal levels remained similar to 2015 percentages.

Tonnage for biosolids conveyed to the Lystek Organic Materials Recovery Center (OMRC) is categorized as Class A Exceptional Quality (EQ) liquid fertilizer and has increased from representing 3.8% of Bay Area biosolids end uses in 2017 to 4.5% in 2019. Several Bay Area agencies send their biosolids to the Lystek OMRC. The OMRC conducts further biosolids processing by utilizing LysteGro technology to create a Class A EQ product. Lystek’s hydrolysis process uses high speed shearing, low pressure steam and alkali in an enclosed reactor to transform sludge or biosolids into a liquid fertilizer. Lystek’s fertilizer program in Solano County began in spring 2017. The following agencies sent material to Lystek in 2019: City of Benicia, Central Marin Sanitation Agency, Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District, City of Palo Alto, City of Petaluma, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, City of Santa Rosa, and Vallejo Flood & Wastewater District. LysteGro is used primarily in Solano County, and the product is registered as a fertilizer with the California Department of Food and Agriculture. As a Class A EQ product, LysteGro can be used with no restrictions, and is not subject to the Solano County biosolids ordinance (Solano County Code, Sec. 25-400).

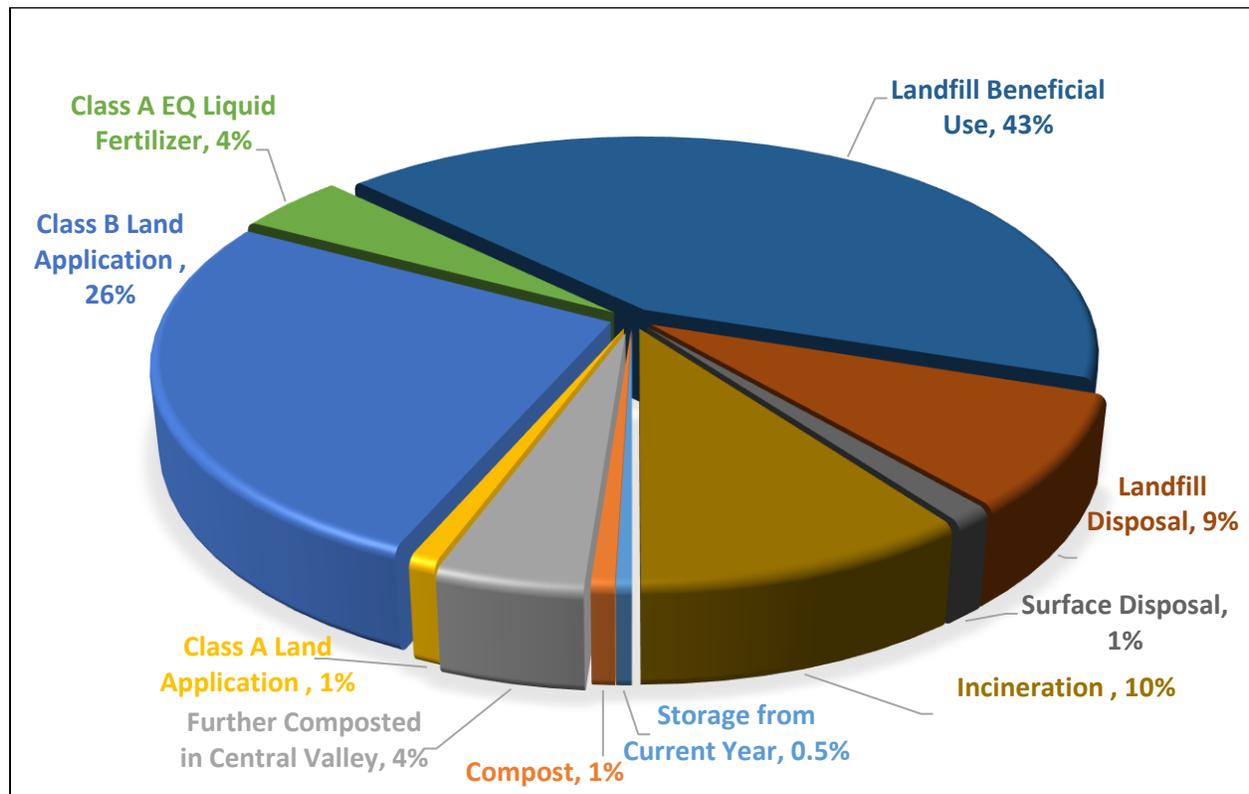


Figure 4. Bay Area Usage of Biosolids, 2019
Data Provided by USEPA Region 9

Counties where biosolids are land applied. Biosolids were predominantly applied to agricultural land in three Northern California counties in 2019 – Sacramento, Merced, and Solano – with Solano County ranking third. **Figure 5** illustrates the distribution of land-applied biosolids among the counties. Smaller amounts were also land applied in Madera, Sonoma, Stanislaus, and Napa counties, among others.

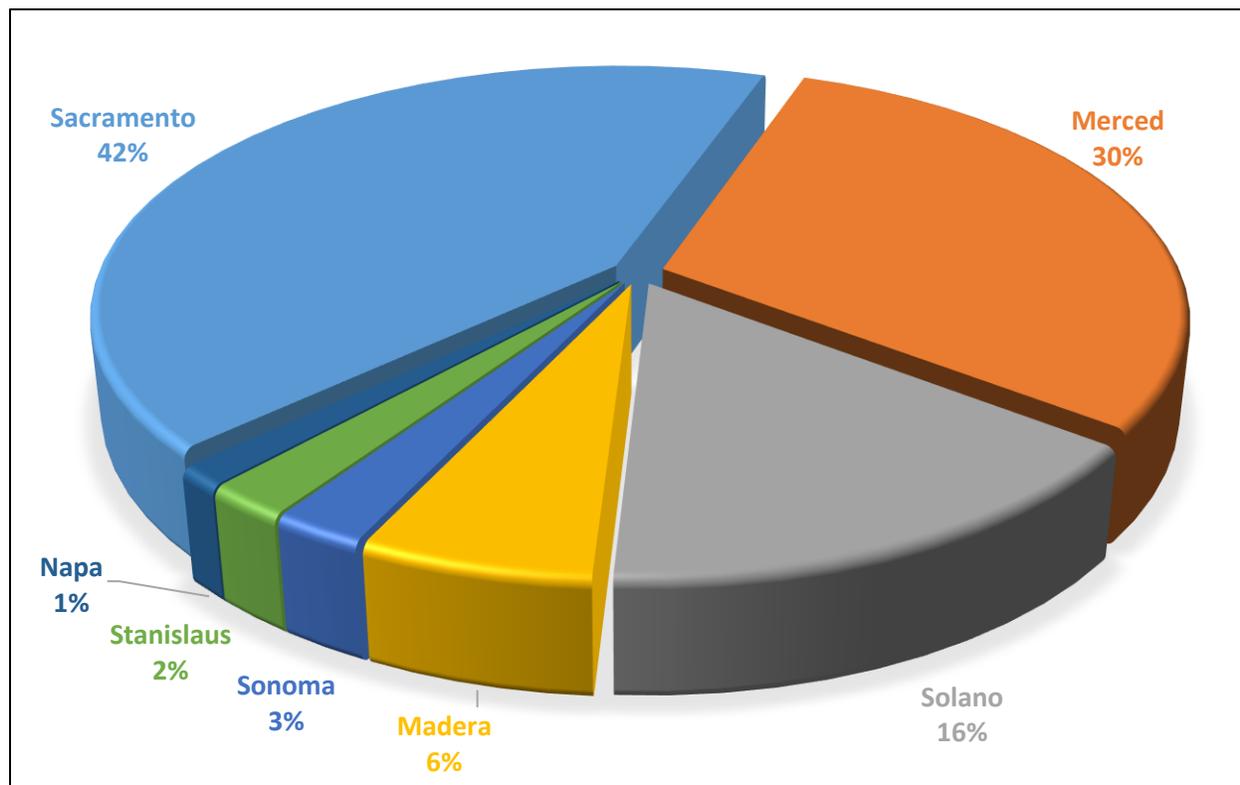


Figure 5. Distribution of Biosolids Land Application among Northern California Counties, 2019

Data provided by USEPA Region 9 and individual agencies

Bay Area Regional Efforts

BACWA Biosolids Committee. The mission of the BACWA Biosolids Committee (The Committee) is to support the development and maintenance of cost-effective, sustainable biosolids management options for the more than 160,000 dry metric tons of biosolids produced in the Bay Area annually. The Committee was formed to provide proactive support and information sharing to member agencies on regional biosolids issues, projects, and proposed regulations and legislation.

In 2020, the Committee completed the 2018 Biosolids Trends Survey Report, which is available at <https://bacwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/BACWA-2018-Biosolids-Survey-Report-Final-2020-12-10.pdf>. BACWA plans to repeat the survey in 2021.

Because of member agencies' level of engagement in the Bay Area Biosolids Coalition at the current time (see below), the Biosolids Committee was placed on hiatus in 2019. The email distribution list continues to be maintained so that the committee can meet again when there is interest. While meetings are on hiatus, the committee will continue to produce this Annual BACWA Report to Solano County, as well as the Biannual BACWA Biosolids Trends Survey.

Bay Area Biosolids Coalition. The Bay Area Biosolids Coalition originally formed in 2004 when a group of agencies came together to evaluate the feasibility of a regional biosolids management project to avoid the threat of a potential ban on land application of biosolids. By 2008, the membership expanded and the group decided to officially brand itself as the Bay Area Biosolids to Energy (BAB2E) Coalition to take advantage of opportunities anticipated to be developed under new state legislation (specifically, Assembly Bill 32 or AB 32). Assembly Bill 32 was adopted in 2006 requiring the state to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 (with further reductions through 2050). To achieve GHG reductions, the state created numerous programs incentivizing renewable energy and low carbon fuel production. This legislation served as a driver to prioritize the conversion of biosolids to energy for the BAB2E Coalition.

In 2016, Governor Brown announced five overarching "pillars" by which he planned to achieve the 2030 GHG reduction target under Senate Bill 32 (SB 32), 40 percent below 1990 levels. These pillars recognize that several major areas of the California economy will need to reduce emissions and do so by:

1. Reducing petroleum use in cars and trucks by 50 percent
2. Increasing the procurement of electricity derived from renewable sources from 33 to 50 percent
3. Doubling the energy efficiency achieved at existing buildings
4. Reducing the release of short-lived climate pollutants (which includes methane)
5. Increasing land-based carbon sequestration

To enact these pillars, Governor Brown signed legislation that either directly or indirectly impacts the disposal and use of WWTP biosolids at landfills, as well as the diversion of other organic waste streams to WWTPs. In an effort to holistically address biosolids end use options, the BAB2E Coalition re-branded themselves as the Bay Area Biosolids Coalition in 2017. While the Coalition continues to be vigilant in identifying biosolids to energy opportunities, the Coalition has expanded its focus to biosolids end use options that manage additional nutrient loading and produce other value-added products to address the Governor's goals and associated regulations in support of GHG reductions statewide. The updated focus of the Coalition continues to satisfy the Solano County Code requirements for land application of biosolids.

The Coalition continues to evaluate biosolids management options with the intent of supporting implementation of at least three options within the next two to three years and

generate products that can be beneficially used locally in all seasons of the year. The Coalition also continues to pursue a multi-pronged approach that includes:

- Educating the public on biosolids management issues in California through public outreach efforts, including the creation of a public website and securing media coverage.
- Advancing the industry and legislative state of knowledge on biosolids as a valuable resource.
- Investigating viable, year-long (weather resilient) alternatives to land application that look beyond "biosolids to energy" and seek to responsibly recycle back value-added products of biosolids to the environment.
- Serving as a technology incubator - particularly for pre-commercial technologies.
- Supporting land application in the Bay Area by seeking to create more capacity for biosolids in the Bay Area marketplace.

The Coalition has established the following goals in support of achieving the above-mentioned objectives, for which associated strategies and key outcomes have been defined that will be pursued over the next one to two years:

- Communicate the value of biosolids for the purposes of increasing understanding, support, and market demand for biosolids.
- Advance independent scientific research on the safety and efficacy of biosolids to inform science-based regulations, guidelines and best management practices.
- Support and expand biosolids land application in the Bay Area.
- Support the development of diverse, cost-effective, and reliable all-weather biosolids projects for the San Francisco Bay Area.

Current Coalition members are:

Central Marin Sanitation Agency	East Bay Municipal Utility District
City of Millbrae	Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District
City of Petaluma	Ironhouse Sanitary District
City of Pleasanton	North San Mateo County Sanitation District
City of San Jose	San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
City of Santa Rosa	Union Sanitary District
Delta Diablo	Vallejo Flood & Wastewater District
Dublin San Ramon Services District	West County Wastewater District

Individual Agency Programs. Individual BACWA agencies are responsible for their own biosolids management programs and each develops its own plan in addition to participating in regional programs. Below are program descriptions from all agencies which sent biosolids to Solano County for agricultural use via land application. All agencies described below produce biosolids according to 40 CFR regulations.

Agencies that land applied Class B biosolids in Solano County either participated in the Bay Area Biosolids Coalition and/or converted portion of their biosolids to Class A either through their own means or at a 3rd party conversion facility (e.g., compost facility or Lystek OMRC).

City of Calistoga. At the City's Dunawael Wastewater Treatment Facility, solids are processed by the treatment methods of thickening and application to drying beds. The material is picked up and land applied to various fields in Solano County by Synagro, and a portion of this material is diverted to produce Class A Biosolids at Synagro's Central Valley Compost site.

Central Marin Sanitation Agency. The Central Marin Sanitation Agency (CMSA) has a contract with Synagro for land application of its biosolids during the dry weather season in Solano county. CMSA also has contracts in place for sending the biosolids to Redwood Landfill for landfill beneficial use and to Lystek International for further processing to meet Class A biosolids requirements. CMSA is currently serving as the Bay Area Biosolids Coalition lead agency.

Delta Diablo. Delta Diablo produces Class B biosolids and contracts with Synagro for biosolids management. Over 90% of the biosolids are land applied in either Solano, Sacramento or Merced Counties with a portion of the material sent to Synagro's Central Valley Compost facility. Delta Diablo is an active participant in the Bay Area Biosolids Coalition and continues to explore additional and alternative biosolids management options.

East Bay Municipal Utility District. EBMUD produces Class B biosolids. In 2020 approximately 62% of the biosolids were land applied, approximately 13% were composted, and the remainder were used for landfill alternative daily cover. While most of the land application occurred in Merced County, a small portion was land applied in Solano County. EBMUD is a participant in the Bay Area Biosolids Coalition.

City of Eureka. The City of Eureka's Elk River Wastewater Treatment Plant contracts with Synagro to land apply biosolids to farmland in Solano, Sonoma, and Sacramento Counties. As part of the Synagro contract, Synagro diverts a portion of Eureka's biosolids to the CVC composting facility in Dos Palos, CA where a Class A product is produced. The City of Eureka continues to investigate feasible and cost-effective Class B disposal options as well as Class A processes for the future.

Fort Bragg Municipal District #1. The Fort Bragg Municipal District #1 Wastewater Treatment facility produces Class B biosolids and contracts with Synagro for biosolids disposal. Synagro transported a portion of the facility's biosolids to their Central Valley Compost site to be further processed into Class A Biosolids.

Ironhouse Sanitary District. The Ironhouse Sanitary District (ISD) Water Recycling Facility is designed to produce Class B biosolids. Approximately half of ISD's biosolids are land applied on District-owned property. The remaining balance are managed by Synagro, which land applies in Solano and Sacramento Counties and typically sends a load per year to Synagro's Central Valley

Compost site for Class A transformation. ISD continues to be a member agency and active participant in the Bay Area Biosolids Coalition.

City of Petaluma. The City of Petaluma's Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility produces Class B biosolids. Digested solids are used as alternative daily cover at municipal solid waste landfills, applied to agricultural land in Solano County, or transferred to the Lystek OMRC for production of and subsequent reuse as Class A biosolids. The City of Petaluma is a member of the Bay Area Biosolids Coalition.

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (Southeast and Oceanside WPCPs). The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) marked its twentieth consecutive season of land application of biosolids for agricultural use in Solano County. The SFPUC also contracts with Synagro to use Class B biosolids for agriculture in Sacramento County and with Lystek to produce a Class A EQ liquid fertilizer. A portion of biosolids were used for alternative daily cover at the Potrero Hills landfills during the 2019-2020 wet weather season, although there are no plans to have SFPUC biosolids used as alternative daily cover for the 2020-2021 wet weather season. The SFPUC is an active participant in the Bay Area Biosolids Coalition.

City of San Leandro. The City of San Leandro's Water Pollution Control Plant typically produces Class A EQ biosolids. In 2020, due to storage of materials in the drying beds from construction, all material was deemed Class B. Production of Class A EQ biosolids is anticipated to resume in 2021. Biosolids are land applied primarily in Sacramento County, with a small fraction going to land application in Solano County.

Sonoma County Water Agency. The Sonoma County Water Agency's (SCWA's) Airport-Larkfield-Wikiup Sanitation Zone treatment plant uses a pond treatment system without routine biosolids removal. Accumulated biosolids are periodically removed from the treatment ponds. In 2020, SCWA contracted with Synagro for a project to remove, dewater, transport, and dispose of the accumulated biosolids. Class B Biosolids were land applied in Solano County and Sacramento County in 2020. The project is ongoing and SCWA will be sending biosolids to Synagro's Central Valley Compost site in 2021.

Town of Windsor. The Town of Windsor Water Reclamation Facility contracts with Synagro to land apply biosolids to farmland in Solano and Sacramento Counties. As part of the Synagro contract, Synagro diverts a portion of its biosolids to its Merced County facility for composting. The Town of Windsor continues to investigate feasible and cost-effective Class B biosolids treatment and process options.

Union Sanitary District. Union Sanitary District (USD) beneficially used most of its biosolids in 2020 and met all USEPA regulations for the 27th consecutive year. USD continues to contract with Synagro for its biosolids management, with nearly 65 percent of USD's biosolids land applied to farmland in Sacramento, Merced and Solano Counties. Approximately 35 percent of biosolids production was delivered to Merced County for producing Class A compost.