

# Biosolids concern council

## Kings County wants report on use of sludge as fertilizer

By GORDON DELANEY Valley Bureau - Tue, Oct 6 - 4:45 AM

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**KENTVILLE —** The possible spreading of biosolids as fertilizer on farmland has raised concerns among Kings County councillors and environmentalists.

Council has asked staff to prepare a report on the issue following a request from the Nova Scotia Environmental Network to ban the practice.

"We all have a certain concern," Warden Fred Whalen said in a recent interview. "One councillor has asked for an immediate moratorium on it."

Representatives from the environmental group appeared at a special council meeting recently in Kentville to express their worries about the possible use of biosolids.

The product comes from an N-Viro Systems Canada facility near the Halifax Stanfield International Airport. Sewage sludge from residential, hospital, industrial, street run-off and commercial sources are treated at the facility and bacteria are destroyed.

Some farmers are using it as fertilizer on their fields, which is much cheaper than conventional nitrogen and potassium fertilizers.

The environmental network believes the product is unsafe, containing contaminants in the sewer sludge that are not being eliminated in the treatment process. Fred Blois and Marilyn Cameron told council they are concerned about the safety of the product and its use in the production of locally grown food.

They say N-Viro plans to distribute and spread 34,000 tonnes of the material on 4,800 hectares of land in the province each year.

Mr. Blois and Ms. Cameron also proposed other solutions for sludge disposal. "What is deeply disturbing is that most Nova Scotians know little or nothing about what is going on," Ms. Cameron, chairwoman of the network's biosolids and waste-water caucus, said in a news release. "In fact, thousands of tonnes of HRM's treated sludges have already been transported and dispersed onto farmland in Kings County this year."

Mr. Whalen said he was not aware of any biosolids being spread in the county. "I heard a rumour of this and one person actually complained about it. But I went to see the person he complained about and he denied it."

He said the province, through the Environment Department, is in the process of preparing a policy on the use of biosolids, "and we didn't really want to jump too far ahead of it."

Brian Smith, the municipality's chief administrative officer, has also been working on the issue through various committees, Mr. Whalen said.

"In the meantime, opponents anxiously wait for the time when this risky practice is finally put to an end and can only hope that not too much of Nova Scotia's precious farmland resource, the food it produces, and the water that drains from it, gets contaminated with sludge pollutants," Ms. Cameron said in the release. ([gdelaney@herald.ca](mailto:gdelaney@herald.ca))