

**CITIZENS FOR SLUDGE-FREE LAND
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November 10, 2003

**Sally Garner, Producer
Mika Brzezinski, Reporter
Andrew Heyward, President
CBS News
524 W. 57th Street
New York, NY 10019**

Re: WEF letter to CBS regarding the network's coverage of sludge spreading

Dear Ms. Garner, Ms.Brzesinski, and Mr. Heyward:

The October 29th letter from the Water Environment Federation (WEF) contains a number of misleading and false statements with regard to the mounting controversy about applying municipal sewage sludges to farmland.

Citizens for Sludge-Free Land (CFSL) is a not-for-profit environmental organization that collects, analyzes, and disseminates accurate and science-based information about sludge disposal options.

There is increasing consensus in the environmental and scientific community that land application of sludge may not be safe. Hundreds of rural residents across the nation are reporting serious adverse health affects after having been exposed to sites that have been spread with lime stabilized Class B sludges. Contrary to what WEF states, some of these cases have been documented in peer reviewed technical and medical journals by Dr. David Lewis and other University of Georgia researchers. Contrary to what WEF states, this research has not been refuted in any peer reviewed published articles.

WEF also claims that land application is an “environmentally beneficial practice.” Yet no environmental group supports this practice. The nation's oldest and largest environmental organization, the Sierra Club, opposes land application because the current rules do not appear to protect human health and the environment. So does the National Farmers Union (with over 300,000 members). Contrary to what WEF claims, the Natural Resources Defense Council, in a recent comment to the EPA Office of Water docket, states that if EPA can't figure out why people are getting

sick from sludge, then the agency should discontinue the spreading of Class B sludge.

Many towns and counties across the nation have banned sludge spreading. Some states do not spread any Class B sewage sludge. Other communities are trying to convince state agencies to put in place more protective rules. This contradicts WEF's statement that there is "tremendous public support" for this practice.

The EPA risk assessment that WEF cites to "prove" that the current sludge regulations are protective, has been criticized in a 2002 National Academy of Sciences report *Biosolids Applied to Land*. In fact, this report repeatedly states that the science behind the current rules is no longer valid and that there is an urgent need for health studies of rural populations exposed to sludge.

Some research by scientists from Cornell University is challenging WEF's claim that sludge spreading under the current rules "enhances" the soil of farmland. After repeated sludging, some farmland may no longer be able to be used for certain crops. In fact, many of us believe that sludge degrades good farmland, gradually turning it into low level waste sites with toxic metals and dioxins and other industry-generated wastes that do not biodegrade but may built up in the food chain or affect groundwater quality. There is documented evidence and EPA data that show that sludge has polluted ground water.

In closing I would like to thank CBS for its fair and balanced coverage of this controversial topic. We look forward to additional in-depth programs about a government policy that appears to harm human beings, live stock, and agricultural land.

Caroline Snyder, Ph.D.

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