



9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 28 May 2021 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

The “Guidelines for the Safe Application of Biosolids to Land” (2003) are being updated. The update is currently in draft form “Guidelines for Beneficial Reuse of Organic Materials on Productive Land” (2017). As the Ministry for the Environment was a primary author of the parent document it is expected the Ministry will have a role in the development of the updated draft guidelines.

Please can you supply information relating to this development of these Biosolids/Organic Materials guidelines (2016-2021) including:

1. All emails, advice, draft materials, data and communication including appendices relating to this consultation received by MfE or produced by MfE.

2. Expert reports (produced or recieved) concerning the chemical toxicity and environmental and human health risk of trace metals/legacy chemicals/contaminants of emerging concern and their metabolites in biosolids/biowaste/sewage sludge released on to agricultural and/or productive land. These reports should include any discussion on soil levels in New Zealand soils concerning trace (heavy metals) including but not limited to, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, mercury, nickel and lead.

3. Reports (produced or recieved) concerning the environmental fate including discussion of bioaccumulation and persistence of trace metals/legacy chemicals/contaminants of emerging concern and their metabolites in biosolids/biowaste/sewage sludge/influent wastewater released on to productive land. This should encompass an expected change in the guideline limits from the 2003 Guidelines for the Safe application of biosolids to land in NZ metal limits to the new draft guideline limits.

4. Information gathering including reports, policy advice and reviews relating to information held with high-income nation-states relating to biosolids/biowaste/sewage sludge released on to productive land, in particular:

(a) Concerning the ecological risk arising from exposures to trace elements/legacy chemicals/contaminants of emerging concern and degradant metabolites.

(b) Analysis, reports, and regulatory information concerning the potential for existing soil profiles and soil biome health to be degraded/compromised by application and bioaccumulation of biosolids/biowaste/sewage sludge containing trace elements/legacy chemicals/contaminants of emerging concern and degradant metabolites.

(c) Analysis, reports, and regulatory information concerning the potential for bioaccumulation in freshwater, groundwater and drinking water sources as a result of diffuse emissions emanating from soil applications.

(d) Analysis, reports, and regulatory information concerning the potential for mixture effects from co-occurring trace elements/legacy chemicals/contaminants of emerging concern and degradant metabolites, and for these mixtures to cause a 'cocktail' effect

5. If information concerning questions 2-4 is not contained with staff or elected members within the Ministry for the Environment, please could the Ministry provide information as to the relevant authority charged with reporting and analysis of these areas, who the Ministry would turn to for advice.

On 23 June 2021 you refined your request to the following:

For the period 2016-2021 regarding the development of updated guidelines on the application of biosolids to land:

- Any reports or advice generated by MfE
- A list of the names of any reports and advice held by MfE regarding the guidelines with the author agency identified.

There is no Ministry generated advice within scope of your request. As previously communicated this is because the Ministry's involvement in the development of the draft guidelines was limited to monitoring their development rather than taking an active role in the drafting.

The Ministry does hold documents within scope of your request authored by other organisations. Please find their details listed below:

Item	Document Title	Author Organisation
1	WWTP Plants' Biosolids metals Graphs for MFE	Watercare Services Ltd
2	The Value of Biosolids in New Zealand – An Industry Assessment	Watercare Services Ltd
3	Review of Guidelines for Beneficial Use of Organic Materials on Productive Land	Bioenergy Association New Zealand
4	From Tapu to Noa – Māori Cultural Views on Human Biowaste Management	Cawthron Institute, ESR Ltd, CScion, Kukupa Research Ltd
5	Review and recommendations on the selection of organic contaminants in the draft Guideline for the Beneficial Use of Organic Waste Products on Land, 2016.	The Centre for Integrated Biowaste Research (CIBR)
6	Organic Materials Guidelines - Contaminant Review - August 2014	CIBR
7	Organic Materials Guidelines – Organic Contaminants Review - August 2014	CIBR
8	Biosolids Guidelines Mark up Vol 2	Environment Canterbury
9	Submissions on first draft of Organic Materials Guideline - July 2017	ESR

Item	Document Title	Author Organisation
10	Updating the Ecological Soil Guideline Values (Eco-SGVs) -June 2019	Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research
11	UPDATED User Guide: Background soil concentrations and soil guideline values for the protection of ecological receptors (Eco-SGVs) – Consultation draft - June 2019	Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research
12	UPDATED Development of soil guideline values for the protection of ecological receptors (Eco-SGVs): Technical document	Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research
13	The CIBR/LEI Community Engagement Framework for Biowastes	CIBR, Lowe Environmental Impact (LEI)
14	Water New Zealand Good Practice Guide Beneficial Use of Organic Materials on Land September 2016	Water New Zealand
15	Guidelines for Beneficial Use of Organic Materials on Productive Land Volume One GUIDE 2017	Water New Zealand
16	Guidelines for Beneficial Use of Organic Materials on Productive Land Volume Two TECHNICAL MANUAL (2017)	Water New Zealand
17	Submission to Water New Zealand Good Practice Guide for Beneficial Use of Organic Waste Products on Land (2017)	Water New Zealand
18	Draft Water New Zealand Good Practice Guide for the Beneficial Use of Organic Waste Products on Land - Christchurch Meeting 23rd February 2017 – Notes	Water New Zealand
19	Draft Water New Zealand Good Practice Guide for the Beneficial Use of Organic Waste Products on Land Hamilton Meeting 21st February 2017 – Notes	Water New Zealand
20	Water New Zealand, Good Practice Guide Beneficial Use of Organic Materials on Land - October 2016	Water New Zealand
21	Water New Zealand Technical Manual Beneficial Use of Organic Materials on Land September 2016	Water New Zealand

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Item	Document Title	Author Organisation
22	Water New Zealand, Good Practice Guide, Beneficial Use of Organic Waste Products on Land, Volume 1: Guide - November 2016	Water New Zealand
23	Water New Zealand, Technical Manual, Beneficial Use of Organic Waste Products on Land, Volume 2: Technical Manual - November 2016	Water New Zealand
24	Draft Water New Zealand Good Practice Guide for the Beneficial Use of Organic Waste Products on Land, Palmerston North Meeting 22nd February 2017 – Notes	Water New Zealand
25	Draft Water New Zealand Good Practice Guide for the Beneficial Use of Organic Waste Products on Land - Queenstown Meeting 24th February 2017 – Notes	Water New Zealand

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision to withhold information relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: ministerials@mfe.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



Glenn Wigley
Director - Policy and Regulatory

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