

Milorganite and the Environment

In the 1970's great concern was expressed about the heavy metals, particularly cadmium, in Milorganite. At one point in late 1979 a citizen subcommittee to the Citizen's Environmental Assessment Base Committee urged the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District to halt Milorganite production. The commissioners of MMSD seriously considered stopping the production of Milorganite. However, before production was stopped the staff of the Milorganite Sales Department demonstrated the situation was greatly exaggerated and production continued. To protect MMSD from possible legal action the commission ordered a notice put on the bags to inform Milorganite users of the cadmium situation. Later, Mike Malk, Manager of Solids Utilization. showed the commissioners of MMSD that Milorganite sales saved the taxpayers of Milwaukee more than \$5 million annually and that any other form of sewage disposal would cost much more.

In order to ease any further objections, MMSD ordered several key industries in the Milwaukee sewage treatment area to pretreat their wastes to remove the cadmium and recycle it. Since then the cadmium levels have dropped to well within the Federal Environmental Protection Agency's recommendations.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR....



Jim Spindler has worked for the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District as a Field Agronomist since February, 1985. He joined them with a B.S. degree in Agronomy from the Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture (1979) and a M.S. in Forestry from Michigan Technological University. Jim has a broad base of experience in agriculture. From July 1982 through September 1984 he served as the Agriculture Coordinator of the Mahalapye Development Trust as a Peace Corps volunteer in Mahalapye Botswana, Africa. Previous to that, he worked in the landscape maintenance business in Philadelphia, landscape construction in Prairie View, Illinois and park maintenance in Roxbury Township, New Jersey. Jim has extensive professional interests that include membership in the WGCSA, O.J. Noer Research Foundation, American Society of Agronomy, Soil Science Society of America, Crop Science Society of America and the Regenerative Agriculture Association. His personal interests and hobbies include hiking, camping, cross-country skiing, golfing, cooking, gardening and keeping tropical fish.