

After more than 10 years of revision, the new draft of the German sewage sludge ordinance (AbfKlärV), which will make phosphorus recovery obligatory for most of Germany's sewage, has been sent by the Federal Ministry of Environment (BMUB) to the European Commission for notification at September 26th 2016. This notification is the standard procedure for new member state regulations (directive 2015/1535/EU). Once approved by EC, the content cannot be changed afterwards except for minor adaptations. During notification, there is a three months stand-still agreement.

The next steps after notification will be cabinet resolution within the German Federal government in January 2017 and presentation for enactment to the Federal Council of Germany and the Parliament in spring 2017. The new ordinance may thus enter into force with a date 1st January 2018.

The ordinance will make phosphorus recovery from sewage sludge obligatory for all German sewage works larger than 50,000 person equivalents (p.e.), that is, around 500 out of a total of c. 9 300 sewage works in Germany. These 500 larger sewage works represent around 2/3 of the total phosphorus removed from German wastewater and transferred into sludge.

For these larger sewage works, phosphorus recovery will be obligatory if the sludge contains more than 2% phosphorus (dry solids), either by P-recovery from the sludge or by mono-incineration and recovery from sewage sludge incineration ash. If $P < 2\%$, then co-incineration will be authorized. Land application of sludge will only be allowed for sewage works $< 50,000$ p.e. Currently 29% of German sewage sludge is spread on farmland, and will have to respect the quality criteria of the new German fertilizing ordinance (DüV). The entry into force of these two new ordinances (AbfKlärV and DüV). Is expected to be cut by half the amount of sewage sludge going to farmland.

The new fertilizing ordinance is the German implementation of the EU Nitrates Directive and will already dramatically impact sewage sludge use in Germany in 2017.

Article by Christian Kabbe (former P-REX).

See also: <http://www.bmub.bund.de/themen/wasser-abfall-boden/abfallwirtschaft/wasser-abfallwirtschaft-download/artikel/abfklarv-klaerschlamverordnung>

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