

PFAS

Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are steadily emerging as a major issue to farmers and ranchers in the United States. Federal agencies should work with state departments of agriculture to keep agricultural operations productive and economically viable by offering financial support and providing access to federal programs, either currently existing or to be created in response to this emerging risk.



BACKGROUND

PFAS are a large group of synthetic fluorinated chemicals that do not fully degrade in the environment. Historically, PFAS chemicals have been widely used in consumer products that are stain, oil, heat and water resistant. Federal and state agencies are increasingly studying the impact of PFAS on humans, the food supply, and the environment. In addition, the means to remedy agricultural land with detections of PFAS.

Does PFAS impact our food supply?

- The U.S. food supply is among the safest in the world. To date, most food does not have a detectable level of PFAS, according to the FDA.¹ States and federal partner are working to test food grown in specific geographic areas with known PFAS contamination.
- No PFAS have been detected in over 97 percent of the fresh and processed foods tested from the FDA's Total Diet Study, which began in 2019.²
- Continued research and additional analyses of foods, including animal food, will help inform state and federal partners' efforts to identify and prioritize activities in understanding the threshold levels of PFAS in food.

PFAS in Biosolids

- There have been three primary management practices for biosolids – the solid matter left at the end of the wastewater treatment process – use and disposal: land application, incinerations, and placement in solid waste landfills.
- The benefits of using biosolids as soil amendments are similar to those provided by animal manures. Biosolids provide crops with critical nutrients and organic matter. However, recent evidence has shown that PFAS can be and are present in biosolids.

¹ "Questions and Answers on PFAS in Food" January 2024, <https://www.fda.gov/food/process-contaminants-food/questions-and-answers-pfas-food>.

² Ibid.



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- NASDA, in partnership with the EPA and Environmental Council of the States, jointly developed “[Principles for Preventing and Managing PFAS in Biosolids](#).” The principles highlight the importance of collaboration among state and federal environmental and agricultural agencies as the science and policy landscape evolves.



NASDA’S POSITION, POLICY AND ACTIONS

NASDA supports developing strategies to remediate lands contaminated with PFAS that allow farmers and ranchers to keep their agricultural land productive.

NASDA supports federal legislation that increases state funding and resources for responding to identified and emerging pollutants, particularly PFAS, impacting agricultural lands, groundwater, surface water, livestock and the nation’s food supply.

NASDA encourages the development of a federal framework that collaboratively supports states responding to PFAS and minimizes impacts on interstate commerce.

NASDA encourages using the best available science and appropriate risk assessment in establishing any regulatory standards of threshold levels for PFAS in food products. We encourage complete toxicological evaluations and interpretations before any relevant federal agency releases the data.

NASDA supports robust financial support for impacted farmers.

NASDA supports federally funding research for mitigation strategies on the risk of PFAS contaminants in the food supply and cleanup efforts.



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