Class A Production of Biosolids

The City of Los Angeles produces an Exceptional Quality (EQ) biosolids that is beneficially used as a fertilizer and soil amendment. EQ biosolids meets the Class A pathogen reduction requirements, the most stringent metal limits (pollutant concentrations), and the vector attraction reduction standards. The City produces high quality Class A biosolids that contains little or no pathogens and is safe for land application and protective of public health and the environment.

In 1999, Kern County adopted an ordinance that ban the application of Class B biosolids and established a requirement that only Class A Exceptional Quality (EQ) biosolids be applied in the unincorporated areas. When the Kern County Ordinance was passed the City was using the Anaerobic Digestion process to produce EQ Class B biosolids. Anaerobic Digestion is a process whereby solid organic material is broken down in a controlled, oxygen-free environment by bacteria naturally occurring in the solid material. The digesters were operating at a temperature of 96 degree Fahrenheit to produce Class B biosolids.

The City was completing its purchase of farm land in Kern County and if we wanted to continue our long range biosolids management program through land application in Kern, we would have to comply with the new Kern County Class A Biosolids Ordinance. The City began the process to produce Class A biosolids in November, 1999. Several pilot and research projects were investigated and developed. The City started testing new temperature and process designs in the existing digesters and decided on the process of heating the digester to higher thermophilic temperatures and subsequent batch digestion to produce Class A biosolids. To accommodate the process changes the City invested in new equipment and technology. After three years, and investing more than $16 million dollars to upgrade the Hyperion Treatment Plant and Terminal Island Water Reclamation Plant to allow additional holding time and increased temperatures to destroy microorganisms, the City was able to produce Class A biosolids and meet the Kern County Ordinance requirements by the January 2003 deadline.