

Growers try to get ahead of sustainable packaging demands



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Growers & Packaging
Biosolid Questions
Strategy for Food Waste
Rural Energy Guide
Report from the MT Outpost

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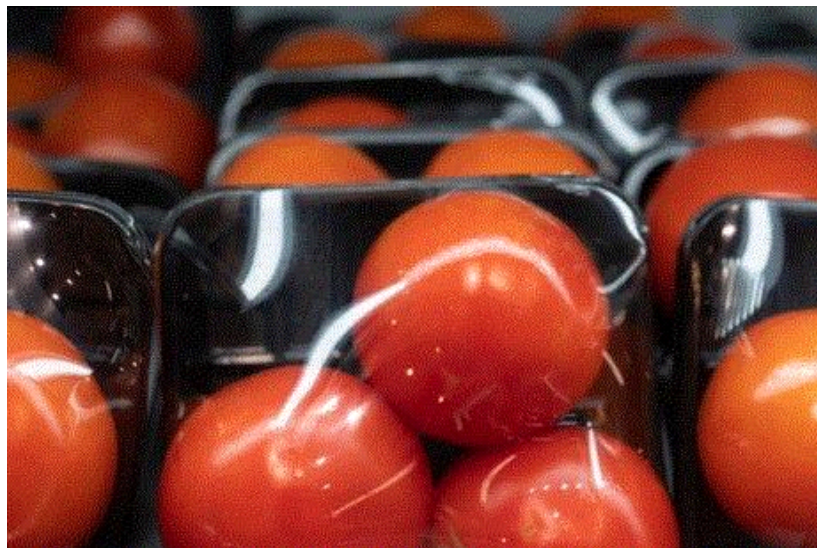


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Canadian Growers Try to Get Ahead of Packaging Requirements

Western Growers and the Canadian Produce Marketing Association are tackling the issue of sustainable packaging. The two organizations just formed a working group that will address the changing landscape of packaging requirements in North America.

Already, there is a pre-proposal in Canada that is advocating for 75% of fresh produce in Canadian stores to be sold in bulk or non-plastic packaging by 2026, moving up to 95% by 2028.



The Sustainable Produce Packaging Alignment for North America (SPPA) will develop unified guidelines for use across the North American fresh produce supply chain, with a target completion date of December 2025.

“Packaging is key to ensuring the quality, affordability and safety of fresh produce,” said Western Growers President and CEO Dave Puglia in a [press release](#). “Consumers are requesting high-quality fresh produce from our growers and changes in packaging. As such, the industry is facing new and aggressive demands from both the public and private sector – demands that are often in conflict with each other, and don’t fully recognize industry realities and progress. The intersection of sustainability with packaging must be addressed for the continued trade with our most important partners and continued availability of nutritious foods for consumers.”

The SPPA project plans to:

- develop industry-focused analysis, white papers and web tools on fresh produce packaging technology for U.S. specialty crop growers.
- host workshops to educate and align stakeholders.
- organize technical working group meetings to leverage industry expertise to craft the tools above.
- launch a public-facing resource to inform stakeholders on how to use the guide once it becomes available.



Biosolid Research Raises Questions

Biosolids left over from wastewater treatment often find their way into fertilizers and landscape applications. A new study from Johns Hopkins details the analysis of biosolid samples from 12 cities, with 92 compounds present in 80% or more of the samples. Many of these are pharmaceuticals and industrial chemicals.

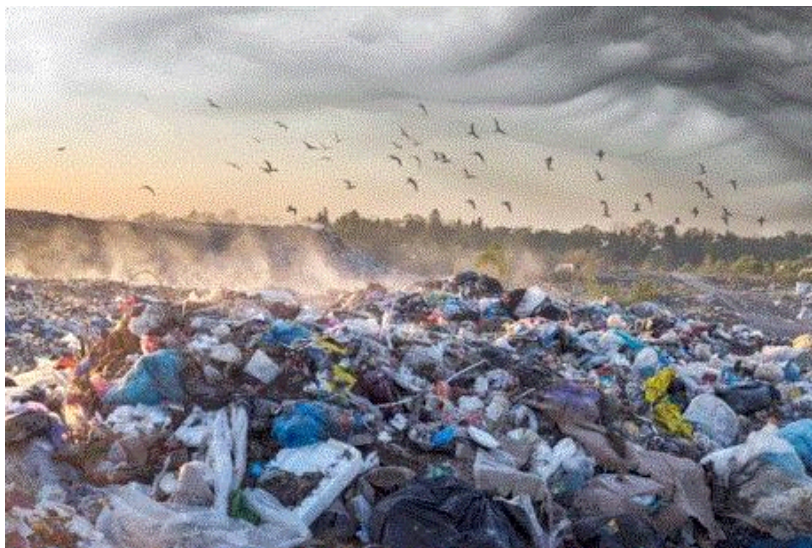
Of course the question on everyone’s mind is how safe that makes biosolids and resulting products down the line, but this particular research was only targeted at identifying which compounds are present and might pose a risk. The lead author, Matthew Newmeyer was interviewed in [this article](#) and said, “We’re not saying that these compounds pose a risk right now, because we haven’t done a formal risk assessment. We’re saying that these have a potential to be problematic and we need more information in order to make sure these biosolids are safe.”

The research team plans to continue to dig into the issue, to see if the concentrations found are great enough to pose a risk workers or the food grown with biosolid amendments.



National Strategy to Reduce Food Waste

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the White House recently announced the formation of a National Strategy for Reducing Food Loss and Waste and Recycling Organics.



Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said, "This National Strategy charts a course to reduce our nation's food loss and waste by 50% by 2030, and I am encouraged by the actions outlined for USDA and our federal partners. Everyone has a role to play in reducing food loss and waste, and I hope that these federal commitments will inspire and catalyze action in the private sector and communities around the U.S."

A large catalyst for the initiative is the amount of methane emissions from landfills that is created by food waste. They estimate that each year in the U.S., food loss and waste create greenhouse gas pollutants equal to the emissions of 60 coal-fired power plants.

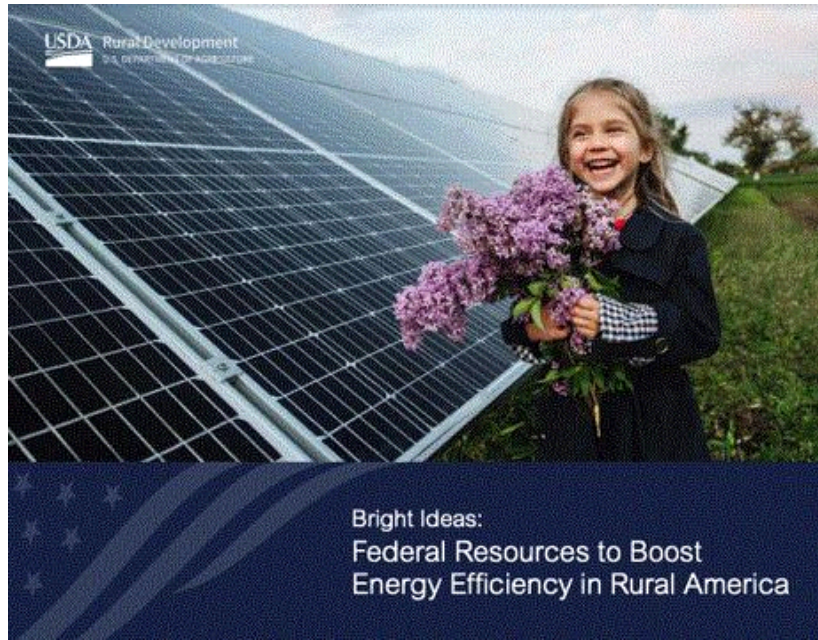
The strategy aims to prevent food loss, prevent food waste, increase recycling for all organic waste, and to support policies that encourage organics recycling and the prevention of food loss.

You can learn more about the strategy [HERE](#).



New Rural Energy Resource Guide

Loyal readers will know that there are a lot of grant and loan opportunities in the U.S. for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. But anyone who has looked into taking advantage of those programs also knows that it's often a complicated process with more options than there are explanations.



Good news! There's a new resource for you. The USDA just put out a new guide with all the USDA Rural Development programs that can help you finance renewable energy. You can download your copy of *Bright Ideas: Federal Resources to Boost Energy Efficiency in Rural America* right [HERE](#).

Report from the MT Outpost

Less than a month ago, I was covering my vegetable garden every night to protect it from frosts. While I was away last week, the invasive weeds began to bloom, a taunting announcement of all the weeds I missed. And now, faced with a heat wave, I'm hoping my plants can handle the heat stress.

Meanwhile, our crisp mornings have been replaced with the hazy filter of wildfire smoke these last couple of days—a true sign that summer has made her wild shift in the Rockies. I'll be putting a few landscaping projects on hold this weekend, opting to put the boat on the Yellowstone River for a cooler respite.

Until next time,



Jennifer Duffield White

jwhite@ballpublishing.com

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