



Thanks for Asking – FPR

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Why are Food Processing Residuals (FPR) from the plant applied to farmland?

The thought of residuals, of any kind, applied to land can be off-putting. That is until you understand the science of how this process enhances soil health. Nutrient-rich food processing residuals (FPR) are safely and accurately applied by farmers to area farmland because they are beneficial for both soils and crops. A recent report by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) reconfirmed that land application of Nicholas Meat's FPR is being done correctly, safely, and in accordance with regulations. Though Nicholas Meat does not directly engage in land application of FPR, as a supplier of FPR, the company fully cooperated with the DEP as it investigated local land application practices. The DEP's lengthy investigation, which involved a month of surveillance, numerous inspections, and soil sampling, revealed that "at no point were there any runoff issues observed nor any setback issues. Additionally, no evidence of over application, either on a per year application basis or for the year, has been noted based on the records provided, which include applications from May 1st through August 31st."

Nicholas Meat is hopeful that the results of the DEP's investigation will reassure the community that land application of FPR is indeed beneficial to local farmland and, when implemented properly, as it was here, poses no risk to area residents or the environment. A major goal of soil conservation is soil health, which is achieved by increasing the organic matter (OM) in the soil. That is exactly what FPR do. FPR, much like green manure (growing plants, cover crop or crop stubble tilled into the soil) and livestock manure, boosts the organic matter that, in-turn, feeds the microbial population in the soil. More microbes create more nutrient cycling, and healthier soils.

The organic matter in the FPR also helps to sustain moisture in the soils, preventing run-off of beneficial nutrients and keeping them onsite where they can have the most benefit. Farmers who land apply the FPR supplied by Nicholas Meat are required to have and adhere to a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP). Under an NMP, farmers are required to maintain detailed records, including application maps identifying setback areas, application quantities, and the crops that are grown onsite. Periodically, soil samples are tested to ensure adequate assimilation of the FPR into the soil and verify that pollutants are not introduced to the soil and crops.

Nicholas Meat is just one of over 900 Pennsylvania processing facilities that generate the FPR that farmers use throughout the Commonwealth.

Do you have a question we can answer? Send us an email at info@nicholasmeats.com. We look forward to seeing your questions and thanks for asking!

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