



Municipalities cooperate to improve their sludge handling, produce biogas fuel for vehicles and spread sludge on farm land as a fertilizer

Swedish municipalities are struggling with the problem of what to do with sewage sludge which, in addition to valuable nutrients, contains both heavy metals and unwanted organics. The municipality of Hörby contracts a local supplier for spreading the sludge on fallow plantations. However this is not entirely according to the trade organization recommendations. If sludge is to be spread on agricultural land it must be certified. The sludge from the sewage treatment plant in Hörby is neither stabilized nor sanitized. In other words, the solution that Hörby currently uses is not sustainable in the long run. Also the legislation is about to be changed, leading to tougher requirements. Local contractors are hence expected to become more and more reluctant to spreading the sludge since the amount that can be spread will probably be reduced due to the regulatory changes.

Hörby municipality has for several years been collaborating with Östra Göinge, Bromölla, Osby, Karlshamn, Ronneby and Olofström to jointly develop a long-term solution to the sludge problem.

- Hopefully it will be a joint anaerobic digestion plant in Mörrum. We have done preliminary studies and are now investigating how to structure the ownership, says Maria Persson, head of operations at Mittskåne Vatten. She points out that cooperation is needed between small municipalities in order to be able to solve a big issue like sludge handling in a sustainable matter. This does not only lower the economic burden on each municipality, but also results in positive work-related gains. Within the waste management area you can find several areas of cooperation between municipalities, a structure that also could be incorporated in wastewater treatment plants and the handling of sludge.

The reason municipalities advocate that the common anaerobic digestion plant is placed in Mörrum is partly because there already is an upgrading plant for vehicle fuel located in Mörrum. It is an advantage to be able to refine and produce biogas as a vehicle fuel. At the same time it reduces the amount of sludge. The goal, says Maria Persson, is to be able to spread the remaining sludge on arable land and to do so they must pass a REVAQ certification. To become REVAQ certified, you are required to produce extensive documentation, a tough job for a small municipality.

- The metals are a major problem. We need to find the pollution sources and persuade both industry and residents not to spill or flush down substances that will exceed the limits, says Maria Persson.

As a part of this process, detective work will have to be done. By sampling heavy metals

along the grid and working upstream, they will hopefully be able to find the polluters and eliminate the sources. This process is necessary if a municipality wants to become REVAQ certified. The sampling and upstream work is partly financed by the European Union as a part of the Euroslam project.

- We want to spread sludge on farm land but if the quality does not meet the requirements, we might have to combust it. Much will depend on the new legislation and the limit values for metals, says Maria Persson.

<http://www.anpdm.com/pdf/10507779/414251407046445D457740445F4271>

Photo: Sampling in Hörby municipality

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