

AGRICULTURAL WASTE MANAGEMENT  
Geary County, Kansas

The nature of the soil is also important in the application of organic wastes and wastewater to land as fertilizers and irrigation; it is also important when the soil is used as a medium for treatment and disposal of these wastes. Favorable soil properties are required to prevent environmental damage.

The use of organic wastes and wastewater as production resources will result in energy conservation, prevent the waste of these important resources, and prevent problems associated with their disposal. Where disposal is the goal, and a maximum amount is disposed in a minimum area to hold costs to a minimum, risk of environmental damage is the principal constraint. Where the reuse goal is pursued, and a minimum amount is applied to a maximum area to obtain the greatest benefit, environmental damage is unlikely.

Interpretations developed for waste management may include ratings for (1) manure and food processing wastes; (2) municipal sewage sludge; (3) irrigation use of wastewater; or (4) treatment of wastewater by the slow rate process, overland flow process, or rapid infiltration process. If available, these should be located in this subsection.

Soil properties are important considerations in areas where soils are used as sites for the treatment and disposal of organic waste and wastewater. Selection of soils with properties that favor waste management can help to prevent environmental damage.

The Ag-Waste tables show the degree and kind of soil limitations affecting the treatment of agricultural waste, including municipal and food-processing wastewater and effluent from lagoons or storage ponds. Municipal wastewater is the waste stream from a municipality. It contains domestic waste and may contain industrial waste. It may have received primary or secondary treatment. It is rarely untreated sewage. Food-processing wastewater results from the preparation of fruits, vegetables, milk, cheese, and meats for public consumption. In places it is high in content of sodium and chloride. In the context of these tables, the effluent in lagoons and storage ponds is from facilities used to treat or store food-processing wastewater or domestic or animal waste. Domestic and food-processing wastewater is very dilute, and the effluent from the facilities that treat or store it commonly is very low in content of carbonaceous and nitrogenous material; the content of nitrogen commonly ranges from 10 to 30 milligrams per liter. The wastewater from animal waste treatment lagoons or storage ponds, however, has much higher concentrations of these materials, mainly because the manure has not been diluted as much as the domestic waste. The content of nitrogen in this wastewater generally ranges from 50 to 2,000 milligrams per liter. When wastewater is applied, checks should be made to ensure that nitrogen, phosphorus, heavy metals, and salts are not added in excessive amounts.

The ratings in the tables are for waste management systems that not only dispose of and treat organic waste or wastewater but also are beneficial to crops (application of manure and food-processing waste, application of sewage sludge, and disposal of wastewater by irrigation) and for waste management systems that are designed only for the purpose of wastewater disposal and treatment (overland flow of wastewater, rapid infiltration of wastewater, and slow rate treatment of wastewater).

The ratings are both verbal and numerical. Rating class terms indicate the extent to which the soils are limited by all of the soil features that affect agricultural waste management. Not limited indicates that the soil has features that are very favorable for the specified use. Good performance and very low maintenance can be expected. Slightly limited indicates that the soil has features that are generally favorable for the specified use. The limitations are minor and can be easily overcome. Good performance and low maintenance can be expected. Somewhat limited indicates that the soil has features that are moderately favorable for the specified use. The limitations can be overcome or minimized by special planning, design, or installation. Fair performance and moderate maintenance can be expected. Very limited indicates that the soil has one or more features that are unfavorable for the specified use. The limitations generally cannot be overcome without major soil reclamation, special design, or expensive installation procedures. Poor performance and high maintenance can be expected.

Numerical ratings in the tables indicate the severity of individual limitations. The ratings are shown as decimal fractions ranging from 0.00 to 1.00. They indicate gradations between the point at which a soil feature has the greatest negative impact on the use (1.00) and the point at which the soil feature is not a limitation (0.00).

Application of manure and food-processing waste not only disposes of waste material but also can improve crop production by increasing the supply of nutrients in the soils where the material is applied. Manure is the excrement of livestock and poultry, and food-processing waste is damaged fruit and vegetables and the peelings, stems, leaves, pits, and soil particles removed in food preparation. The manure and food-processing waste are either solid, slurry, or liquid. Their nitrogen content varies. A high content of nitrogen limits the application rate. Toxic or otherwise dangerous wastes, such as those mixed with the lye used in food processing, are not considered in the ratings.

The ratings are based on the soil properties that affect absorption, plant growth, microbial activity, erodibility, the rate at which the waste is applied, and the method by which the waste is applied. The properties that affect absorption include permeability, depth to a water table, ponding, the sodium adsorption ratio, depth to bedrock or a cemented pan, and available water capacity. The properties that affect plant growth and microbial activity include reaction, the sodium adsorption ratio, salinity, and bulk density. The wind erodibility group, the soil erodibility factor K, and slope are considered in estimating the likelihood that wind erosion or water erosion will transport the waste material from the application site. Stones, cobbles, a water table, ponding, and flooding can hinder the application of waste. Permanently frozen soils are unsuitable for waste treatment.

Application of sewage sludge not only disposes of waste material but also can improve crop production by increasing the supply of nutrients in the soils where the material is applied. In the context of this table, sewage sludge is the residual product of the treatment of municipal sewage. The solid component consists mainly of cell mass, primarily bacteria cells that developed during secondary treatment and have incorporated soluble organics into their own bodies. The sludge has small amounts of sand, silt, and other solid debris. The content of nitrogen varies. Some sludge has constituents that are toxic to plants or hazardous to the food chain, such as heavy metals and exotic organic compounds, and should be analyzed chemically prior to use.

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The content of water in the sludge ranges from about 98 percent to less than 40 percent. The sludge is considered liquid if it is more than about 90 percent water, slurry if it is about 50 to 90 percent water, and solid if it is less than about 50 percent water.

The ratings in the table are based on the soil properties that affect absorption, plant growth, microbial activity, erodibility, the rate at which the sludge is applied, and the method by which the sludge is applied. The properties that affect absorption, plant growth, and microbial activity include permeability, depth to a water table, ponding, the sodium adsorption ratio, depth to bedrock or a cemented pan, available water capacity, reaction, salinity, and bulk density. The wind erodibility group, the soil erodibility factor K, and slope are considered in estimating the likelihood that wind erosion or water erosion will transport the waste material from the application site. Stones, cobbles, a water table, ponding, and flooding can hinder the application of sludge. Permanently frozen soils are unsuitable for waste treatment.

Disposal of wastewater by irrigation not only disposes of municipal wastewater and wastewater from food-processing plants, lagoons, and storage ponds but also can improve crop production by increasing the amount of water available to crops. The ratings in the table are based on the soil properties that affect the design, construction, management, and performance of the irrigation system. The properties that affect design and management include the sodium adsorption ratio, depth to a water table, ponding, available water capacity, permeability, slope, and flooding. The properties that affect construction include stones, cobbles, depth to bedrock or a cemented pan, depth to a water table, and ponding.

The properties that affect performance include depth to bedrock or a cemented pan, bulk density, the sodium adsorption ratio, salinity, reaction, and the cation-exchange capacity, which is used to estimate the capacity of a soil to adsorb heavy metals. Permanently frozen soils are not suitable for disposal of wastewater by irrigation.

See the National Soil Handbook, September 1992, Part 620, for criteria used in rating soils for sanitary facilities and waste management.

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(The information in this table indicates the dominant soil condition but does not eliminate the need for onsite investigation. The numbers in the value columns range from 0.00 to 1.00. The larger the value, the greater the potential limitation. See text for further explanation of ratings in this table.)

Map symbol and soil name	Pct of map unit	Application of manure and food- processing waste		Application of sewage sludge		Disposal of wastewater by irrigation	
		Rating class and limiting features	Value	Rating class and limiting features	Value	Rating class and limiting features	Value
Be: Benfield-----	42	Very limited Restricted permeability Slope	1.00 1.00	Very limited Restricted permeability Slope	1.00 1.00	Very limited Restricted permeability Too steep for surface application	1.00 1.00
		Droughty	0.01	Droughty	0.01	Too steep for sprinkler application	1.00
		Depth to bedrock	0.01	Depth to bedrock	0.01	Droughty Depth to bedrock	0.01 0.01
Florence-----	28	Somewhat limited Droughty	0.37	Somewhat limited Droughty	0.37	Very limited Too steep for surface application	1.00
		Restricted permeability	0.30	Restricted permeability	0.22	Too steep for sprinkler application	0.39
		Slope	0.16	Slope	0.16	Droughty Restricted permeability	0.37 0.22
Cc: Clime-----	75	Very limited Slope	1.00	Very limited Slope	1.00	Very limited Too steep for surface application	1.00
		Restricted permeability	1.00	Restricted permeability	1.00	Too steep for sprinkler application	1.00
		Depth to bedrock	0.20	Depth to bedrock	0.20	Restricted permeability	1.00
		Droughty	0.10	Droughty	0.10	Depth to bedrock Droughty	0.20 0.10
Cf: Clime-----	60	Very limited Restricted permeability Slope	1.00 0.84	Very limited Restricted permeability Slope	1.00 0.84	Very limited Restricted permeability Too steep for surface application	1.00 1.00
		Depth to bedrock	0.46	Depth to bedrock	0.46	Too steep for sprinkler application	0.89
		Droughty	0.11	Droughty	0.11	Depth to bedrock Droughty	0.46 0.11
Sogn-----	20	Very limited Depth to bedrock Droughty Runoff limitation	1.00 1.00 0.40	Very limited Droughty Depth to bedrock	1.00 1.00	Very limited Droughty Depth to bedrock Too steep for surface application	1.00 1.00 0.31
Cr: Crete-----	90	Very limited Restricted permeability Too acid	1.00 0.11	Very limited Restricted permeability Too acid	1.00 0.42	Very limited Restricted permeability Too acid	1.00 0.42
Cs: Crete-----	90	Very limited Restricted permeability Too acid	1.00 0.11	Very limited Restricted permeability Too acid	1.00 0.42	Very limited Restricted permeability Too acid Too steep for surface application	1.00 0.42 0.00
Ct: Crete-----	90	Very limited Restricted permeability Too acid	1.00 0.11	Very limited Restricted permeability Too acid	1.00 0.42	Very limited Restricted permeability Too steep for surface application Too acid Too steep for sprinkler application	1.00 0.66 0.42 0.00
Eu: Eudora-----	85	Somewhat limited		Very limited		Somewhat limited	

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		Rating class and limiting features	Value	Rating class and limiting features	Value	Rating class and limiting features	Value
Ge: Geary-----	85	Flooding Filtering capacity	0.60 0.00	Flooding Filtering capacity	1.00 0.00	Flooding Filtering capacity	0.60 0.00
		Somewhat limited Too acid	0.05	Somewhat limited Too acid	0.21	Somewhat limited Too steep for surface application Too acid Too steep for sprinkler application	0.66 0.21 0.00
Gf: Geary-----	85	Somewhat limited Slope	0.37	Somewhat limited Slope	0.37	Very limited Too steep for surface application Too steep for sprinkler application Too acid	1.00 0.59 0.21
		Too acid	0.05	Too acid	0.21		
He: Haynie-----	55	Very limited Flooding	1.00	Very limited Flooding	1.00	Very limited Flooding	1.00
Hf: Hobbs-----	89	Very limited Flooding	1.00	Very limited Flooding	1.00	Very limited Flooding	1.00
Hg: Hobbs-----	89	Somewhat limited Flooding	0.60	Very limited Flooding	1.00	Somewhat limited Flooding	0.60
Hm: Holder-----	95	Somewhat limited Too acid	0.22	Somewhat limited Too acid	0.77	Somewhat limited Too acid	0.77
Ho: Holder-----	75	Somewhat limited Too acid	0.22	Somewhat limited Too acid	0.77	Somewhat limited Too acid Too steep for surface application	0.77 0.31
Id: Irwin-----	85	Very limited Restricted permeability Runoff limitation	1.00 0.40	Very limited Restricted permeability Sodium content	1.00 0.08	Very limited Restricted permeability Too steep for surface application Sodium content	1.00 0.31 0.08
		Sodium content	0.08				
Ka: Kahola-----	75	Very limited Flooding	1.00	Very limited Flooding	1.00	Very limited Flooding	1.00
Kb: Kahola-----	75	Somewhat limited Flooding	0.60	Very limited Flooding	1.00	Somewhat limited Flooding	0.60
Ko: Konza-----	85	Very limited Restricted permeability Runoff limitation Too acid	1.00 0.40 0.11	Very limited Restricted permeability Too acid	1.00 0.42	Very limited Restricted permeability Too acid	1.00 0.42
Lm: Ladysmith-----	90	Very limited Restricted permeability Runoff limitation	1.00 0.40	Very limited Restricted permeability	1.00	Very limited Restricted permeability	1.00
Lo: Longford-----	85	Very limited Restricted permeability	1.00	Very limited Restricted permeability	1.00	Very limited Restricted permeability	1.00
M-W: Miscellaneous Water-	100	Not rated		Not rated		Not rated	
Mb: Mccook-----	85	Somewhat limited Flooding	0.60	Very limited Flooding	1.00	Somewhat limited Flooding	0.60
Mc: Mccook-----	85	Not limited		Somewhat limited		Not limited	

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		Rating class and limiting features	Value	Rating class and limiting features	Value	Rating class and limiting features	Value
Mk: Mccook-----	63	Somewhat limited Flooding	0.60	Flooding	0.40	Somewhat limited Flooding	0.60
Smokyhill-----	25	Very limited Restricted permeability Ponding Flooding	1.00 1.00 1.00 0.60	Very limited Flooding Restricted permeability Ponding	1.00 1.00 1.00 1.00	Very limited Restricted permeability Ponding Flooding	1.00 1.00 1.00 0.60
Mu: Muir-----	94	Not limited		Somewhat limited Flooding	0.40	Not limited	
Oc: Orthents-----	100	Very limited Low adsorption Runoff limitation	1.00 0.40	Very limited Low adsorption	1.00	Very limited Low adsorption Too steep for surface application	1.00 0.08
Or: Orthents, Earthen Dam-----	100	Not rated		Not rated		Not rated	
Pt: Pits, Quarries-----	100	Not rated		Not rated		Not rated	
Ra: Reading-----	85	Somewhat limited Restricted permeability Too acid	0.30 0.03	Somewhat limited Flooding Restricted permeability Too acid	0.40 0.22 0.14	Somewhat limited Restricted permeability Too acid	0.22 0.14
Re: Reading-----	85	Somewhat limited Restricted permeability Too acid	0.30 0.03	Somewhat limited Flooding Restricted permeability Too acid	0.40 0.22 0.14	Somewhat limited Restricted permeability Too acid	0.22 0.14
Sa: Sarpy-----	90	Very limited Filtering capacity Flooding Leaching limitation Droughty	1.00 0.60 0.45 0.42	Very limited Flooding Filtering capacity Droughty	1.00 1.00 0.42	Very limited Filtering capacity Flooding Droughty	1.00 0.60 0.42
Sc: Sarpy-----	90	Very limited Droughty Filtering capacity Flooding Leaching limitation	1.00 1.00 0.60 0.45	Very limited Droughty Flooding Filtering capacity	1.00 1.00 1.00	Very limited Droughty Filtering capacity Flooding	1.00 1.00 0.60
Sh: Solomon-----	85	Very limited Restricted permeability Ponding Flooding Runoff limitation	1.00 1.00 0.60 0.40	Very limited Restricted permeability Flooding Ponding	1.00 1.00 1.00	Very limited Restricted permeability Ponding Flooding	1.00 1.00 0.60
St: Sutphen-----	80	Very limited Restricted permeability Ponding Flooding Runoff limitation	1.00 1.00 0.60 0.40	Very limited Restricted permeability Flooding Ponding	1.00 1.00 1.00	Very limited Restricted permeability Ponding Flooding	1.00 1.00 0.60
Tn: Tully-----	85	Very limited		Very limited		Very limited	

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		Rating class and limiting features	Value	Rating class and limiting features	Value	Rating class and limiting features	Value
To: Tully-----	85	Restricted permeability	1.00	Restricted permeability	1.00	Restricted permeability Too steep for surface application	1.00 0.00
		Very limited Restricted permeability	1.00	Very limited Restricted permeability	1.00	Very limited Restricted permeability Too steep for surface application Too steep for sprinkler application	1.00 0.66 0.00
Vc: Valentine-----	85	Very limited Filtering capacity	1.00	Very limited Filtering capacity	1.00	Very limited Too steep for surface application	1.00
		Leaching limitation	0.45	Slope	0.16	Filtering capacity	1.00
		Slope	0.16	Droughty	0.02	Too steep for sprinkler application	0.39
		Droughty	0.02			Droughty	0.02
W: Water-----	100	Not rated		Not rated		Not rated	
We: Wells-----	50	Somewhat limited Too acid	0.03	Somewhat limited Too acid	0.14	Somewhat limited Too acid Too steep for surface application	0.14 0.00
Ortello-----	30	Somewhat limited Filtering capacity	0.00	Somewhat limited Filtering capacity	0.00	Somewhat limited Filtering capacity Too steep for surface application	0.00 0.00
Wf: Wells-----	50	Somewhat limited Too acid	0.03	Somewhat limited Too acid	0.14	Somewhat limited Too steep for surface application Too acid Too steep for sprinkler application	0.66 0.14 0.00
Ortello-----	30	Somewhat limited Filtering capacity	0.00	Somewhat limited Filtering capacity	0.00	Somewhat limited Too steep for surface application Filtering capacity Too steep for sprinkler application	0.66 0.00 0.00

