NE Ethanol Production and Treated Seed
October 1, 2020

Background:

- AltEn, LLC operates an ethanol facility located near Mead, NE. This facility has been in operation for approximately 5 years and uses treated seed corn and some amounts of other treated seed in its production process. It appears this seed is provided to the facility free of charge.
- The ethanol process by-product is wet cake, which was previously offered as a soil conditioner and received approval from NDA for this use. NDA's initial approval was offered without knowledge that the facility was using treated seed.
- NDA and NDEE contacted R7 in early 2019 regarding the AltEn site. They had received numerous complaints about the facility and sought input on methods to manage the wet cake, which was stockpiled outside in large volumes.
- NDA sampled the wet cake and identified residues of numerous seed treatment pesticides including neonicitinoids which are long lasting pesticides that have special restrictions for their use due to their potential effects on plants and wildlife, especially bees. OPP requires seed bag tags to include language
- 5 DP

Current Status:

- The facility continues to operate and generates approximately 150 tons of wet cake per day. It has landfilled approximately 32 K tons (1,500 truckloads) of wet cake. Estimates of remaining wet cake range from 50 to 80 K tons.
- A recent NDEE inspection during a rainfall event indicated poor compliance with SWPPP: uncontrolled runoff (observed wet cake leaving site), the lack of BMPs and poor general housekeeping. Some colored liquid was not contained and had been pumped to a low point that discharged to an outfall leading to a stream. NDEE indicated the stream flows through a UNL research farm. A UNL professor has raised concerns to EPA and NDEE regarding alleged impacts to managed bees on the farm.
- Ground water sampling is underway and data is expected to be available in November.
- The facility has requested a permit to allow the material to be land applied as a means of disposal. NDEE requested assistance in reviewing the data and evaluating the potential for an acceptable agronomic rate that would enable the material to be land applied.

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Options Discussion:

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