Administrator,

I'm pleased to share that we received the 2018 report for EPA for Feds feeds families, and EPA contributed the most for a small agency. It was a successful campaign and cross-agency effort. Today we are looking forward to welcoming the European Union delegation to our labs in RTP, NC, and supporting the rollout of the PFAS management plan.

Hot issues

EPA Working with USDA, States of VA and NC, and Pork Industry to Prepare U.S. Response to a Potential African Swine Fever Virus Outbreak

There is an outbreak of African Swine Fever Virus (ASFV), similar to Ebola, but highly contagious like measles, and which only affects pigs. It started in Lithuania and has rapidly spread to [HYPERLINK "http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Beijing,-almost-a-million-pigs-killed-in-African-swine-fever-outbreak-45992.html"] and Mongolia. USDA and the pork industry are extremely worried that if ASFV were to spread to the U.S. it could seriously impact the $40B pork industry and create a public health and environmental crisis. The virus is not a direct threat to humans. (USDA has produced a [HYPERLINK "https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/asf.pdf"]). A possible solution for carcass management operations is to use "horizontal grinders" – large commercial wood chippers that are used for vegetative debris management. There are many of these units around the country, which could be rapidly deployed for swine carcass grinding. The pork industry is planning a series of tests within the next 60 days to evaluate whether horizontal grinders could be effectively used for this purpose. ORD and OLEM are helping to assess the biosecurity issues associated with using grinding equipment on diseased animal carcasses. Due to the impending potential ASFV outbreak, it is crucial that the feasibility testing of the horizontal grinders for composting operations (paid for by the pork industry) and biosecurity assessment (performed by EPA) be completed ASAP so that it could be available in the event of an outbreak in the U.S. If successful, composting could be used as an environmentally benign means to not only kill the virus but provide a potential material that could be used as fertilizer.

Measurement Technology for Ethylene Oxide (EtO) emissions. In response to OAQPS's need for immediate action on EtO, we have been moving as quickly as possible on instrumentation and methods development to support measurements at/below the newly determined health risk (based on IRIS and NATA) of approximately 10pptv, or equivalent to ~20ng/m^3. EtO has become a pressing issue at sterilizers across the Nation, but most notably (thus far) in Willowbrook, IL where the public has been very vocal in calling for EPA action. Because of the levels of EtO present in and around Willowbrook, OAQPS has been collecting samples twice weekly for analysis with data being released to the public as agreed upon between the state of Illinois and EPA.

Helping Oregon Farmers Address Groundwater Contamination

ORD was invited by Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's Director of the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUB GWMA) to meet with farmers to explain nitrogen budgets. The meeting, slated for February 28, 2019, in Hermiston, Oregon, will allow EPA to share the approach and understanding of nitrogen dynamics from research work in the Willamette River Basin. The GWMA board is interested in using a similar approach to inform nitrogen management in the Lower Umatilla, which has different climate and crops, but similar groundwater nitrate contamination issues.