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Lystek International is turning organic waste into a market-ready, CFIA-registered source of N, P and K

**BY COURTNEY DENARD**  
*Ontario Farmer*

Ontario's newest waste management company is changing the way biosolids are being processed and applied to farmers' fields.

Lystek International, which recently opened its doors in Dundalk, is an award-winning organic materials recovery firm that was founded in 2000 at the University of Waterloo.

Kevin Litwiller, Lystek director of business development, says the concept for the company was born after researchers questioned if there was a better way to apply biosolids to farmland.

"For years, the farming community has been the dumping grounds for much waste so we really wanted to see if there was a different way to do things," Litwiller told the *Ontario Farmer* on a recent tour of the new plant.

So, for the past 13 years, the company has been working on developing a new and improved process that's environmentally friendly and profitable.

According to Litwiller, that goal has been achieved and now Lystek is ready pitch its product to Ontario farmers.



**Lystek's 35,000 cubic metre lagoon holds 8,000 cubic metres of organic material**

So what makes Lystek different from the other biosolid companies that are already out there?

For starters, Lystek's recovery

process is unique. The company is working with municipalities across Ontario to transform biosolids into a market-ready, Canadian Food Inspection Agency registered fertilizer.

To date, Lystek's fertilizer is the only product of its kind to receive the CFIA seal of approval.

The company's product is also higher in organic matter than traditional biosolids so farmers won't have to use as much to get good results. Litwiller said this cuts back on over-application, which has been an issue on many farms in the past.

Lystek's facility in Dundalk is state-of-the-art and was built with the well-being of the rural community in mind.

Mike Dougherty, senior operator at Lystek, said odour was one of the biggest factors considered throughout the development and construction process.

"One-third of the \$10 million that was invested into this plant was spent on odour control and air handling," said Dougherty.

The investment seems to be worth it because Lystek has yet to receive an odour complaint from the surrounding community.

It's the facility's closed loop design

that keeps odours from contaminating the surrounding airways. This means once material is pumped into the plant it never again sees the light of day in its original form.

The material is transferred from one processor to the next inside the plant and is pumped underground to a 35,000 cubic metre lagoon where it sits in its final state.

Dougherty said farmers would not be disappointed with Lystek's market-ready product.

"For every 1,000 gallons of material there is 40 pounds of nitrogen, 50 pounds of phosphorus, and 25 pounds of potassium," he said.

Although the fertilizer can be spread in the spring (weather dependent) and at second cut hay, the fall will be the optimal time to land apply.

Lystek is encouraging farmers to inject the materials rather than surface apply to get the most out of the nutrients available.

Producers will be able to access Lystek's organic material through a sub-contract or directly from the company.

Dougherty said Ontario farmers could expect the fertilizer to be on the market in January 2014 once the CFIA registration process is complete.



**Kevin Litwiller and Mike Dougherty of Lystek pose in front of the facility's two reactors that convert organic materials into a market-ready fertilizer**