

 **FANGHILAB**  
HUB PER LO SVILUPPO DEL TERRITORIO

Forme Avanzate di Gestione dei fanghi di  
depurazione in un Hub Innovativo lombardo

28 novembre 2022

Claudia Mensi - A2A Ambiente

**Progetto FANGHI: sfide e opportunità**

REALIZZATO CON IL SOSTEGNO DI



**UNIONE EUROPEA**  
Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale



**Regione  
Lombardia**



POR FESR 2014-2020 / INNOVAZIONE E COMPETITIVITÀ

# Contesto del progetto



**Sewage sludge:**  
Why we need to stop  
pollution at source

Environmental Pollution 261 (2020) 114198

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Environmental Pollution

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**Sewage sludge application as a vehicle for microplastics in eastern Spanish agricultural soils<sup>☆</sup>**

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## Investigating the dispersal of macro- and microplastics on agricultural fields 30 years after sewage sludge application

Collin J. Weber<sup>✉</sup>, Alexander Santowski & Peter Chiffard

Plastic contamination of terrestrial ecosystems and arable soils pose potentially negative impacts on several soil functions. Whereas substantial plastic contamination is now traceable in agro-landscapes, often internal-caused by the application of fertilizers such as sewage sludge, questions remain unanswered concerning what happens to the plastic after incorporation. Based on a combined surface and depth sampling approach, including density separation, fluorescence staining and ATR-FTIR or  $\mu$ FTIR analyses, we quantified macro- and microplastic abundance on two agricultural fields—34 years after the last sewage sludge application. By sub-dividing the study area around sludge application sites, we were able to determine spatial distribution and spreading of plastics. Past sewage sludge application led to a still high density of macroplastics (637.12 items per hectare) on agricultural soil surfaces. Microplastic concentration, measured down to 90 cm depth, ranged from 0.00 to 56.18 particles per kg of dry soil weight. Maximum microplastic concentrations were found in regularly ploughed topsoils. After 34 years without sewage sludge application, macro- and microplastic loads were significantly higher on former application areas, compared to surrounding areas without history of direct sewage application. We found that anthropogenic ploughing was mainly responsible for plastic spread, as opposed to natural transport processes like erosion. Furthermore, small-scale lateral to vertical heterogeneous distribution of macro- and microplastics highlights the need to determine appropriate sampling strategies and the modelling of macro- and microplastic transport in soils.

***....Mostly, the major pollutants in sewage sludge include PAHs and potentially toxic elements (PTEs), heavy metals (Cr, Ni, Cu, Zn, Cd and Pb), micropollutants (n ¼ 117) and human bacterial pathogens (HBPs) which have severe and unknown effects on different ecosystems (Huang eta Yuan, 2016;Ju et al., 2016;Mailler et al., 2014;Rani and Shanker, 2018;Waqas et al., 2015). ...***

..... sewage sludge also contains potentially toxic substances, such as toxic metals, pathogens (Oleszczuk and Hollert, 2011), endocrine-disrupting compounds (Mailler et al., 2014) and polychlorinated dibenzodioxins (Gworek et al., 2013). Thus, an alternative strategy for the land application of sewage sludge needs to be explored to enable the effective use of all of its inherent nutrients while decreasing its detrimental effects and the health risks from the potentially toxic elements that it contains. ...

**..... HOWEVER, INCINERATION OF WASTE ACTIVATED SLUDGE (WAS) IS NOW BEING APPLIED IN MORE COUNTRIES DUE TO THE STRICT LEGAL REQUIREMENTS IMPOSED ON THE LAND APPLICATION OF WAS FOR FOOD PRODUCTION (MAILLER ET AL., 2014). THE ASHES ARE COMPOSED OF HIGHLY CONCENTRATED P, MAINLY DUE TO THE CONSIDERABLY REDUCED VOLUME... .**



# Contesto del progetto

Ogni anno sono trattate in Lombardia circa **1.000.000 t di fanghi** da impianti di depurazione civili e industriali, di cui 660.000 prodotti in regione e il resto importato da altre regioni

Oltre l'80% di questi fanghi viene attualmente indirizzata alle attività di **recupero in agricoltura**



MA.....

i fanghi contengono numerose **sostanze potenzialmente dannose** per la salute e per l'ambiente, alcune delle quali (**inquinanti emergenti**) dagli **effetti sconosciuti**, e che si possono **accumulare** nell'ambiente ed, in alcuni casi, essere oggetto di uptake nella filiera umana

In attesa di una loro regolamentazione, dobbiamo comunque procedere alla valutazione di soluzioni adeguate per garantire il rispetto della SALUTE dei cittadini e dell'ambiente

## Scopo del progetto

Sperimentare **nuove tecnologie** per ottimizzare il recupero energetico e di materia in **modo controllato** e valutarne la **sostenibilità** sanitaria, ambientale, energetica, economica.

# Contesto del progetto



.....” the EC is assessing whether the current Sewage Sludge Directive should be reviewed, including gathering further information are the presence of emerging pollutants in sewage sludge (EC, 2018c). “

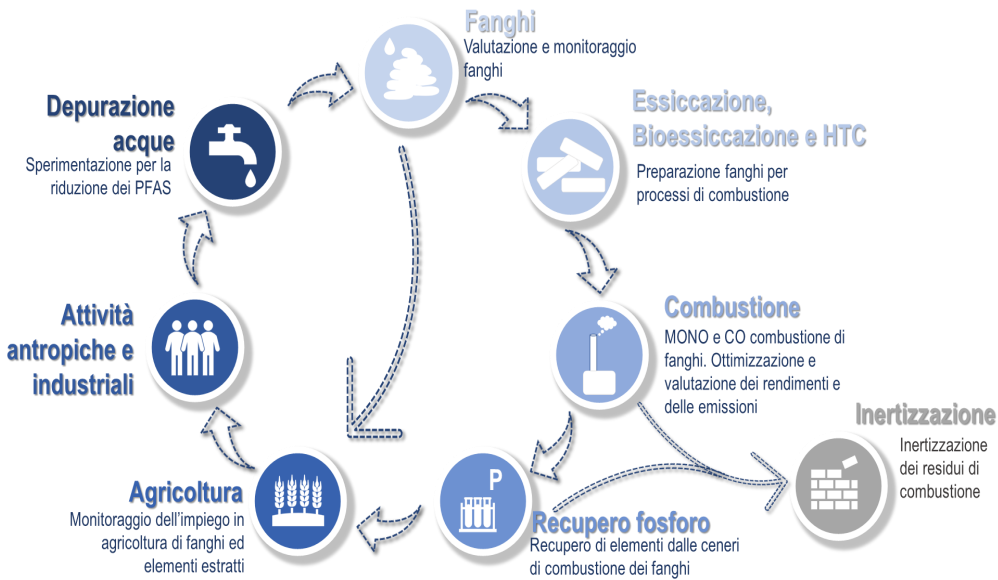
Table 3. contd.

Process/Action	Source of potential health implications	Health impact (direct or indirect)	Nature of potential health endpoint
	positive or negative		
Efficient use of resources	Use of sewage sludge in agriculture with contaminants (e.g. persistent industrial chemicals, pharmaceuticals, pesticides)	Change of soil/water quality	Wide range: eg typhoid, dysentery, diarrhoeal diseases
	Resource-efficient agricultural practices (including reduction in fertilizer and pesticide use), regenerative farming practices (including organic cultivation), closed loops of nutrients and other materials	Reduced pressures and states (indirect) and exposure (direct)	Reduction in poor-diet-related conditions, obesity, various cancers

# Overview



# Overview



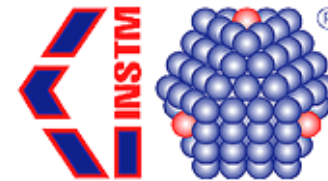
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# Risultati

- La conoscenza scientifica è in continua evoluzione e, ove non si disponga di sufficienti informazioni, si deve necessariamente far ricorso a nuovi strumenti e metodologie di valutazione oltre che al principio di precauzione applicato in modo flessibile e non dogmatico.
- Il trattamento termico è una soluzione integrata e necessaria ad un corretto sistema di gestione dei fanghi .
- Sono state verificate sperimentalmente le modalità di trattamento dei fanghi sia tramite co-combustione che tramite mono-combustione.
- Emissioni e qualità dell'aria non presentano criticità.
- Sono stati realizzati, validati e testati sistemi di campionamento al camino che permettono una più facile gestione della misura.
- Il recupero di fosforo è tecnicamente possibile e sostenibile.
- Occorre aggiornare i test di verifica della qualità dei fanghi in relazione anche alle nuove conoscenze scientifiche e armonizzare il corpus delle norme di riferimento.

