

### Waste Disposal A Problem

By Dixie Berg  
For some of North Carolina's coastal communities, the problem of getting rid of increased amounts of human wastes is nearing the breaking point. Two traditional waste disposal methods - septic tanks and sewage treatment plants - are already taxed to capacity.

As some state and local government officials see it, there seems to be nowhere to turn - except to the ocean. Some coastal states already have large pipes, called outfalls, transporting treated sewage into offshore waters.

But in North Carolina, no one is quite sure where those whirling Atlantic waters would carry sewage. Some believe sewage would be taken out to sea and dispersed. Others fear it would wash right back to shore.

A team of Sea Grant-supported scientists at N. C. State University is trying to settle the question. They are studying water movements in Onslow Bay, the offshore area between Morehead City and the South Carolina line, to find out where effluents dumped there would travel.

Their research, led by oceanographer Dr. L. J. Pietrafesa and ocean engineer Dr. C. Tung, is one of some 20 projects supported by the University of North Carolina Sea Grant Program during 1976. UNC Sea Grant was recently awarded a \$335,000 grant by the U. S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Those funds were matched by a \$267,000 grant from the N. C. Department of Administration. Sea Grant supports research, education and advisory services aimed at improving the economic and environmental well-being of coastal North Carolina.

Preliminary findings from the Onslow Bay study, based on data collected since July, picture the bay as an extremely energetic area, according to Pietrafesa. "Things happen very dramatically there," he says, pointing to charts that indicate four degree drops in water temperature over a brief four-hour period. Temperature changes are much slower in other offshore areas, such as on the Oregon shelf, he adds.

Pietrafesa and Tung recorded vastly different water temperatures between surface and bottom waters in the bay. Sewage trapped in cold bottom waters could possibly be returned to shore under certain conditions, Pietrafesa points out.

Data gathered in 1976 should help scientists better understand just what physical and environmental conditions might cause the waters to bring sewage back to the state's beaches. Besides measuring temperatures, they're also looking at circulation patterns, waves, currents, bottom sediments, and the influence of the wind and Gulf Stream on Onslow Bay. Eventually, the researchers hope to use the computer to predict where sewage dumped into the bay

might travel - and how rapidly it would disperse - under a wide range of environmental conditions.

#### Senator Robert Morgan

##### Report to the People

The Far East sounds like an odd place to realize some important things about North Carolina agriculture, but during the recent tour I made Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, that is exactly what happened.

These countries are three of the biggest customers for American farm products, including many items grown in North Carolina. There is a tremendous market out there for soybeans, tobacco, and poultry, to name just three. As one of the agricultural giants of the nation, North Carolina has a tremendous - and growing - stake in supplying this world demand.

First, let's look at some of our exports to these nations. It is a surprising fact that one "rice bowl" for South Korea is the United States. Between last July and February of this year, Korea bought 240 million pounds of American rice, and close to 80 million bushels of wheat.

The Philippines bought about 17 million pounds of tobacco, and Taiwan about 22 million pounds, about half of it flue-cured, during the same period. Taiwan was also the customer for 27 million bushels of soybeans.

But is it Japan which is our biggest customer in the Far East? Japan - industrialized, densely populated, and short of room to grow things - must import food to live.

Japan is also our best Asian customer for tobacco. During the July to February period, Japan bought 111 million pounds of unmanufactured tobacco from America, and an additional 84 million pounds of flue-cured leaf.

How secure is this tremendous market? Right now, nobody is saying "Come home, America" as far as our farm exports are concerned, but something must be watched for.

There is a lesson to be learned from our experiences after the fall of South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. With this increase in the power of Communist government in Southeast Asia, and the decrease in the power of the United States, other countries in the area had no choice but to reconsider their political and economic alignment.

Should the United States pull out of Northeast Asia as well - in the area of Korea and Japan - these nations could not continue to be friends and trading partners on the same basis that exists now. The power of China and her allies simply could not be ignored.

A distant, abstract issue? Not at all. It could be as near, and as concrete, as North Carolina's booming agricultural export market.

**Auxiliary Meeting**  
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