

Higgins Farm

Route 518 Franklin Township Somerset County

BLOCK: 5 LOT: 26.01

Community Relations Coordinator: Mark Herzberg (609) 633-1369

SITE DESCRIPTION/RESOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:

Higgins Farm is an active cattle breeding farm. Drums containing chemical wastes were once buried at two areas of the property. The site became the subject of an NJDEP investigation in 1985 after elevated levels of chlorobenzene, a volatile organic compound, were discovered in a nearby private potable well. A geophysical survey revealed drums were buried at the northwest portion of the site approximately 40 yards from the contaminated well. The property owner excavated approximately 50 drums of chemical wastes and visibly contaminated soil from this area in 1986. NJDEP subsequently determined that three other private potable wells in the area were also contaminated with volatile organic compounds at levels exceeding New Jersey Drinking Water Standards. NJDEP installed Point-of-Entry Treatment (POET) systems on the four contaminated wells as an interim measure to provide potable water for the residents. In 1989, USEPA added Higgins Farm to the National Priorities List of Superfund sites (NPL) and began a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) to determine the nature and extent of the contamination and evaluate cleanup alternatives. In 1990, USEPA issued a Record of Decision (ROD) with NJDEP concurrence that required installation of a public water line to replace the contaminated private potable wells and other wells in the area that were at risk of becoming contaminated. Twenty six residences were connected to the water line when it was completed in 1993. USEPA excavated 94 buried drums and contaminated soil from a second drum disposal area during a removal action in 1992.

Based on the findings of the RI/FS, USEPA determined that the ground water at the site was contaminated with a variety of volatile organic compounds, including tetrachloroethylene and benzene, as well as semi-volatile organic compounds and metals. The RI/FS also revealed that the soil at the property and the surface water and sediments in a pond were not significantly contaminated. In 1992, after completing the RI/FS, USEPA issued a second ROD for the site with NJDEP concurrence that required installation of an on-site remediation system to extract and treat the contaminated ground water, with discharge of the treated water to an existing pond on the property. USEPA completed construction of the ground water remediation system in 1997 and is conducting operation and maintenance (O&M) of the system. Approximately 100,000 gallons of ground water are extracted and treated each day at the site. The ground water treatment is expected to continue for approximately 20 years.