GW planning project to reduce odor

A $200,000 to $300,000 ounce of prevention, but no $6 million pound of cure, was proposed today by officials of Great Western Sugar Company to reduce odors coming from the operations of its Northern Ohio Division at Fremont.

Whether or not the ounce of prevention in the form of installations inside the Fremont plant will bear fruit remains to be seen.

But R. E. Munroe, vice president of environmental affairs of Great Western, promised an aerating system installed directly at the sugar beet residue ponds will provide substantial relief to Fremont residents from the odors which have plagued them from time to time much of the current processing campaign.

Munroe, accompanied here by Larry L. McGhee, G. W. director of communications, and Fremont Plant Manager Irvin Zitterkopf, said the aerators will reduce the amount of bio-chemical demand going into the city sewage treatment plant. The less BOD, the less obnoxious odors, according to the officials.

The pound of cure needed to eliminate virtually all odors would require a $6 million sewage treatment plant comparable to one-third of the city treatment plant.

"This is not economically possible for us to do," Munroe said.

He said the aerator project would greatly reduce odor problems here, but would not eliminate them entirely.

Munroe said the new equipment has already been proposed to the management and can be installed in time for the 1975 sugar beet campaign.

Meanwhile corrections of equipment in the city treatment plant and weather conditions have served to improve odor conditions here during the last three weeks. The plant is scheduled to close the 1974 campaign Saturday, thus bringing to a close the problem for this season.

A combination of circumstances caused the worst smells this fall, the officials said.

Aerating equipment in the city sewage plant failed about the end of October. The failure caused more watery residue from the sugar plant to be stored in its lagoons. The larger amount of pollutants plus some warmer weather than usual compounded the problem until the equipment was repaired and the flow from the processing plant to the city sewer plant returned to normal, the officials said.

Short of a 100 per cent treatment plant, no technology exists to completely eliminate odors.

The company has used a commercial product called "Eliminate" and sodium nitrate in the ponds, but with little success. The company also uses about 10 tons per day of burned limelock in the ponds.

However, G. W. officials recognize the problem and are working on it to the best of their knowledge within limits of revenues available, Munroe indicated.

The company spends about $100,000 paid to the city for sewage treatment service, plus pollution and odor control procedures operating within the sugar plant area, he added.

Weather conditions also play a part in odor and pollution control. Dry seasons are more favorable than wet ones. Wet seasons cause more dirt to cling to the beets. The resulting mud within and eliminating process causes more pollutants.

This season was relatively dry, but odor problems developed anyway because of the breakdown at the sewage plant and the warm weather, the G.W. officials claimed.