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Can IKS Increase Acceptability of Human Excreta in Agriculture? Evidence from a Preliminary Study in KwaZulu-Natal Province

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ABSTRACT This was a qualitative study conducted in peri-urban and rural KwaZulu-Natal Province. It examined the social acceptility of reusing treated effluent from a Decentralized Wastewater Treatment System (DEWAT) system in agriculture. The study found that participants were open to growing and consuming food produced using treated effluent in agriculture and made references to indigenous practices that encourage recycling and reuse of human excreta. Given the high level of acceptability of effluent in agriculture, it can be concluded that the DEWAT system provides a viable option in addressing the challenges of sanitation backlog and food insecurity in a manner that is environmentally safe. The study recommends that the design of social housing as well as sanitation facilities should take into account how effluent can be harvested for agricultural use. Further research is required to map and document existing indigeneous beliefs and practices that could enhance acceptability of effluent in agriculture.