

Compost Working Group

Meeting Notes – November 14, 2014

ATTENDEES: Cary Giguere (AAFM), Dan Goossen (GMC), Steven Wisbaum (CV Compost), Jessica Bunker (Resource Management Inc.), Pat Sagui (CAV), Wendy Sue Harper (CAV), Cathy Jamieson (DEC), Josh Kelly (DEC), Karl Hammer (VCC), Lisa Ransom (Grow), Robert Foster (VNAP), anyone I missed?

NEXT STEPS:

- Horse/Livestock Owner Pamphlet – Final Pretty Draft Coming Shortly from Josh....VERY SHORTLY.
- Compost Op-Ed – Jessica Bunker and others will share with the group when it is ready.
- Research – Wendy Sue and Pat may work up a research request for plastics in soil
- Revisit Policy Proposals at next meeting

NOTES:

SOLID WASTE INFRASTRUCTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

Josh gave overview of SWIAC group formed, has met 3 times and will issue a report to legislature in January likely. Report will review costs for implementing Universal Recycling and recommend possible funding sources to build infrastructure and hauling capacity.

PERSISTENT HERBICIDES DISCUSSION

Pat – Is it possible for farmers to spread or apply wood ash to manure to deal with persistent herbicide issue?

Composters – Not really feasible. Too difficult.

USCC is creating a persistent herbicide pamphlet geared towards composters.

Group reviewed last edits and changes to the Horse and Livestock Owner Persistent Herbicide info sheet.

Could UVM Ext. showcase this document at the big horse show?

Could the Natural Resource Conservation Districts be another group that could distribute these info sheets?

Could AAFM provide these at their display table at farm/ag. related events?

CONTAMINANTS & LEGISLATION DISCUSSION –

Discuss trash contamination, persistent herbicides, and any other concerns and possible legislation that could improve compost quality.

Straws, PLU stickers, plastic bags, and burlap coffee bags with plastic label were discussed.

GMC supports state legislation that would require any compostable labeled product to meet ASTM compostability standards...similar to what California has passed.

Wendy Sue Harper participates in a federal level group discussing plastic bag contamination.

Pat, is thinking of talking to the VT Delegation about possible federal legislation on this.

Karl – Wants ANR to have enforcement authority on food scrap generators for improper source separation, e.g. too much trash mixed with the food waste.

CONTAMINANTS POLICY SUMMARY –

Listed in Order of Priority to Group

1. PLU Stickers – supports banning plastic stickers/requiring certified compostable or paper stickers.
2. Plastic bags – less of a priority since they are able to be screened out of finished compost, but group is generally supportive of anything that reduces plastic bag contamination.
3. Compostable Product Labeling Requirements – requiring any product labelled compostable to meet ASTM standards. See CA standards for sample legislation.
4. Other contaminants of concern, but with no clear way to deal with them: straws, “blister” single serving condiment packs, ag. plastics, coffee bags with plastic labels and poly threads.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION

Wendy Sue - Research – what do plastics (both petroleum based and certified compostable) do in the soil when they breakdown? A literature review could be very interesting and helpful some agreed.

Wendy Sue is willing to work with a student from Green Mountain College to do some of this type research.

NEXT MEETING –

Anaerobic Digestion; Future of UVM Bioassay Testing

Dan – Would like to talk about AD at next meeting. Digesters have been proposed for Franklin County.

Josh will invite Alex DePillis and possibly Mike Raker to come and speak with this group.

Some are interested in reviving the Vermont Organics Partnership.