

**Managing Organic Residuals
Program Work Team – Annual Meeting Summary
Cornell Waste Management Institute**

Date: March 10, 2011

Location: Syracuse Center of Excellence, Syracuse, NY

Purpose: The purpose of the PWT is to gain guidance from participants on what direction CWMI should take in research and outreach to be able to answer stakeholders' questions, as well as to provide updates on current programs and share newly developed resources.

Meeting Summary: The annual PWT meeting drew a lively group of 19 diverse stakeholders together. This year's meeting discussed 1) NY State's Solid Waste Management Plan and its focus on management of organics, 2) getting the "Focus" on Compost and Composting, 3) other Organics diversion, 4) update on CWMI projects and, 5) requests for research and/or information.

Tour: Syracuse Center of Excellence – Melissa Young, Syracuse COE, Environmental Finance Center

List of Attendees

Affiliation	Name
<u>Cayuga Compost</u>	<u>Jim Proctor</u>
<u>Cayuga Compost</u>	<u>Mark Wittig</u>
<u>Cornell Cooperative Extension, Wyoming County</u>	<u>Joan Petzen</u>
<u>Cornell Waste Management Institute</u>	<u>Jean Bonhotal</u>
<u>Cornell Waste Management Institute</u>	<u>Mary Schwarz</u>
<u>Cornell Waste Management Institute</u>	<u>Hannah Shayler</u>
<u>Cornell Waste Management Institute</u>	<u>Lauri Wellin</u>
<u>Devine Gardens</u>	<u>Tina Jacobs</u>
<u>Fern Hill Compost</u>	<u>Peter Spalding</u>
<u>GHD, Inc. (formerly Stearns and Wheeler)</u>	<u>Beth Ann Smith</u>
<u>New England Organics</u>	<u>Jeff Brinck</u>
<u>NYS Department of Environmental Conservation</u>	<u>Gary Feinland</u>
<u>NYS Department of Environmental Conservation</u>	<u>Sally Rowland</u>
<u>Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency</u>	<u>Greg Gelewski</u>
<u>Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency</u>	<u>Amy Miller</u>
<u>Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency</u>	<u>Andrew Radin</u>
<u>Syracuse University, Environmental Finance Center</u>	<u>Melissa Young</u>
<u>Syracuse University, School of Information Studies</u>	<u>Janet Marsden</u>
<u>Western Finger Lakes Solid Waste Management</u>	<u>Marjorie Torelli</u>

Issue Discussions:

New York State's Solid Waste Regulations:

- NYS is currently in the process of revising the solid waste regulations so that the "type" of operation is the focus. The 2nd draft should come out this summer. Comments are welcome and should be addressed to Sally Rowland (sjrowlan@gw.dec.state.ny.us). Comments can be made at any point in the process and since Sally is currently working on the re-write, now would be a good time to address any concerns.
- The State is trying to come up with some numbers for different levels of regulating the amount of food scraps to help people compost them with minimum hassle. They are also trying to get numbers for digesters as well.

New York State Planning Efforts:

Local Plans: Planning units within the State (mostly counties, but could be others) are responsible for coming up with a solid waste management plan. Most of these are 20 years old and are coming up for renewal, so there is an opportunity to help these units manage their organics. DEC will look over the plans and ask appropriate questions such as: What are you doing with your leaf and yard waste, what are you doing with your roadkill, are there plans for food scraps, etc.? In addition, they are hoping to make these 10 year plans and get the units to make more specific plans to handle their solid waste.

State Plan: Part of the State plan is a proposal for legislation that includes a \$5 a ton tip fee on all landfill and incinerator waste. Five dollars would be charged to the facility for every ton accepted. The money would go to DEC to distribute to municipalities for recycling efforts.

- Product stewardship, getting manufacturers to be responsible for the cost of managing the “end of life” of their product, is a very big part of the plan. The NYS Product Stewardship Council (<http://www.nypsc.org>) describes Framework Principles for Product Stewardship.
- Other “types” of operations include pyrolysis and gasification plants. DEC is looking at these facilities to help insure they do not unfairly compete with the regular recycling industry. This means that they must find a source for their waste that doesn’t pull recyclables from the existing stream (i.e. getting the plastics from manufacturers that cannot recycle directly).
- The State Plan hopes that the State will eventually be able to get to the point where landfills would only be landfilling ash from waste to energy plants. That is, there would be enough recycling infrastructure in place that any “trash” left could be burned in waste to energy plants and only ash would remain.

Focus on Compost and Composting:

- Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency is building a full scale composting system using aerated static piles. There will be 6-8 bays capable of processing 10,000 tons food scraps per year with a 3:1 mix of yard waste. They anticipate making between 30-40,000 cubic yards of compost per year. This facility will be the first in the state of that size accepting commercial and institutional food waste.
- Having more facilities of this nature would be a big step in reducing the amount of organics that go to the landfill. We need to have someone pushing composting as recycling to help get that 60% organics out of the waste stream.
- Encourage small business compost facilities such as those belonging to 3 of the PWT attendees: Devine Gardens: vermicompost and worms for bins - <http://www.devinegardensllc.com/>, Fern Hill Compost - <http://fernhillcompost.com/> and Cayuga Compost <http://www.cayugacompost.com/index.htm>.
- Support is needed in the private sector to divert brown waste to compost facilities so that they can continue to grow in handling food waste.
- It would be helpful to have composting be part of the Green Infrastructure System – composting is never included in that and composting is the backbone of any green infrastructure.
- How to get compost to urban gardeners in NYC and other large cities for amending soils. Can compost sales be staged once a year in large cities? Have compost facilities bring their product for people to purchase at a central location?

Other Organics Diversion:

- New England Organics is working in Central Massachusetts with 4 farms to build digesters that will accept processed food slurry.
- There was concern that Waste-to-Energy plants would use “food” sources rather than “waste” for energy.

- Washington County has a waste to energy plant using manure as the heat bank. Through composting, they are using the energy to create electricity and to heat water. There will be an open house there soon.

Update on CWMI projects:

- The Vermicomposting page on CWMI's website is up and running, including a 9 minute video on vermicomposting. <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/vermicompost.htm>.
- Work has continued on the fate of veterinary drugs in composting livestock mortalities. A video on composting horses is in progress.
- Healthy Soils, Healthy Communities is now in its 2nd year of a 4 year project. The goal is to get the right information to gardeners so they can make informed decisions on risks versus benefits in gardening and give them the tools for best management. Fact sheets: <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/sourcesandimpacts.pdf>, <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/guidetosoil.pdf>, http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/Soil_Contaminants.pdf
- An article on composting options for medium scale food waste generators is scheduled to come out in the March issue of BioCycle and will be on our website soon. <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/invesselcomposting.pdf>. We are currently working on a similar piece for home composting which will include information on home compost bins, instructions for home composting, web links and other information.
- CWMI gets a lot of calls about organic residual assessments, i.e. what can we do with the residual from making paper, what can we do with our onion skins, and are working on a project to find alternative uses for these residuals.

Requests for Research and/or Information:

- A way of finding places for food scraps from festivals, field days, fairs, etc.

Tour of the Syracuse Center of Excellence: <http://www.syracusecoe.org/coe/>

Melissa Young walked the group through the Syracuse Center of Excellence, which is one of 5 "living labs" for green technology. Everything on site is being tested. Everything in the building is hooked into a system that measures certain parameters to make it a more comfortable environment. Needless to say, sometimes the adjustments the building makes can startle the occupants (everyone jumped when the blinds suddenly lowered themselves)! Some of the building features include: angled green roof, storm water retention tank that controls the run-off entering the Syracuse waste water treatment plant, a water tank that collects rain and melt water to flush the toilets, geothermal pipes, demand controlled ventilation in the rooms and hallways, radiant floor and ceiling panels and a solar power prototype.

Other:

- Wyoming County Agri-Palooza, June 12, 2011. For more information, call 585-237-0230 or 585-786-2251. <http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/wyoming/calendar/agpa/index.html> Hosted by CCE Wyoming County.