

Managing Organic Residuals
Program Work Team – “CNY Compost Workshop and Facility Tour” Summary
Cornell Waste Management Institute

Date: August 6 - 7, 2013

Location: New York State Grange Headquarters in Cortland, NY and Compost Facilities in Cortland County, 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. As a result of interest generated at the annual meetings, this PWT workshop and tour was conducted.

Meeting Summary: On August 6 and 7, Cornell Waste Management Institute (CWMI), in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County, Sustainable Cortland, and the Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District, hosted a compost workshop and compost facility tour in central NY. Thirty-seven participants from around the state and even from Connecticut, Florida and Ontario, Canada, attended a workshop titled “Making Organic Waste Products Work for You”. The following day, 38 participants toured 5 facilities that are managing organic residuals in a variety of ways.

Workshop: Thirty-seven (37) citizens and stakeholders attended the workshop on Aug 6. There were sessions on “What Makes Good Compost? Review of the Basics of Composting”, “Using Co-Composter”, and “Producing Compost for Various Markets” by CWMI. In addition, Jared Popoli (Cortland Count SWCD) presented the session on “Site Setup, Maintenance and Permitting for Larger Scale Composting” and Gary Feinland and Nicole Chisolm (NYSDEC) spoke about rules and regulations for compost facilities. Greg Gelewski (Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency) and Michelle Bergkamp (Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency) both gave an overview of their municipal programs including food scrap composting. They talked about both successes and failures at their facilities and how they are moving forward on separation, collection and composting in their communities. Lee Telega from USDA, Rural Development, and Scott Collins from NYS Agriculture and Markets, talked about funding opportunities for composting. We rounded out the end of the day with a rousing game of Compost Jeopardy. There was a lot of discussion, questions and answers and networking that created a very successful workshop.

Evaluation of the workshop by the participants indicated that they were pleased with the amount of information received, the low cost, and the food, especially what was homemade. About one-third of the participants indicated they will use the information gained on their job, either to reinforce current practices, do a better job of managing their current site, or to better assist others in planning for solid waste management. Another third of participants indicated the information will be used to help educate others on solid waste management and composting. One-quarter of participants would have liked to have more in-depth information on several of the topics and several participants suggested that source separation would have been a good topic to discuss. As stated by one of the participants on evaluation “Some information was very basic and some was more advance. It was a good mix of information. All of my questions were answered. Thank you for putting these workshops on.”

Tour: Thirty-eight (38) citizens and stakeholders boarded the bus on August 7, 2013 and toured five facilities in Central NY. As with the workshop, most of the participants indicated that they would use the information gained on the tour in their jobs or for educational purposes. Most everyone enjoyed

Main Street Farms as it was a novel operation, but would have preferred seeing a larger-scale vermicomposting operation. Several participants suggested that the next tour should include a forced air facility and/or larger scale composting facilities. From one of the tour participants: “The most important aspect of the tour for me was to meet other people interested in composting from across NYS. I’m very encouraged from the five different sites that mid/large scale composting is possible in my area.”

1. **Homer Municipal Composting Facility:**

- a. Contact: Greg Darling, Village of Homer, Homer, NY 607-749-2511
<http://www.homerny.org/index.php/village-compost-site-2>.
- b. The Village of Homer Compost site accepts garden debris, grass clippings, leaves and branches from Village of Homer residents only and composts these organic residuals in static piles. Greg Darling has done a wonderful job of beautifying the site with “recycled” material.



2. **Main Street Farms:**

- a. Contact: Allan Gandelman, 116 N West St., Homer, NY 607-749-0086,
info@mainstreetfarms.com. <http://www.mainstreetfarms.com/>.
- b. Main Street Farms is an urban aquaponics farm, organic plant nursery, and education center, dedicated to sustainable agriculture and local food security. The farm raises fish (Tilapia) in tanks, feed them, and use the waste water to fertilize the plants (Lettuce and Herbs). The plants in turn clean the water for the fish in a closed loop cycle, creating a symbiotic relationship. They are breeding soldier flies and feeding the larvae on food waste to produce fish food from the larva. They are also vermicomposting food scraps under the fish tanks.

3. **Cobblestone Valley Organic Farm:**

- a. Contact: Paul and Maureen Knapp, Preble, NY, 607-749-4032, cvfarm@twcny.rr.com.
<http://cobblestonevalley.com/>.
- b. Cobblestone Valley is a diversified organic farm certified by NOFA-NY. The backbone of the farm is dairy production with all other enterprises connected to and synergistic with milk production. Cobblestone Valley believes that all health begins with the soil and the compost produced on their farm is the basis of their soil fertility program. Cobblestone Valley uses several feedstocks/ingredients to manufacture their compost. Manure from the dairy barn is combined with one of several dry carbon materials. This includes, but is not limited to straw, sawdust, woodchips, old hay, old silage or animal bedding. Occasionally they accept lake

weeds harvested from Tully Lake, which improves the diversity of the compost. Once the ingredients are assembled into a windrow, the windrow is turned a number of times over the next few weeks. Turning breaks up the piles and keeps oxygen coming in so that the process remains aerobic. During this time the microorganisms are hard at work and the windrow temperature ranges anywhere from 100 to 150 degrees F, depending on the conditions. Temperature is taken on a daily basis; it is a valuable monitoring tool. The basic idea in any natural system is to feed the soil life. Soil life in turn will feed the plant. Plants in turn feed people and livestock.

4. **Lone Birch Stables:**
 - a. Contact: Larry Jones, 5668 Route 11, Homer, NY, 607-591-9727
 - b. Lone Birch Stables is composting horse manure, bedding and food scraps from Cortland Central School and SUNY Cortland in turned windrows on a concrete pad. Their current plan is to use the finished compost as bedding for their beef cows.
5. **NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) Mortality Composting Site:**
 - a. Jim Parker, DOT Supervisor, 4771 State Route 41, Cortland, NY 607-745-3804
 - b. NYSDOT is composting road-killed deer and other wildlife at several DOT sites. This one in Cortland is typical of mortality composting sites. Woodchips (of which DOT sites have plenty) are used to envelop carcasses. This system allows for passive aeration meaning the piles do not need to be turned. The DOT will reuse these piles several times as a base for new piles. After that, finished compost is used in highway department right-of-ways to help seed and prevent erosion.

List of Attendees – Workshop and Tour

Affiliation	Name
Citizen	David C. Smith
Citizen	Eileen Banyra
Citizen	Linda LoGiurato
Citizen	Nicole Dionne
Citizen	Roger Risley
Cornell Cooperative Extension Cortland County	Heather Birdsall
Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County	Joyce Tomaselli
Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County	Kathy Smith
Cornell Waste Management Institute	Jean Bonhotal
Cornell Waste Management Institute	Mary Schwarz
Department of Public Works City of Cortland	Nicholas Dovi
Devine Gardens	Tina Jacobs
Hazlitt 1852 Vineyards	John Santos
Main Street Farms	Adrienne Traub
Main Street Farms	Isaac Arginteano
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation	Gary Feinland
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation	Jason Boliver
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation	Molly Baker
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation	Nichole Chisholm
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation	Tom Lynch

Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority	Andrew Opperman
Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency	Greg Gelewski
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture	Bill Groot Nibbelink
Organic Recycling	Alberto Baruffi
Organic Recycling	Justin Waldron
Organic Recycling	Michael Nolan
Rainbow's End Butterfly Farm and Nursery	Cornelius DuPlessis
Rainbow's End Butterfly Farm and Nursery	Pat DuPlessis
Sustainable America	Jeremy Kranowitz
Soil and Water Conservation District Cortland County	Dana Burke
Soil and Water Conservation District Cortland County	Jared Popoli
Soil and Water Conservation District Jefferson County	Jacob Ambrose
Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency	Michelle Bergkamp
Village of Homer	Greg Darling
WeCare Organics	Chris Franklin

List of Attendees – Workshop Only

Affiliation	Name
Citizen	Bob Applegate
Citizen	Chris Applegate
Main Street Farms	Allan Gandelman
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets	Scott Collins
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation	Gary Maslanka
Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority	Jamie Tuttle
USDA Rural Development	Lee Telega

List of Attendees – Tour Only

Affiliation	Name
Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County	Chuck Schmitt
Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County	Susan Pezzolla
Cornell Cooperative Extension Jefferson County	Sayre Stevens