

## **Summary of Organics Recycling Roundtable: Connect the Rots May 17, 2010 Bolton Landing, NY**

The main purpose of the roundtable discussion was to identify incentives and challenges to building additional organics recycling capacity. Forty-two people attended and put their names on the sign-in sheet. Approximately fifteen people were invited prior to the discussion for their knowledge and interest in organics recycling. This was to ensure that knowledgeable representatives would be present from different perspectives including collection, hauling, composting and anaerobic digestion, investing, and organics networking. Prior to the meeting, a group of these representatives created a framework to focus the discussion. At the beginning of the discussion, all participants had an opportunity to add new items to the discussion framework.

### **Definitions**

For the purposes of the discussion, **organics** means anything that was once living. It therefore includes manure, food scraps, food processing waste, wood chips and much more.

### **Create an environment to promote organics recycling**

#### **Long term contracting**

Establishing long term contracts with municipalities and institutions will help companies to private businesses to build facilities. Investors need to see long term commitments from generators of feedstock such as food scraps.

#### **Provide assistance to communities**

NYSDEC or other entities could help municipalities to develop bid documents for organics recycling facilities and to review incoming Requests for Proposals. Help create additional capacity at existing facilities by assisting them to expand the feedstocks that they accept.

Continue to fund organics recycling projects through Empire Development's EIP program and NYSDEC's Municipal Waste Reduction and Recycling State Assistance Program (See tools section).

#### **Provide assistance to entrepreneurs of potential organics recycling facilities**

Establish a no/low interest loan fund for building organics recycling facilities.

There are many constituents for entrepreneurs of potential organics recycling facilities to satisfy. An education campaign would create a better climate for these entrepreneurs. Two necessary components of an education program are the benefits of organics diversion and the resulting end products including compost and energy. This would be a step towards changing the culture to make recycling of organics more acceptable.

Provide training and certification for organics managers.

#### **Achieve consistency in regulating facilities**

Regulations are sometimes enforced differently in different DEC regions. Having more consistent enforcement would even out the playing field for municipalities and businesses interested in expanding composting capacity.

## **Model expansion of organics recycling after the recycling industry's success**

Municipal recycling really took off when it changed from voluntary to mandatory programs as municipalities were required through general municipal law 120aa to adopt source separation laws. If municipalities are required to separate out organics for recycling, infrastructure will eventually follow.

## **Challenges**

There is growing competition among facilities for biomass. For example, in some regions, compost facilities and combustion facilities are competing for the same pool of wood chips. As more biomass to energy facilities are built, this competition, driving up the price of wood chips.

Food waste disposers will potentially compete with compost facilities for food scraps.

In many parts of the State, organics facilities must compete with inexpensive landfills. It is challenging to build facilities for small municipalities. A model that can work is for a group of municipalities to work with a private vendor to contract for a regional facility. Facilities must be local, reliable and scalable.

Siting new facilities remains a challenge.

## **Marketing**

Many compost producers lack skills for marketing the products. This is an opportunity for public private partnerships. In addition, people need to be educated of the value of the product. Municipalities often give it away, which reinforces the idea that compost is not valuable. Having some sort of fee structure would help users to see that it is a valuable product. New York City government recognizes the value of compost as they import compost to use on City grounds.

In order to have a valuable product it must be of high quality. One way to demonstrate quality is to have the product certified. The United States Compost Council (USCC) offers a certification program.

## **Develop a New York or northeast organics collaborative**

BioCycle's process for establishing the American Biogas Council would be a good model for us. A New York group could potentially be housed under the Federation of New York Solid Waste Associations.

## **Opportunities/Tools to help link generators and facilities/networks**

NYS Compost Facilities Map (maintained by Cornell Waste Management Institute)

<http://compost.css.cornell.edu/maps.html>

Food Waste Finder Map (maintained by Cornell University's manure management program)

[http://www.manuremanagement.cornell.edu/HTML/Interactive\\_Waste\\_Locator.htm](http://www.manuremanagement.cornell.edu/HTML/Interactive_Waste_Locator.htm)

On-line Exchanges: NYfoodtrader.org, NYagtrader.org, Biomassstrader.org

Findacomposter.com

NE Biosolids Residuals Association <http://www.nebiosolids.org/>

Mid-Atlantic Biosolids Association <http://www.mabiosolids.org/>

### **Other Opportunities/Tools**

Food and Organics Recycling in New York/New Jersey Listserv

<http://groups.google.com/group/fornynj?hl=enFORNY/NJ>

USEPA Food Waste Website

<http://www.epa.gov/osw/conserve/materials/organics/food/index.htm>

Best Management Practices for Incorporating Food Residuals into Existing Yard Waste Composting

<http://www.compostingcouncil.org/download.php?r=46&f=4b3d51af0afb94254a6c68752142a4d8.pdf>

Operator Training Course offered by US Compost Council – August 2-6.

SARE Grant On-farm Compost Marketing Workshop

NYSERDA's [powernaturally.org](http://powernaturally.org)

NYSDEC's MWRR State Assistance Program <http://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/4776.html>

It provides up to 50% reimbursement for eligible projects up to \$2 million.

Empire State Development's EIP <http://www.empire.state.ny.us/BusinessPrograms/EIP.html>

It provides up to \$500,000 depending on the project.

US Composting Council – <http://www.compostingcouncil.org/>

California's Organics Toolbox <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/organics/roadmap08/ToolBox.htm>