

CTDEP Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee
Subcommittee Meeting - Meeting Notes from 5-22-07
Organics Recycling and Composting

CTDEP Subcommittee Lead: K.C. Alexander, Environmental Analyst 3
Kathy.alexande@po.state.ct.us
860-424-3239

Stakeholders Present: Stephen Slipchinsky, Geoffrey Kuter, Delpha Vary, Michael Lafebvre, Abigail Maynard, Kristina Stefanski, Doug Alderman, Gary Trinetti, Myron Hirschman, Virginia Walton, Peter Egan, Chris Field, Janice Ehlemeyer

DEP Staff Present: K.C. Alexander, Gene MacGillis, David McKeegan, Mary Ann Nusom Haverstock

Others who have expressed interest, but could not make this meeting: Jennifer McDonnell (Whole Foods), George Purtill (Old Maid Farm), Dave Gootemote (EOR)

Introductions: Exchanged names. Please see attached list for complete contact information.

Overview: Steve Slipchinsky gave an overview of Foodshare and its' mission. Foodshare operates in Hartford & Tolland counties, whereas CT Food Bank covers the rest of the state. This year, Foodshare will be donated 4 million pounds of produce. Of that, approximately 15% is waste. Most goes through a grinder and then to a compost facility. Some goes directly to local farm as animal feed. Cost to recycle/compost (tip fee + hauling) = \$44/ton vs. cost to dispose = \$80/ton. Foodshare starting new partnership with Stop & Shop called "Meat the Need" where meat that is close to code is frozen and donated to Foodshare instead of being disposed.

Ginny Walton told us about the successful school composting programs in Mansfield's elementary and middle schools. The program has grown from a small backyard composter, then to in-vessel unit, now to several large bins, large enough for a bobcat loader to scoop from. Each elementary school generates about 30 pounds of food scraps/day, whereas the middle school contributes around 50 lbs/day. Students sort the food scraps, custodians transport buckets to composters, teachers and Ginny add food to bins and manage the compost piles. Finished compost is given away to people who buy plants at the annual school plant sale to use when transplanting to the garden. The compost makes a better soil amendment than seed starter. Cost savings is about \$300/school. Driving force is the resulting compost, which everyone loves. School composting manual developed and distributed to all CT schools as part of DEP grant.

Discussion:

- Food Banks can help keep wet, heavy food out of the waste stream, so it would behoove us to promote them as a source reduction strategy.
- Put a page on DEP website discussing food banking and how it relates to source reduction. Include link to "Meat the Need" and other source reduction/food recycling projects.
- Suggested that CT Dept of Agriculture partner with Foodshare in making farm connections.
- Home composting can play a role in organics recycling. DEP receives many calls from the public each spring and fall asking where to obtain compost bins. Many assume State has a purchasing program for residents to get bins at wholesale prices.
- Suggested establishing an SEP fund (or negotiating an individual SEP) to be used to defray cost of purchasing home compost bins for municipalities. Wholesale prices can be as low as \$35 ea. Important that residents are asked to pay something toward the cost of bin (\$15-\$20) as to not devalue the importance. Also important to have a promise from towns who receive SEP monies to include an educational component to the bin distribution program.
- If money available, update VHS compost video and grasscycling video to CD-ROM format.

- Suggested that CT compost facilities register on www.findacomposter.com

Next Steps: Email KC ideas for future agenda items. See action bullets above.

Next Meeting: Next meeting is June 26, 2007 following the main SWAC meeting. Room TBA.