

PROP Organics Roundtable
Tuesday, July 14, 2009
10 am to 2 pm
Beaver County/Bradys Run Park Lodge
Fallston, PA

Those in attendance were:

Stephen Sales (PA-DEP), Sharon Barnes (Ohio Organics), Denise Stewart (Beaver County Department of Waste Management), Daniel Distler (Beaver County Conservation District), Skip Raabe (Beaver County Department of Waste Management), Shawn Shea (Vermeer Sales and Service), Robert E. Graves (PSU Ag. & Biol. Engr.), Joy Smallwood (Allegheny County Health Department), Rick Quigley (Beaver County Department of Waste Management), Peg Schweinsberg (Independence Conservancy), Barb Rupert (Independence Conservancy), Dave Minnear (L R Kimball & Associates, Inc.), Larry "Jake" Jacobs (S & S Processing Inc.), Earl Bobbert (S & S Processing, Inc.), Terry Keene (Barton & Loguidice), Eric Holby (Vermeer Sales & Service), Lorin Meeder (Cranberry Township), Nancy Sikona (Cranberry Township), Sharon Svitek (PA-DEP), Patti Olenick (PA-DEP), Erik Johnson (Venango County), Carl Hursh (PA-DEP), Carla Castagnero (AgRecycle), Nadine Davitt (Penn State), Lorraine Ranchod (Lawrence County), Tony Amadio (Beaver County), Dan Snowden (PennDOT), George Rowse (Penn State Master Gardener), and Jan Arnold (PROP).

Terry Keene, Organics Committee Co-Chair, welcomed everyone and self introductions were made.

Terry then formally introduced Skip Raabe, Director of the Beaver County Department of Waste Management (www.co.beaver.pa.us). Skip provided us with information about the Department and its composting facility which has a Permit-by-rule. Skip also noted that they have a locked gate, they sell keys to the gate to landscapers and others who use the facility, their large volume contractors pay less tipping fees, and that they provide a 5/8" screened product. He then went on to speak about their pilot foodwaste program that involved taking material from the Maple Syrup Festival, sponsored by the Beaver County Conservation District, (over 12,000 visitors) that is held on this meeting site. They previously had used Styrofoam plates and cups that needed to be rinsed for recycling. Dan Dishler, Beaver County Conservation District, then spoke about the determination to use compostable plates, cups, and utensils which has made the processing easier. From that experience and others in regards to adding foodwaste to their list of leaves and grass taken at the compost site, Skip said that they have learned that they can feel comfortable rejecting loads for contamination and that businesses will travel cross county to deliver foodwaste because it is cheaper than landfilling.

Carla Castagnero (AgRecycle), added that all compostable brands of foodservice ware are not created equally. At AgRecycle, they ask for exact model numbers and a sample because one company can make traditional, compostable, and biodegradable products. Their requirement is that the compostable product loses identity in 12 weeks. She added that AgRecycle is composting for PNC Park and the Convention Center plus various grocery stores and processors. They do not accept bagged material. Carla also stated that education is important prior to bringing customers to using your site. In regards to the Private/Public cooperative effort, Skip said that AgRecycle brings their turner to his compost site. He added that they do not accept any plastic bags but craft bags are permitted.

In further discussion of the compostable serviceware products, Carla recommended

- 1) asking for a printed list of additives that may have been placed in the compostable products, and
- 2) pouring boiling water on material and it should lose its integrity.

She also added that the difference between biodegradable and compostable is that biodegradable means that it will break down over some undetermined period of time (which could be very long) but that compostable is defined as when processed in a commercial-scale composting facility, the product should lose its integrity within a period of about 12 weeks. She and Skip recommended Spudware and Chinnet. Dan said that they spent \$15,000 on plates and utensils for the festival. He added that the plates were reasonably priced but that the utensils were expensive.

Wayne Ryan (Soils Inc.) was unable to attend so Skip continued with describing how his operation runs in the black. (Please contact him for exact details, sraabe@beavercountypa.gov.)

Sharon Barnes, President of the Organics Recycling Association of Ohio (previously known as the Ohio Compost Association, Inc.) www.ohiocompost.org, gave a PowerPoint presentation, "Environmental Crisis – Opportunity for Bio-Recycling/Composting." (This presentation is available upon request.) Sharon explained that their organization began in the 1990s and they have 30 to 80 private/public members. They have 11 board members and dues range from \$100 to \$250. The Board meets 4 times annually and there are 2 membership meetings a year. They often collaborate with EPA. There are 442 registered composters in the state and grants are matched dollar for dollar. Their business challenges are the economy and the lack of wood chips. She listed the challenges for operations as water, odor, weather, vectors, plastic, and other contamination. Their business challenges are the economy, the speed of change, impacts of cap and trade on the industry, and change in feedstock availability. Ohio has experienced a greatly improving regulatory infrastructure over the years and that they are very pro composting. Flow control and trash hauling vs. new economic paradigm are two of the political impacts. Other Ohio initiatives include the new beneficial use rules for foundry sand and certain industry by-products. Organic industrial residuals include fly ash, Foundry sand, alum sludge, gypsum sludge, spent lime, steel slag, and papermill sludge. Approved uses for compost include highway construction, watershed restorations, sustainable sites initiative, and bioremediation projects. In regards to biomass to energy competition regarding compost, there is the use of traditional feedstocks to fuel power plants and the development of anaerobic digester technology to handle foodwaste. This is important because there is a short window for economic development opportunity, it provides an important piece of comprehensive recycling policy, it provides additional income to composter while providing savings (or no net increase) to generator. She ended her program by saying that intermunicipal cooperation is imperative for sustainability. Sharon also invited us to attend their tour of Ohio composting operations. (That information was emailed to all on the Organics email list directly after our meeting.)

During lunch, Terry directed our attention to the PROP survey result sheets that were distributed. This survey was available to all on our Organics email list (over 400 individuals and companies). He specifically addressed the following:

- Funding is an important issue.
- Concerns about disposal bans – Carl Hursh explained that bans are being proposed.
- Enforcement is an important issue.
- PROP's Organic newsletter, "The Rottin' News" will remain so named.
- Roundtable topics requested by the survey respondents included anaerobic digesters, compostable food residuals (the upcoming November 12 Roundtable will feature a tour

at the State College facility and its new pilot program to collect residents' foodwaste for composting), public/private partnerships, site visits (which is always held during the Roundtables), and carbon sequestration discussion.

Terry discussed the Strategic Plan handout and explained that the Organics Committee was striving to have more representation on the PROP Board and Committees. Thus far, Nadine Davitt is now on the Markets Committee, Dan Snowden is on the Education and Markets Committees, Sharon Svitek is on the Data Management Committee, and Patti Olenick is on the Media Committee. Terry requested that anyone interested in being a member of the Government Liaison committee to contact him or Jan. He also noted that Dan Eichenlaub (AgRecycle) would be available to mentor that person since he had been involved with that committee. Terry noted that the Strategic Plan will be formalized after the January meeting and urged everyone to send ideas or comments to either he or Jan. It should also be noted that Terry has been nominated for a position on the PROP Board. Election will occur soon.

Dan Snowden then spoke about the three PennDOT projects using compost. He reported that the project in District 8, Exit 17 on I-81 is on hold. The other project in District 8 in York County along Route 425 is using compost blankets and a topsoil mix to keep the road from being covered with soil after a rain. In District 9, a wetlands creation and enhancement project will occur. Dan added that the 408 specs are the standard specs for the state.

George Rowse invited all to visit the Master Gardener's backyard composting demo site that was nearby.

Before leaving for the tour of the compost facility, jugs of maple syrup that were made at the Maple Syrup Festival were given to each attendee. Afterwards, Terry invited Jan to tell the group about the upcoming PROP organics-related events at the PROP conference. She also invited everyone to take copies of the PROP magazine, the "Rottin' News" newsletter, and other related information.

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 12, at the Centre County Solid Waste Authority in Bellefonte from 10 am to 2 pm. A tour of the State College Composting Facility will be included.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jan Arnold
PROP Program Manager

PLEASE NOTE:

The tentative schedule of future meetings:

Tuesday, January 12

Tuesday, April 20

Tuesday, July 13

Tuesday, October 19

Manufactured Soils Workshop, September 24

A practical, hands-on, in the field, one day workshop for

Soil Blenders and topsoil suppliers

Landscape and nursery industry
Composters
Suppliers of blended soil components

The workshop is limited to 25 people so register soon!!

Registration fee is \$100 and includes refreshments, lunch, and all needed materials.

For on-line registration please go to:

<http://guest.cvent.com/i.aspx?5S,M3,bf3a19df-4503-488f-885d-0cab779d1e2c>

or go to: <http://environmentalsoils.cas.psu.edu/> and follow the registration link under the manufactured soils workshop announcement.

This workshop is sponsored by the **Pennsylvania Recycling Markets Center** (www.parmc.org)

For more info regarding the program: Richard Stehouwer, Associate Professor,
Environmental Soil Science Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, Penn State University,
116 ASI Building, University Park, PA 16802 Phone: 814-863-7640 email: rcs15@psu.edu

Workshop venue: **Ridgewood Soils, Inc., Reading PA** (www.ridgewoodsoils.com)

Workshop features:

Teaching and practical advice from Penn State University Soil Science faculty.

Tour of the Ridgewood soil blending facility

Designing and blending your own soil

Assessing the quality of your blended soil.

Learn:

How soils function and key characteristics for various uses

How to blend soil for athletic fields, residential lawns, nursery beds and more

How to assess possible materials for use in blended soils

How to determine what ratios to blend for different soil uses and markets

How to test and evaluate.

Workshop Agenda

9:30 –10:00 Check-in and coffee

10:00 –12:30 Practical Soils Teaching (Rick Stehouwer, Max Schlossberg, Ann Wolf)

Fundamental soil properties and why they are important

Soil pH and how soils supply plant nutrients

How soils hold and supply water and air for plant roots

Designing soils for specific uses

Assessing and testing soil quality

12:30 –1:00 Lunch (provided)

1:00 –2:00 Blending soils –a hands-on, do it yourself experience

2:00 –2:45 Ridgewood Soils facility tour (Gary Burnisky)

2:45 –3:00 Break

3:00 –4:00 Practical, hands-on assessment of the quality of the soil you blended.