

**PROP Organics Council Meeting  
Wednesday, September 22, 2004  
Laurel Valley Soils**

Those in attendance were:

Nadine Davitt, Penn State  
Amy Cicchillo, PROP  
Bill Toffey, Philadelphia Water Dept  
Steve Tucker, Lycoming County  
Jan Arnold, Blair County  
Carla Castagnero, AgRecycle  
Dan Eichenlaub, AgRecycle  
Michael Hnatin, Lycoming County  
Jim Bednarski, EnviroGro  
Joe DiNorscia, Laurel Valley Farms

Mike Giuranna, EPA  
Ned Foley, Two Particular Acres  
Tim Bollinger, Lehigh County  
Emily Wade, Wenger Feed Mills  
Charlie Scheidler, PA DEP  
Gary Smith, Cummings & Smith  
Rick Stehouwer, Penn State  
Jeanne Weil, Zwicky Processing  
John Frederick, PROP

A brief description of the facility was given by Joe DiNorscia of Laurel Valley Farms. Laurel Valley creates 4,000 cubic yards of mushroom compost a week, about 160,000 cubic yards a year. The composting operation has been in existence since 1973 and is located on 10 acres of the total 128 acres.

Nadine Davitt, council chairperson, then welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Individual introductions were made followed by a request for a volunteer for the Markets Committee chair. As background, John Frederick explained that the Education and Technology Committees were combined with Cary Oshins as chairman, and that Dan Eichenlaub is chairman of the Government Committee. The Markets Committee deals with issues such as inventory, feedstock, and specifications for PennDOT. A chairman is still needed.

**OLD BUSINESS:** John Frederick reported on the organics sessions at the PROP conference held this past July in Wilkes-Barre. He mentioned that this conference contained the most extensive organics tracts and composting equipment vendors than any previous conference. The evaluations of the classes were all favorable. John questioned whether we want to put the soils conference as an individual event or incorporate it into the PROP conference. (Later discussion concluded that the soils conference could alternate with an intensive compost conference the following November. The PROP conference would include organics sessions that will stimulate interest for the soils or compost conferences.) John further explained that some of this year's organics sessions at the PROP conference were concurrent and asked for ideas about any other methods. Dan Eichenlaub recommended that the PROP conference compost classes should be kept as basic informational pieces and maintain the soils conference as the more specialized program. A question was asked regarding the PROP conference attendees and the soils conference attendees. Rick Stehouwer said that there was a small overlap from both. It was further explained that there is a different constituency at both conferences since there is more science involved with composting than recycling.

The recommendations, accomplishments and proposed work plans were then discussed. Nadine Davitt explained that the Steering Committee had discussed these issues. She stated that the Council meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of April

and September (noting with some levity that this was Wednesday). Also mentioned was that there will be an Organics Council meeting during the Manufactured Soils Conference in November and at the PROP conference in July 2005. The Steering Committee asked the Education Committee to prepare a fact sheet for compost facilities with special emphasis on preventing the West Nile Virus. The Education Committee discussed this and Cary Oshins was able to make corrections to a current DEP "On Farm" fact sheet to turn it into an "On Compost Facility" fact sheet. Patti Olenick is moving this through the DEP channels. The fact sheet will be mailed by DEP to all registered compost facilities. The mailing will include a newsletter focusing on organics processing. The newsletter will be compiled by the PROP staff. John Frederick requested everyone to notify him by e-mail of any important and pertinent information that should be shared with the group. Future organics-related newsletters could follow the format of the municipal committee's newsletter that is sent to the 100 largest municipalities. Council members would need to contribute articles and the newsletter would be sent when sufficient information was available.

Nadine Davitt stated that the first newsletter will provide information about the organics council and encourage organics processors to become involved in the council. The Ag Council and equipment companies could also be invited.

Dan Eichenlaub suggested that a PROP staff member should be dedicated to composting and this council to get the committees going and make the Council more productive. John Frederick responded that a PROP Board retreat will be held in November and that a comprehensive strategic planning session will be held to discuss this issue and others.

John then distributed copies of the "Recommendations, Accomplishments, and Proposed Work Plans" as prepared by the PROP office using the information developed by the Organics Task Force. Much discussion followed regarding permitting, regulations, and using liquids in organics processing. Carla Castagnero commented that there must be accountability from DEP regarding permits and regulations. Charlie Scheidler stated that Secretary McGinty would be open-minded about input regarding these issues and that perhaps Larry Holley may have some suggestions. Charlie also recommended that the minutes be available on the PROP website. John Frederick said that the next thing to do is assemble our concerns and locate the best people to address these issues. This way, it not just an individual's voice but an entire council and membership. Dan Eichenlaub added that the Government Committee should discuss the issues and the contacts. John replied that the programs, and how they will help their agendas, should be stressed to DEP. Bill Toffey explained that he had attended a meeting where future technological issues were discussed and that three items were brought to their attention: 1) utility and dairy are merging (i.e. manures and composting), 2) modified bioreactor landfill (liquid aerobic composting, biosolids + municipal waste + compost), and 3) brownfields restorations (especially around petroleum sites). Being that we have oil and dairy, Pennsylvania could be the innovator in this new technology and that should be stressed to DEP. He also added that water quality and septage are going to be big issues. His recommendation is that environmentalists, watershed managers, etc., should be contacted to create some networking. In answer to a question regarding PROP support on these issues, John said that generally, PROP could write support letters. He also reiterated that any appropriate information should be forwarded to PROP along with all questions, concerns, or alerts and that a deadline be established for a work plan for each committee.

To generate additional membership interest, Carla Castagnero suggested that 5 minutes at the Soils Conference could be dedicated to an explanation of this Council. Rick Stehouwer decided that the meeting will be held during lunch and that Carla will do the presentation. John Frederick explained that the registration fee of last year's conference was low to gain attendance but that this year's registration was raised and that an attendee's PROP membership gained a discount. Carla recommended that PROP membership forms be available at the conference and John volunteered to add the annual report to this packet of information.

**NEXT MEETING:** It was decided that our next meeting will be held the second day of the Soils Conference as a breakfast meeting on Thursday, November 18, from 7 am to 8:30 am. Agenda items will include organization and committee updates. The PROP staff will contact vendors to see if there is an interest in providing door prizes for the meeting.

**2005 meetings:** Please mark your calendars for **April 19** in Harrisburg to enable members to visit the legislature and tour a facility at Camp Hill, **July 26** at the PROP conference at the Penn Stater, **September 20** in Williamsport, and the **November** meeting will be held at the Manufactured Soils Conference in State College. Meeting topics with speakers will be developed by the steering committee.

**OTHER EVENT DISCUSSIONS:** The 2004 Manufactured Soils Conference is being held November 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Information and registration are available on the PROP ([www.proprecycles.org](http://www.proprecycles.org)) website. Additional publicity, exhibitors, and sponsors are still needed. Nadine suggested that PROP should contact the Mid-Atlantic Composting Association and challenged us to contact our suppliers to find sponsors for this event. The 2005 PROP Conference will be held Wednesday, July 27, through Friday, July 29. The 2005 Manufactured Soils Conference will be held in November 2005.

After the business meeting, Jim Bednarski expressed interest in becoming the Markets Committee chair. Nadine Davitt and John Frederick will follow up with Jim.

After lunch, we toured Laurel Valley Soils.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Arnold  
Secretary