



Independent coverage of composting, wood recycling and organics management



Composting News

May 2024

McIntee Media
Market Intelligence

Volume 33 Number 3

Compostable packaging breaks down at composting facilities, study says

Overall, compostable packaging successfully breaks down at composting facilities that meet reasonable operational parameters, according to a report by Composting Consortium. The consortium, an industry collaboration led by the Center for the Circular Economy at Closed Loop Partners, said its report fills a critical data gap for the U.S. composting industry—how well does certified, food-contact compostable packaging actually break down in real-world composting facilities?

The report, “Breaking It Down: The Realities of Compostable Packaging

(See Breakdown, page 6)



Image: Composting Consortium

House Farm Bill fails to address organic sector needs, NOC says

A draft federal Farm Bill, which was introduced into the House of Representatives on May 21, fails to address the needs of the growing organic sector, the National Organic Coalition (NOC), Arlington, Massachusetts, said. The 954-page bill, HR 8467, was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture.

“NOC appreciates that the House Farm Bill continues support for several critically important organic programs, including funding for the National Organic Program (NOP), the agency that oversees the growing organic sector, the Organic Certification Cost Share Program and the flagship organic research program (OREI),” NOC said. “Unfortunately, the bill assumes a stagnant organic sector rather than providing the necessary resources to keep pace with the growing organic food and farming sector.”

NOC said almost 1,000 companies became certified as organic in just the first four months of this year due to new requirements in the Strengthening Organic



(See Farm Bill, page 4)

Compost Caucus launched in House with two members

U.S. Reps. Tim Burchett (R-Tennessee) and Julia Brownley (D-California) last month launched the bipartisan Compost Caucus in the House of Representatives.

“This is something that can bring members on both sides of the aisle together,” Burchett said. “There’s a lot of good things that can be done when it comes to composting and recycling, and launching this caucus this is a good first step to get members working on it

together.”

The caucus will serve as an informal group of members dedicated to

(See Caucus, page 5)

Highlights

- Consortium releases policy toolkit
- US organic product sales set record

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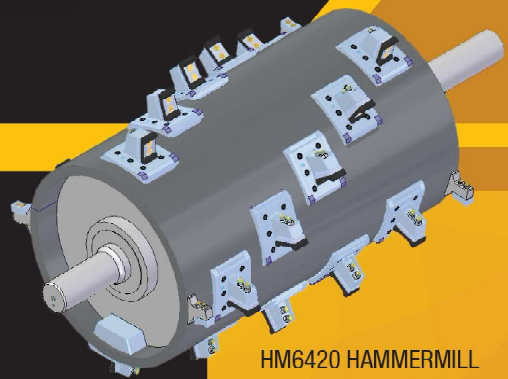
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Legislation/regulation

Consortium releases policy toolkit

In response to the rise of food waste legislation and increasing commitments to zero waste and climate action, the Composting Consortium, New York, managed by the Center for the Circular Economy at Closed Loop Partners, has released a Compost Policy Toolkit. The comprehensive toolkit equips policymakers, regulators, composters, brands and retailers with the insights and tools needed to navigate a complex policy landscape around compostable packaging and keep food out of landfill by diverting food scraps towards composting infrastructure, the consortium said.

The toolkit covers three pressing topics

in policy today:

- extended producer responsibility (EPR);
- labeling laws; and
- compost end market expansion.

The consortium, a multi-year collaborative effort that focuses on advancing circular solutions for food-contact compostable packaging and scaling composting infrastructure, emphasized the importance of policy in addressing organic waste and advancing circular outcomes, alongside design innovation and recovery infrastructure.

The consortium said the toolkit was released at a critical juncture—in the U.S. about 24% of the material in landfills is food waste.

Compostable packaging is increasingly seen as a mechanism to divert food scraps away from landfills and the U.S. composting system is slowly transitioning, with more composting facilities now accepting food scraps and

(See Toolkit, page 4)



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Legislation/regulation

Toolkit

From page 3

some forms of food-contact compostable packaging, the organization said.

“To support this transition, policies must help ensure that new materials—such as compostable packaging—align with available infrastructure and markets, as well as incentivize proactive infrastructure development to ensure that these materials are responsibly processed,” the consortium said, adding that U.S. policy on compostable packaging and organics is at a key inflection point.

“As awareness grows of the environmental impact of organic waste, more landfill bans and materials recovery policies are being implemented to advance packaging and food recovery,” the consortium said. “To date, 10 states and several major cities have established organics bans. Four states—California, Colorado, Maine and Oregon—have adopted EPR laws for packaging and several others have established study bills to evaluate the opportunity for EPR. There is also increasing attention on the importance of soil health, as seen by the proliferation of healthy soils policies and programs across the U.S. As momentum around policy accelerates, there is critical need to develop robust EPR laws that include food-contact compostable packaging, clear labeling laws that help customers and composters identify compostable packaging, and policies that expand the procurement and application of compost across the country.”

The toolkit includes insights on a range of policies that are critical to supporting the composting industry in the U.S. It provides actionable insights on:

- optimizing EPR for composting. This brief explores the role of EPR in building composting infrastructure. It emphasizes the importance of conducting thorough needs assessments that account for composting infrastructure and certified food-contact compostable packaging;
- clear and consistent labeling for compostable packaging. This brief shares

consumer survey findings, highlighting the need for standardized labeling on compostable packaging to avoid confusion with non-compostable packaging, maximize consumer participation in organics diversion programs and support composters in accepting food-contact compostable packaging at their facilities;

- policy considerations for supporting compost procurement. This brief explores strategies for promoting the purchase and use of finished compost to enhance our soils, including model procurement policies, compost application incentives and compost education programs.

The toolkit is an outcome of the consortium’s in-depth research on policy, made possible by collaboration with key stakeholders across the composting industry, the consortium said. By outlining these key areas and offering practical recommendations, the toolkit aims to equip policymakers and regulators with the insights and best practices needed to navigate the complexities of compostable packaging and infrastructure development.

“Policy plays an important role in keeping resources in circulation whether for reuse systems or in support of robust recycling and composting infrastructure,” said Kate Daly, managing director of the Center for the Circular Economy at Closed Loop Partners. “We believe this policy toolkit is a valuable resource that will help accelerate the responsible growth of composting infrastructure and unlock the environmental and economic benefits of a circular organics economy.”

The toolkit is available for download at tinyurl.com/2n2xnyzx.

Farm Bill

From page 1

Enforcement rule that went into effect in March. Meanwhile, the cost of organic certification has risen more than 85% since 2012 and continues to rise.

NOC said it is “deeply disappointed” that the bill:

- caps funding for the NOP at \$24 million

annually and does not increase the funding level over the life of the Farm Bill. The NOP currently oversees more than 46,000 operations in more than 100 countries around the world and the sector continues to grow. Additional resources are essential to adequately enforce organic regulations and to tackle fraud in organic supply chains. The Farm Bill should provide stepped-up funding for the NOP over the life of the Farm Bill;

- provides only \$8 million annually for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program. That funding level is not even enough to fully fund the program in 2024, and the cost of the program is expected to continue to rise over the next five years as more operations participate in organic certification and the cost of organic certification continues to go up. The Farm Bill should provide funds as needed to adequately cover the cost of this critically important program;
- fails to invest in the growth of USDA’s organic research ecosystem. Although this bill maintains level funding for USDA’s flagship research program, Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI), it does not reflect the growth of the organic market since 2018 and the challenges all farmers face. Organic research benefits all farmers, but conventional research does not benefit organic producers. Level funding fails to provide farmers with the tools to create thriving businesses in the face of changing weather patterns and shifting markets. The Farm Bill should ensure that organic research keeps pace with the growing organic sector and this bill falls short;
- does not require timely action by USDA to implement organic regulations. NOC and partners supported the introduction of a bipartisan bill—the Continuous Improvement and Accountability in Organic Act (CIAO)—to strengthen organic integrity and make regular updates to the organic standards. The House bill does not include these provisions. The Farm Bill should adopt CIAO (HR-5973) to create

transparency and timeliness in organic rulemaking;

- while the Senate Farm Bill (Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act) framework introduced by Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Michigan, chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture) includes several elements of the newly launched USDA Organic Transition Initiative, the House bill does not include these same provisions. The House bill does not fund organic market development nor does it fund USDA partnerships with nonprofits to help farmers transition to organic agriculture;
- does not adequately address racial justice and land access challenges.

NOC said the bill does include several positive provisions including:

- the bill increases mandatory funding for the Organic Data Initiative from \$5 million to \$10 million;
- it includes language requiring USDA to

collect, analyze and publish segregated organic dairy data;

- it increases the payment limit for farmers who take part in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Organic Initiative (a conservation program run by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service). The payment limit would be \$200,000 over a five-year period, rather than the current limit of \$140,000. NOC is seeking payment limit equity with the overall EQIP program, which provides a payment limit of \$450,000 over a five-year period.

HR 8467 includes provisions to fund testing of biochar types across soil types, soil health and soil management conditions, application methods and climatic and agronomic regions, including through the establishment of a national biochar research network. Funding also is proposed to research the

agricultural impacts of microplastics and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, including structural firefighting foam, in land-applied biosolids or compost on farmland.

Caucus

From page 1

supporting efforts to advance compost utilization, compost manufacturing and organics recycling, collection and education programs that lead to composting, he said.

The caucus was launched when Burchett and Brownley wrote a letter to Reps. Bryan Steil (R-Wisconsin), chairman and Joe Morelle (D-New York), ranking member of the House Committee on Administration to register the Caucus as a Congressional Member Organization for the 118th Congress.

As of the time of publication, Burchett's office was unable to provide the names of any other caucus members.

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National Compost Prices

The prices listed below are intended to indicate the value of mature compost products sold by compost producers and retailers in noted regions. Prices listed are based on surveys and publicly posted prices. Your input on published prices is encouraged. Contact Ken McEntee, editor, at (440) 238-6603. Fax: (440) 238-6712. EMail: ken@compostingnews.com.

Address: 9815 Hazelwood Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44149. Notes on listings.

- Each listing includes a high price obtained, a low price obtained and an average of all prices obtained within a particular market.

- Market areas: Thirteen market areas have been targeted to provide a cross section of compost product markets in the U.S. Where regions are not identified by a specific city, "Chesapeake" refers to the region stretching between Norfolk, Va. to Baltimore, Md. "Texas" incorporates several major cities in the state. "Northwest" represents the Seattle and Portland, Ore areas. "SF-Bay" refers to the San Francisco Bay area. SoCal is Southern California, including the Los Angeles and San Diego areas. Denver includes Colorado, Wyoming and Montana.
- "Food waste" compost: This category refers to compost products that include food waste, regional

specialities and other feedstocks not specifically covered in other categories.

- Manures: Chicken manures may include other poultry manures, such as turkey and duck manure. Cow manures may include manures marketed as steer and dairy manure. Horse manure is included in this category as well.
- Absence of a regional listing within a given category indicates not enough information for a valid listing. Additional data will be added as more information is obtained.
- Bulk retail prices do not include municipal operations that give compost away for free.

Bulk Retail (yard)

Yard waste compost	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 32.55	\$ 77.00	\$ 17.50
Chesapeake	\$ 24.50	\$ 30.00	\$ 17.00
SE	\$ 21.88	\$ 29.95	\$ 16.00
Florida	\$ 16.42	\$ 26.00	\$ 10.50
Cleveland	\$ 19.90	\$ 28.00	\$ 12.50
Iowa	\$ 21.57	\$ 53.00	\$ 7.50
Minneapolis	\$ 17.09	\$ 28.00	\$ 8.00
Texas	\$ 29.71	\$ 40.00	\$ 15.00
Denver	\$ 20.31	\$ 31.00	\$ 12.00
Northwest	\$ 24.05	\$ 55.00	\$ 10.00
SF-Bay	\$ 21.92	\$ 30.00	\$ 10.00
SoCal	\$ 14.75	\$ 24.00	\$ 8.00

Food waste compost	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 39.12	\$ 64.00	\$ 17.50
Chesapeake	\$ 23.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 15.00
SE	\$ 28.11	\$ 35.00	\$ 24.00
Florida	\$ 17.50	\$ 22.00	\$ 13.00
Iowa	\$ 25.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 15.00
Minneapolis	\$ 12.33	\$ 16.00	\$ 9.00
Texas	\$ 30.21	\$ 48.95	\$ 15.00
Denver	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00
Northwest	\$ 20.55	\$ 30.00	\$ 15.00
SF-Bay	\$ 23.61	\$ 38.00	\$ 14.00
SoCal	\$ 30.50	\$ 45.00	\$ 16.00

Leaf humus	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 24.98	\$ 30.00	\$ 19.95
Chesapeake	\$ 27.49	\$ 30.00	\$ 23.95
Cleveland	\$ 19.27	\$ 26.00	\$ 8.00

Composted biosolids	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 30.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 20.00
Chesapeake	\$ 24.98	\$ 35.00	\$ 12.00
SE	\$ 12.14	\$ 28.00	\$ 4.00
Florida	\$ 13.14	\$ 22.00	\$ 8.00
Cleveland	\$ 24.77	\$ 30.00	\$ 19.50
Iowa	\$ 12.67	\$ 21.00	\$ 8.00
Texas	\$ 21.28	\$ 30.00	\$ 10.00
Denver	\$ 9.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 7.00
Northwest	\$ 17.91	\$ 26.00	\$ 7.00
SoCal	\$ 13.36	\$ 22.00	\$ 3.50

Composted chicken manure	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 45.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 40.00
Chesapeake	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00
SE	\$ 42.00	\$ 42.00	\$ 42.00
Minneapolis	\$ 17.00	\$ 17.00	\$ 17.00
Texas	\$ 37.23	\$ 47.50	\$ 26.95
Denver	\$ 25.65	\$ 28.00	\$ 24.00
SF-Bay	\$ 16.00	\$ 16.00	\$ 16.00
SoCal	\$ 44.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 27.00

Composted cow manure	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 45.50	\$ 46.00	\$ 45.00
SE	\$ 31.33	\$ 45.00	\$ 12.00
Cleveland	\$ 24.00	\$ 24.00	\$ 24.00
Iowa	\$ 42.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 16.00
Minneapolis	\$ 29.33	\$ 32.00	\$ 26.00
Texas	\$ 29.33	\$ 47.50	\$ 15.00
Denver	\$ 21.71	\$ 30.00	\$ 12.00
Phoenix	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00
Northwest	\$ 23.85	\$ 33.75	\$ 17.45
SF-Bay	\$ 26.00	\$ 26.00	\$ 26.00
SoCal	\$ 17.25	\$ 24.00	\$ 12.00

Wood waste mulch	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 21.35	\$ 38.00	\$ 12.50
Chesapeake	\$ 21.13	\$ 28.00	\$ 12.00
SE	\$ 18.78	\$ 34.95	\$ 12.00
Florida	\$ 17.50	\$ 18.00	\$ 17.00
Cleveland	\$ 25.56	\$ 36.25	\$ 14.00
Iowa	\$ 32.50	\$ 40.00	\$ 25.00
Minneapolis	\$ 26.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 20.00
Texas	\$ 16.19	\$ 27.00	\$ 9.00
Denver	\$ 18.74	\$ 25.00	\$ 12.48
Phoenix	\$ 17.61	\$ 22.95	\$ 10.00
Northwest	\$ 19.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 7.50
SF-Bay	\$ 18.14	\$ 30.00	\$ 8.00
SoCal	\$ 20.50	\$ 50.00	\$ 6.00

Colored wood mulch	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 28.00	\$ 28.00	\$ 28.00
Chesapeake	\$ 28.67	\$ 33.00	\$ 25.00
SE	\$ 27.13	\$ 42.00	\$ 15.00
Florida	\$ 20.33	\$ 22.00	\$ 19.00
Cleveland	\$ 24.87	\$ 28.99	\$ 21.95
Iowa	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00
Minneapolis	\$ 36.80	\$ 49.00	\$ 30.00
Texas	\$ 26.08	\$ 32.50	\$ 18.00
Denver	\$ 33.28	\$ 33.28	\$ 33.28
Northwest	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00
SF-Bay	\$ 34.00	\$ 36.00	\$ 28.00
SoCal	\$ 32.50	\$ 35.00	\$ 30.00

Bulk wholesale (yard)

Yard waste compost	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 21.50	\$ 48.00	\$ 11.00
Chesapeake	\$ 13.39	\$ 16.00	\$ 8.00
SE	\$ 16.66	\$ 25.00	\$ 8.65
Florida	\$ 9.75	\$ 13.00	\$ 8.00
Cleveland	\$ 12.50	\$ 15.00	\$ 10.00
Iowa	\$ 14.00	\$ 19.00	\$ 8.00
Minneapolis	\$ 12.00	\$ 17.00	\$ 7.00
Texas	\$ 17.25	\$ 24.00	\$ 9.00
Denver	\$ 13.05	\$ 14.10	\$ 12.00
Northwest	\$ 14.79	\$ 35.00	\$ 7.50
SF-Bay	\$ 13.71	\$ 22.00	\$ 7.00
SoCal	\$ 7.33	\$ 10.00	\$ 6.00

Food waste compost	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 25.79	\$ 48.00	\$ 11.00
Chesapeake	\$ 10.50	\$ 15.00	\$ 8.00
SE	\$ 20.65	\$ 30.00	\$ 15.00
Florida	\$ 10.50	\$ 13.00	\$ 8.00
Iowa	\$ 13.40	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00
Minneapolis	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 12.00
Texas	\$ 17.50	\$ 24.00	\$ 8.50
Denver	\$ 11.33	\$ 15.00	\$ 7.00
Northwest	\$ 17.25	\$ 20.00	\$ 15.00
SF-Bay	\$ 12.67	\$ 26.00	\$ 5.00

Composted biosolids	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 15.33	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00
Chesapeake	\$ 9.31	\$ 15.00	\$ 5.00
SE	\$ 10.93	\$ 15.00	\$ 5.00
Florida	\$ 10.50	\$ 13.00	\$ 8.00
Texas	\$ 15.99	\$ 20.00	\$ 9.00
Denver	\$ 13.00	\$ 13.00	\$ 13.00
Northwest	\$ 16.75	\$ 21.00	\$ 12.00
SoCal	\$ 10.50	\$ 17.00	\$ 3.00

Composted cow manure	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 36.00	\$ 36.00	\$ 36.00
SE	\$ 21.38	\$ 31.50	\$ 7.00
Iowa	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00
Texas	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00
Denver	\$ 12.05	\$ 14.10	\$ 10.00
Northwest	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00
SF-Bay	\$ 34.25	\$ 34.50	\$ 34.00
SoCal	\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 4.00

Wood waste mulch	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 15.75	\$ 33.00	\$ 8.00
Chesapeake	\$ 15.80	\$ 17.00	\$ 13.00
SE	\$ 14.60	\$ 24.95	\$ 5.00
Florida	\$ 14.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 13.00
Iowa	\$ 30.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 20.00
Minneapolis	\$ 18.50	\$ 20.00	\$ 17.00
Texas	\$ 10.83	\$ 14.00	\$ 8.00
Denver	\$ 7.66	\$ 8.32	\$ 7.00
Northwest	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00
SF-Bay	\$ 12.33	\$ 14.00	\$ 9.00
SoCal	\$ 9.25	\$ 15.00	\$ 5.00

Colored wood mulch	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00
Chesapeake	\$ 20.50	\$ 22.00	\$ 19.00
SE	\$ 19.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 15.00
Florida	\$ 16.00	\$ 16.00	\$ 16.00
Iowa	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00
Minneapolis	\$ 27.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 19.00
Texas	\$ 20.67	\$ 24.00	\$ 18.00
Denver	\$ 17.66	\$ 21.32	\$ 14.00
Northwest	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00
SF-Bay	\$ 21.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 19.00
SoCal	\$ 22.50	\$ 25.00	\$ 20.00

Bag Retail

Compost (40# bag)	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 6.87	\$ 8.00	\$ 4.50
Chesapeake	\$ 3.73	\$ 5.49	\$ 2.15
SE	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.00
Iowa	\$ 1.99	\$ 1.99	\$ 1.99
Cleveland	\$ 2.45	\$ 2.99	\$ 2.10
Iowa	\$ 3.12	\$ 7.99	\$ 1.50
Texas	\$ 4.25	\$ 6.99	\$ 1.99
Denver	\$ 3.59	\$ 4.75	\$ 1.73
Phoenix	\$ 4.71	\$ 5.99	\$ 2.77
Northwest	\$ 4.29	\$ 5.99	\$ 2.99
SoCal	\$ 5.39	\$ 6.25	\$ 3.90

Composted cow manure (40# bag)	Average	High	Low
NE	\$ 6.53	\$ 9.87	\$ 3.85
Chesapeake	\$ 5.97	\$ 7.95	\$ 3.99
SE	\$ 5.16	\$ 6.97	\$ 3.34
Florida	\$ 1.98	\$ 1.99	\$ 1.97
Cleveland	\$ 3.27	\$ 3.99	\$ 2.49
Iowa	\$ 2.18	\$ 2.49	\$ 1.75
Minneapolis	\$ 3.70	\$ 7.00	\$ 1.99
Texas	\$ 4.59	\$ 6.99	\$ 1.99
Phoenix	\$ 2.99	\$ 3.99	\$ 2.49
Northwest	\$ 3.99	\$ 3.99	\$ 3.99
SF-Bay	\$ 7.00	\$ 7.00	\$ 7.00

Compostables

Breakdown

From page 1

Disintegration in Composting Systems,” shares findings from an 18-month study—the largest known field test of certified, food-contact compostable packaging conducted in North America—revealing the realities of compostable plastic and fiber disintegration in diverse in-field composting conditions.

In total, the study tested more than 23,000 units of certified food-contact compostable packaging within large-scale industrial composting environments. This encompassed 31 types of fiber packaging and products, and compostable plastic packaging and products—such as polylactic acid (PLA) and polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHA)—across 10 diverse composting facilities across the U.S., the consortium said.

The organization said the data is released at a critical time, as compostable

packaging grows as an alternative to conventional plastics amidst an urgent waste crisis. Roughly one-third of the world’s food is wasted each year—a loss estimated at \$230 billion, the consortium said, adding that almost 60% of the uncontrolled methane emissions from municipal landfills are caused by discarded food, highlighting its significant impact on the environment.

To address the urgent food waste and climate challenge, demand for organics circularity is rising, and with it, the volume of food-contact compostable packaging—a market poised to grow 16% annually in the U.S. until 2032, four times faster than traditional plastic packaging.

“Today, the U.S. composting industry is in an early stage of transformation to accept and process more food waste—[about] 70% of the composters who process food also accept and process some format of food-contact compostable packaging, with the understanding that accepting these

materials helps bring in more food waste to their facilities,” the consortium said.

For compostable packaging to reach its full potential as a circular packaging solution, disintegration at end-of-life is critical, in tandem with consistent labeling and design that differentiates compostable and non-compostable packaging further upstream, as well as policies that incentivize robust composting infrastructure to process these materials. In this new study, the Composting Consortium focuses on how compostable packaging breaks down. Previously, scant information was publicly available on the disintegration of compostable packaging, particularly on the compost environments in which they disintegrate.

The study found that overall, compostable packaging breaks down successfully at composting facilities that meet reasonable operational parameters such as pile temperatures, moisture,

(See Breakdown, page 8)



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Compostables

Breakdown

From page 7

oxygen and pH. While the study did not assess disintegration with the intention to pass or fail any specific compostable packaging or product, notably, the average compostable plastic and fiber packaging in-field performance in this study met disintegration thresholds used by industry groups:

- compostable plastic packaging and products broke down successfully across five composting methods and all 10 facilities' varying processing timeframes and operating conditions, achieving 98% disintegration on average by surface area, which exceeds industry thresholds to achieve a 90% or higher disintegration.
- compostable fiber packaging and products achieved 83% disintegration on average by surface area, meeting industry thresholds to achieve an 80% or higher disintegration. Findings showed that certain operating conditions, like turning, agitation and consistent moisture levels above 50%, support increased disintegration of fiber packaging and products.

The findings point to the viability of certified food-contact compostable packaging as an alternative packaging solution to single-use conventional plastic packaging, the consortium said. It also highlights the importance of ensuring that these materials align with available recovery infrastructure and the importance of expanding robust recovery pathways to divert compostable packaging and the food scraps they carry, from landfills.

The consortium said that it, in collaboration with its brand and industry partners, the U.S. Composting Council (USCC) and the Compost Research and Education Foundation (CREF), of Raleigh, North Carolina, and other groups, will leverage these findings to help inform policymaking around compostable packaging, update best management practices for composting facilities and shape a field test standard

for evaluating compostable packaging disintegration at composting facilities. Data from the study will be donated to CREF's Compostable Field Testing Program (CFTP), which will later launch an open-source database on the disintegration of compostable packaging.

Additionally, ASTM International, West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, is currently developing an in-field test method for assessing disintegration of compostable items at composting facilities, and data from this study will be used to inform the draft field testing method.

As the consortium moves into its next phase of work, the results of the study will shape its engagement and education efforts with composters, municipalities, regulators, brands and packaging manufacturers, the consortium said.

"Field testing for disintegration has been ongoing for three decades and the Composting Consortium's work across the value chain has significantly advanced insights for the industry," Diane Hazard, executive director of CREF. "The collaborative approach and open-source data from this project both advances field testing methods and equips compost manufacturers and brands with the knowledge to better understand the variability of disintegration across different systems, all major steps towards successfully processing compostable packaging."

The study brought together the consortium's corporate brand partners, including:

- PepsiCo.;
- the NextGen Consortium;
- Colgate-Palmolive;
- Community Impact at Danaher;
- Eastman;
- The Kraft Heinz Co.;
- Mars Inc. and Target Corp..

It also included technical partners USCC, Resource Recycling Systems, CFTP and the Biodegradable Products Institute and a cohort of compost partners including:

- Atlas Organics, New York;
- Napa Recycling & Waste Services, Napa, California;
- Specialized Environmental Tech-

- nologies, Minnetrista, Minnesota;
- Windham Solid Waste Management, Brattleboro, Vermont;
- Black Earth Compost, Gloucester, Massachusetts;
- Ag Choice Organics Recycling, Andover, New Jersey;
- Happy Trash Can Compost, Bozeman, Montana;
- Veteran Compost, Aberdeen, Maryland; and
- Dayton Foodbank, Dayton, Ohio.

Advisory partners included:

- 5 Gyres, Santa Monica, California;
- Foodservice Packaging Institute, Falls Church, Virginia;
- ReFED, Long Island City, New York;
- the Compost Research and Education Foundation (CREF);
- the Sustainable Packaging Coalition, Stamford, Connecticut;
- Compost Manufacturing Alliance, Port Orchard, Washington;
- Eco-Cycle, Boulder, Colorado;
- University College London;
- Western Michigan University;
- University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point; and
- World Wildlife Fund, Gland, Vaud, Switzerland.

"Brands and manufacturers must prioritize material selection and design and labeling for compostable packaging to achieve optimal performance in composting environments, which can then incentivize composters to accept food-contact compostable packaging materials at their facilities," said Frank Franciosi, executive director, USCC. "As feedstock for composters becomes diversified and more complex, it's important for all entities within the supply chain to support consumer education on source separation of organics and reevaluate best management practices to support those composters who choose to accept compostable packaging, and this study is another tool for our industry to be able to start that process."

For information about print and online advertising contact Ken McEntee, ken@compostingnews.com

Product/Equipment and Services Guide



Featuring the industry's leading vendors. This listing of the industry's leading vendors of products, equipment and services essential to the compost manufacturing, wood recycling and organics management business also is available online at compostingnews.com. Scan the QR code with your mobile device to go there. If your business is not listed, please contact ken@compostingnews.com.

Analytical Laboratory



Control Laboratories

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Contact: Assaf Sadeh
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Anaerobic digestion



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Bagging/Packaging Equipment



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In-Vessel Composting



Ag-Bag Environmental

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Mulch Coloring Systems



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Replacement Parts



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Fax: 785-284-2010
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DynaHog CW Mill Equipment -

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Product/Equipment and Services Guide



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Replacement Parts (cont.)



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Wear Parts



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Screening Systems & Trommels



Action Equipment Company Inc.

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Wood Shredders



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Diamond Z

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Windrow Turners



Aeromaster Midwest Bio-Systems

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 28933 35 E Street
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Wood Grinders - Horizontal



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Thermometers & Monitoring Equipment



Reotemp Instruments

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Wood Grinders - Tub



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Organics

US organic product sales set record

U.S. sales of certified organic products approached \$70 billion in 2023, a new record for the sector, the Organic Trade Association (OTA), Washington, D.C., reported. Dollar sales for the American organic marketplace hit \$69.7 billion last year, up 3.4%, according to OTA's 2024 Organic Industry Survey.

Produce held its spot as the largest organic category in 2023, continuing to be the primary entry point for consumers into the organic market.

Despite stubborn price inflation seen throughout retail aisles, consumers remained clear-eyed about their priorities in the products they chose for themselves and their families, valuing health and sustainability and seeking out the USDA Organic label, OTA said. The organic marketplace recalibrated its supply chain and reconciled the cost of doing business in part with increased retail pricing. The industry continued to grow, with organic food sales in 2023 totaling \$63.8 billion and sales of organic non-food products totaling \$5.9 billion.

"It is encouraging to see that organic is growing at basically the same rate as the total market," said Tom Chapman, co-CEO of OTA. "In the face of inflation and considering organic is already seen as a premium category, the current growth shows that consumers continue to choose organic amidst economic challenges and price increases. Although organic is now a maturing sector in the marketplace, we still have plenty of room to grow."

In 2023, the increase in dollar sales in the organic market was driven more by pricing than unit sales, OTA said. However, consumers boosted their purchases of many organic products. Increases in unit sales were reported for up to 40% of the products tracked in this year's survey. The survey also showed



that prices for many non-organic products climbed at a faster rate than organic products. This means the price gap between conventional and organic is closing, which should help fuel growth for organic products in 2024.

OTA said produce held its spot as the largest organic category in 2023 because organic produce meets the consumer's desire for clean, healthy food.

"The importance of organic's critical benefit of no toxic synthetic pesticides is easy to grasp when buying organic berries or carrots," OTA said. "In 2023, the category grew by 2.6% to \$20.5 billion. Organic produce now accounts for more than 15% of total U.S. fruit and vegetable sales. Top sellers in the organic produce section were avocados, berries, apples, carrots and packaged salads—and organic bananas saw stronger growth in 2023 than non-organic bananas."

The second biggest-selling food category in the organic aisles was the grocery category with sales of \$15.4 billion, for a 4.1% growth. This new category represents many of the products previously grouped under breads and grains, condiments and packaged and prepared foods.

Organic labeled a stand-out

The number of "organic" claims and labels continued to expand in the retail aisles in 2023, but the organic seal remained a stand-out with consumers, OTA said. A growing consumer focus on personal and family health, sustainability and a desire for clean products free from

antibiotics, hormones, preservatives and dyes kept shoppers turning to organic. More consumers are aware of the potential health benefits associated with organic foods and many consumers, especially the Gen Z generation, are increasingly conscious of the ethical implications of their food choices and are looking for products that align with their values, such as animal welfare, fair trade and support for organic farmers.

Research is showing a consistent and growing interest in organic from millennials and Gen Z. These generations grew up with organic and sustainability, and the health of people and the planet are top-of-mind for these consumers. Industry experts see this as an opportunity for organic, with the sector well positioned to meet the product attributes and values sought by consumers today and for future generations.

By 2030, the U.S. population will consist of a majority driven by millennial, Gen Z and younger generations.

But the future for organic is not without its challenges, OTA said. The latest term adding confusion to the marketplace is "regenerative."

While regenerative labels are not necessarily top of mind for consumers yet, the attributes they claim to represent include soil health, animal and human welfare and biodiversity—attributes already embodied by the USDA Organic seal. As new certifications develop around regenerative agriculture, there is concern of consumer confusion, making it all the more important to elevate organic education, OTA said.

"It is essential to educate consumers that choosing organic is a straightforward way to tackle some of the greatest challenges we face," said Matthew Dillon, co-CEO of OTA. "Whether it's accessing healthy foods, improving transparency in supply chains, mitigating climate change, supporting rural economic resilience, protecting natural resources or realizing the multitude of other benefits, effectively communicating and delivering on these promises is the key to expanding organic's share of our dinner plate."

Facilities

Yolo County grant will expand compost facility

Yolo County (California) Central Landfill (YCCL) and Northern Recycling LLC, Woodland, California, received a \$10 million grant from CalRecycle to significantly expand their state-of-the-art compost facility.

The original facility, inaugurated in 2022, reached its capacity of 182,000 tons per year within its first year of operation. This expansion project will increase the facility's capacity by about 50,000-60,000 tons per year, supporting Yolo County's sustainability and waste management goals.

The grant, which is part of California's Organics Grant Program under the California Climate Investments initiative, is projected to divert an additional 600,000 tons of organic waste from landfills over the next decade.

"Yolo County continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to our sustainability goals," said Lucas Frerichs, chair of the Yolo County Board of Supervisors. "Innovation in our operations at our publicly-owned landfill is consistently one of the bright spots in reducing Yolo County's overall greenhouse gas emissions."

Once complete, the expansion project will enhance Yolo County's capacity to manage organic waste sustainably, supporting the circular economic model promoted by CalRecycle. The increased composting capacity allows for further diversion of green waste by Yolo County, regional businesses and residents. State-mandated programs require that food waste such as coffee grounds, melon rinds, table scraps and food-soiled paper napkins and towels be placed in compost bins. This not only diverts substantial amounts of organic waste from landfills but also produces valuable compost, a vital resource for soil health and carbon

sequestration in agriculture.

Northern Recycling, in partnership with YCCL, said it intends to expand Yolo County's covered aerated static pile composting facility, utilizing grant funds to implement state-of-the-art composting infrastructure. This will include composting aeration systems, working pads and equipment for screening and sorting food and green material.

Food waste

Twins composted 300 tons of service ware

After turning 300 tons of trash into fertile soil last year, the Minnesota Twins and Eco-Products, Boulder, Colorado, plan to top that number this year, the organizations said.

With the help of fans, hundreds of thousands of beer cups, plates and nacho trays at Target Field were converted to compost last year. They are made by Eco-Products.

"Our fans should be proud of all they're doing to make Target Field the greenest ballpark in America," said Jase Miller, the Twins' manager of ballpark operations. "Together we've kept hundreds of tons of trash out of local landfills. That's a huge win not just for Target Field, but for the whole community."

Much of the Eco-Products packaging relies on a material called Ingeo, a compostable resin made by NatureWorks, Minnetonka, Minnesota.

At Target Field, all plastic bottles and aluminum can be recycled, while all other concessions-related products can be composted. The stadium has bins for the compostable materials set up around the stadium, side-by-side with recycling bins.

After each game, stadium workers empty the compost bins and the material is taken to a commercial composting facility. There the stadium's trash is turned into organic materials such as

soil for area farms, gardens and landscapers.

At the time of publication, the Twins were a distant third place in the American League Central Division, 6.5 games behind the Cleveland Guardians.

Bigbelly unveils smart compost program

Bigbelly Solar LLC, Needham, Massachusetts, unveiled its "Smart Compost Program" this month. The program provides residents a seamless way to dispose of food waste in an environmentally conscious, budget-friendly manner, powered by cutting-edge technology, Bigbelly said.

After a successful U.S. debut, the company said it is rolling out its program to communities across the globe, enhancing beautification efforts and fostering sustainability efforts worldwide.

"This is where convenience meets sustainability, all the while contributing to the beautification of our planet," said Jeff Satwicz, Bigbelly's founder and vice president of business development. "We're not just tackling waste; we're fostering a cleaner, greener, more equitable future."

There are three key components to the program:

- conveniently placed, secure bins that each service 100 residences;
- a mobile app that allows participants in the program to locate and unlock the bins; and
- cloud-based management software that allows municipalities to operate the program at 50% less cost than curbside composting.

The Bigbelly smart compost bins are placed in public spaces, eliminating the need for buy-in from individual residents or building managers. Resident participation is automated through the free Smart Compost app.

"We can have a community program up and running in a matter of weeks," Satwicz said. "Municipalities have access

Equipment news

Spaleck adds HNB to dealer network

to software to manage use, collection routes and capacity. All residents need to do is download the mobile app and they're ready to go. There's about a 70-million household gap between the people that have access to recycling and those with access to food waste collection. That's a massive divide to close. We see an enormous opportunity to make a difference."

The smart compost bins are fully enclosed and locked, eliminating the possibility of rats and other pests gaining access and preventing people from depositing trash. Individuals who participate in the program locate and unlock the bins through the mobile app, which can be configured to inform residents on what can and can't be composted and provide a vehicle to report issues.

Established in 2003, Bigbelly said it has expanded its footprint to serve more than 2,500 customers in 60 countries. Offering a range of self-contained bins, from budget-friendly options to cutting-edge smart waste receptacles, Bigbelly integrates solar and battery-powered technologies alongside advanced sensors that monitor critical data such as fill level, collection activity and GPS location.

\$1 million in grants will fund Michigan food waste reduction

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) Recycling Unit announced a \$1 million pool of grants for infrastructure projects to increase access to food waste diversion and increase the state's food waste composting and recycling rate. EGLE's Materials Management Division (MMD) has issued a request for proposals (RFP) to solicit projects for food waste collection and processing through its Organics Infrastructure Grant program.

EGLE said food waste composting decreases greenhouse gases by

Spaleck USA, a Pittsburgh-based vendor of screening and conveying technology, has expanded its dealer network with the addition of HNB Equipment, of Holdrege, Nebraska. HNB is an exclusive dealer for Iowa and Nebraska with authorization in select surrounding states.

HNB provides equipment sales and rentals of mobile scalping screeners with supporting equipment including dozers, excavators, parts and transportation. The company also operates a composting site.



"Walking our yards and seeing the amount of money that was left behind in the dirt, we needed to do something," said Ross Booe owner of HNB. "We initially were going to rent a screener from Spaleck, but after looking at long term benefits within the recycling community of the Midwest ultimately led to a purchase and the dealer agreement."

Spaleck offers customized solutions for a variety of applications in the recycling industry, such as the separation and processing of compost, metal scrap and industrial waste.

"The combination between Spaleck's professionalism and the quality of their equipment was a major factor in our decision to sign on as a dealer," said Paige Booe, executive of marketing and sales for HNB. "We take a hands on approach with customers. We can relate to their needs because we experience the same."

Maria Cargould, sales representative at Spaleck, emphasized the importance of collaboration with HNB.

"Our goal is not only to offer high-quality products but also to build close and long-term partnerships with our customers," Cargould said. "Working with HNB Equipment as a dealer is another step towards strengthening our presence in the region and providing even better service to our customers."

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improving carbon sequestration in the soil and reducing methane emissions from landfills. The grants also will facilitate the safe management of waste materials and help maintain the flow of vital raw materials for Michigan businesses. Increasing access to recycling opportunities also saves water and energy and creates jobs, the department said.

Eligible proposals include:

- implementing curbside food waste carts;
- creating or enhancing drop-off food waste collection;
- public-space food waste collection containers;

- school food waste collection and processing;
- food waste collection vehicles;
- multifamily food waste collection projects; and
- food waste processing projects.

The RFP is open for applications through 5 p.m. August 28, 2024. The expected grant period is November 29, 2024 through September 30, 2027.

Grant requests may range from \$5,000 to \$250,000. Applicants are required to pledge matching funds equal to at least 20% of the total grant budget.

Any written answers to questions, changes, and/or clarifications will be posted at Michigan.gov/MIRecycles.

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