REGIONAL ROUNDUP

San Diego, California
PILOT EVALUATES COVERED COMPOSTING OF FOOD WASTE

The City of San Diego Environmental Services Department (ESD) initiated a pilot project to evaluate the GORE Cover composting system versus its current windrow composting to process food waste with green waste. The pilot is located at the city's Miramar Greenery composting and mulch facility, which is built on the closed portion of the Miramar Landfill. The GORE system started operating in April. Phase I was 28 days. Phases II and III are each 15 days for a total of roughly 60 days for the trial. Materials being composted under cover are 112 tons of food waste from various commercial sources, 150 tons (about 400 cubic yards) of green waste from landscapers and the city's collection and about 15 tons (100 cy) of overs from the screened compost, used as a bulking agent.

"The City is running the trial to assess the operational effectiveness of covered aerated static pile technology with the Miramar Greenery feedstock and high levels of food waste (including biodegradable flatware) in anticipation of more stringent emissions regulations and expected increased levels of contamination as we compost more varied feedstocks," says Renee Robertson, Recycling Specialist at ESD. "We are seeking to divert more organics from the landfill by branching out into more contaminated feedstock streams, including mixed commercial organics. In addition, the composting site and landfill are immediately adjacent to a military air base, so it is essential that more mixed organics do not equal more vectors, including birds. We also want to compare compost maturity results with the open windrow material, as well as gather operational data and costs for running a covered aerated system on a closed landfill." Results of the trial will be reported later this summer.

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
TWO DECADES OF BIOSOLIDS COMPOSTING SUCCESS

The Coeur d'Alene wastewater treatment plant treats approximately 3.6 million gallons/day of wastewater. A recent news item in the Northwest Biosolids Management Association newsletter (www.nwbiosolids.org) provided an update on the WWTP and its composting operation, which has been operating since 1990. The plant uses anaerobic digesters, rotating screen and gravity thickeners, and centrifuge dewatering, producing 21,000 wet pounds/day of Class B biosolids. The composting plant, added to produce Class A, Exceptional Quality biosolids, is three miles from the WWTP on an 18-acre site. The facility is surrounded on three sides by residential neighbors. The biosolids cake (22 percent solids) is delivered via dump truck, mixed with red fir bark chips and composted in aerated static piles. Annual compost production is about 4,000 cubic yards; material is sold to local area landscapers and tree nurseries. Several major additions and modifications have been made at the composting facility, including covered chip storage, outside pile bays and purchase of new mixing and screening equipment.

Avon, New York
TAPPING HORTICULTURE, VINEYARD MARKETS WITH VERMICOMPOST

RT Solutions, LLC designed and built a vermicomposting facility in Avon on a 1,600 head dairy farm that is adjacent to a 1,700 head operation. Manure solids are mixed with silage and composted in aerated bins for 14 days prior to being loaded into the flow-through vermicomposting system. At the recent vermicomposting workshop at North Carolina State University, Thomas Herlihy of RT gave presentations on commercial-scale vermicomposting and on marketing the end product to commercial growers and retail outlets. "We target our product, Worm Power, to high value growers who can justify the use of vermicompost products," said Herlihy. "Those markets include vineyards, nurseries, greenhouses, and turf and vegetable growers." He described a greenhouse operation using 10 to 15 percent Worm Power in its potting soil; the product also is used to top-dress the plug trays and is the primary ingredient in the nursery's tea that is applied weekly. "That single customer has purchased 150,000 lbs of vermicompost," he added. "We had to get organic certification from OMRI, as well as get product liability insurance and guarantee our specifications range."

The company has been participating in organic potting mix studies with Cornell University for about four years. A current project is evaluating use of vermicompost to substitute for synthetic inputs in horticulture and nursery production. The project team includes researchers in plant pathology and horticulture and extension specialists in dairy economics and compost production.

Raleigh, North Carolina
NEW DISPOSAL BANS COMING IN OCTOBER

Starting October 1, 2009, wooden pallets, plastic bottles and oil filters are targeted for diversion from landfills by North Carolina statutes. The state already has disposal bans for yard trimmings, whole tires, used oil, lead-acid batteries, white goods and aluminum cans. When the bill banning three new materials passed in 2005, the General Assembly acknowledged they constituted commodities, not waste. In doing so, says Scott Mouw of the state's Department of Environment and Natural Resources, lawmakers recognized that the recovery of these materials contributes to the growth of the state's economy. For example, for PET (#1 plastic) bottles, a joint venture between DAK Inc. and Shaw Carpets will create 100 new jobs and recycle more than five billion PET bottles/year into polyester fiber for carpet manufacture. The facility, known as Clear Path Recycling, adds 280 million pounds of PET capacity to the 130 million pounds/year needed by a plant operated by NU-URC and Coca Cola in Spartanburg, South Carolina. The combined capacity of these two plants alone is more than double all of the PET generated in North Carolina.