Residential Food Waste Collection
Trends in Source Separated Organics (SSO) Programs

Northeast Recycling Council
Amherst, MA – November 7, 2014
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Novamont
Living Chemistry for Quality of Life.
Why Novamont (a biopolymer producer) researches source separated organics

BioCycle’s National Survey on Residential Food Scrap Collection

Regional trends & examples

Next steps
Mater-Bi® Compostable Biopolymers
Mater-Bi® Production and Life Cycle
Mater-Bi® Production and Life Cycle cont’d
BioCycle Nationwide Survey: Residential SSO

Key Data (2012):
- Over 185 residential SSO programs across 18 states
- Over 2.55 million households served

Number of U.S. residential food waste collection programs by state:

- California: 62
- Colorado: 4
- Illinois: 1
- Iowa: 2
- Kentucky: 1
- Maryland: 4
- Massachusetts: 2
- Michigan: 2
- Minnesota: 26
- New Jersey: 1
- New York: 4
- Ohio: 1
- Oregon: 6
- Pennsylvania: 1
- Texas: 2
- Vermont: 1
- Washington: 2
- Wisconsin: 2
Growth Trends from 2011 to 2012:
• About 15% growth in number of municipalities
• About 10% growth in number of households

Prediction for 2013
• Slow but steady growth, with several new pilot programs, and expansion of existing programs with more households
Regional SSO

Growth in the Northeast & Mid-Atlantic

- Mandatory food waste collection for large commercial generators in four States (CT, VT, MA, RI)
  - Drives collection and processing infrastructure that benefits residential sector
- States are amending regulations to ease permitting of new food waste composting facilities & providing grants for SSO programs
- Drop-off programs and transfer stations to improve hauling efficiencies; private company subscription programs
- 18 new pilots in 8 States since 2011, including:
  - Howard County (MD); Takoma Park (MD);
  - Salem (MA); Cambridge (MA); Providence (RI);
  - Princeton (NJ); Lambertville (NJ); Bridgewater (CT);
  - New York City (NY); State College (PA);
  - Brattleboro (VT)
Collection

Key Factors For SSO

- Participation and capture rates
- Quality (low contaminants)

Toolkit For Achieving Those Goals:

- Clear Communication (how & why to participate)
- Collection frequency/Cart size
- Tools: kitchen pails & compostable bags
- PAYT & other incentives
SSO Programs That Allow Compostable Bags (2012)

- Yes: 79%
- No: 21%

*Up from 69% in 2011*
Regional Trends (vs. West Coast)

- Small curbside carts target food waste
  - Focus on food allows for hauling efficiency, vs. larger carts in West for yard trimmings + food
- PAYT schemes are less frequent
  - Waste/recycling often paid through general tax or fixed fee
- Compostable bags promoted from start
  - Learned from other municipalities importance of bags for participation
- Innovative hauling
  - Split-body trucks for co-collecting food scraps and recycling weekly, subscription services collecting with bicycles
Howard County, MD

- Mini-pilot in 2010 (34 households), recently expanded to 5,900 households in October 2014
  - Participants given curbside cart (35- or 65-gallon), sample compostable bags, flyer about participation (and now DVD with videos)
  - Households supply their own kitchen container
  - Average 9 lbs/household/week food waste collected (no meat/dairy)
  - Paid through taxes (no PAYT)
- Howard County opened its own composting facility in 2013 at Alpha Ridge Landfill for residential organics and schools
Cambridge, MA

✓ Pilot for 800 households launched 2013

✓ Participants received a 13-gallon cart, vented kitchen pail, one year supply of compostable bags, and a flyer on how/why to participate

✓ Collecting 6.65 lbs/household/week – **85% capture rate (based on capture rates)**

✓ Composted at Rocky Hill Farm (less than 1% contamination reported)

✓ No PAYT
Subscription Services

✔ Public demand for residential food scrap service
✔ Entrepreneurs meeting this need, since eastern US municipalities have been slow to set up programs
✔ Innovative hauling (bicycles, small collection vehicles) and flexibility for processing (including community gardens)
✔ For Takoma Park, MD the local subscription program (Compost Crew) has been folded into the town’s plan for citywide service
✔ Potential model for other communities with subscription programs
Next Steps

✓ Expand pilot programs into city/county wide service
  ✓ Some smaller towns are bypassing the pilot stage, building off experience from neighboring towns, knowledge base of haulers/composters

✓ Coordination of commercial and residential policies
  ✓ Consistent messaging about what is compostable, behavior change in all settings → better participation, lower contamination

✓ More communities with SSO!
  ✓ Momentum from sharing success on all levels (municipal, hauler, composter)

✓ Processing infrastructure will grow with demand → enforce appropriate policies (ie, no conventional plastic bags) so facilities have clean feedstock and viable business
COMPOST 2015

ORGANICS ON THE RISE

➢ Education
➢ Exhibition
➢ Equipment Show
➢ Networking
➢ FUN!

US Composting Council Conference & Tradeshow
Jan. 20-23, 2015 | Austin, TX
Questions?

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