NERC report shows MRF materials value increase in Q2 2020

Recycling association's survey shows curbside recyclables gained value during restricted activity months.

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Brian Taylor

The material recovery facility (MRF) Blended Value Study conducted by the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) for the second quarter of 2020 showed an increase in the overall value of curbside recycling materials during the timeframe, which coincided in part with COVID-19-related restrictions.

The Vermont-based group says it collected data from MRF operators in 11 states (Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia), with the results from those who responded showing a 21 percent increase in material values.

The report, which covers April to June, shows the average commodity value per ton for MRF materials, minus the expense of handling residuals, was $46.06, which is up 21 percent compared with the $37.93 value in the first quarter of the year.

The average processing cost came in at $301 per ton, which represents a decrease of 5 percent compared with the previous period, despite any additional COVID-19-related compliance costs. The decrease was in sharp contrast to the 10 percent rise in processing costs during the first quarter of 2020.

Commenting on the second-quarter results, NERC states, "We had anticipated being able to see an obvious impact from the pandemic, but nothing stands out as distinctly different from the regular ups and downs of end market values. Overall, values were up, [and] the majority of this can be accounted for due to increased paper values and strong plastic values (although not all were up)."

A 2019 NERC survey of average MRF input showed old corrugated containers (OCC) representing 25 percent of the material. The value of OCC surged during the spring.

The full NERC second quarter 2020 MRF Blended Commodity Values report can be found on [this web page](https://www.recyclingtoday.com/).