

# Act 148 & Composting: Managing Food Waste in the Workplace

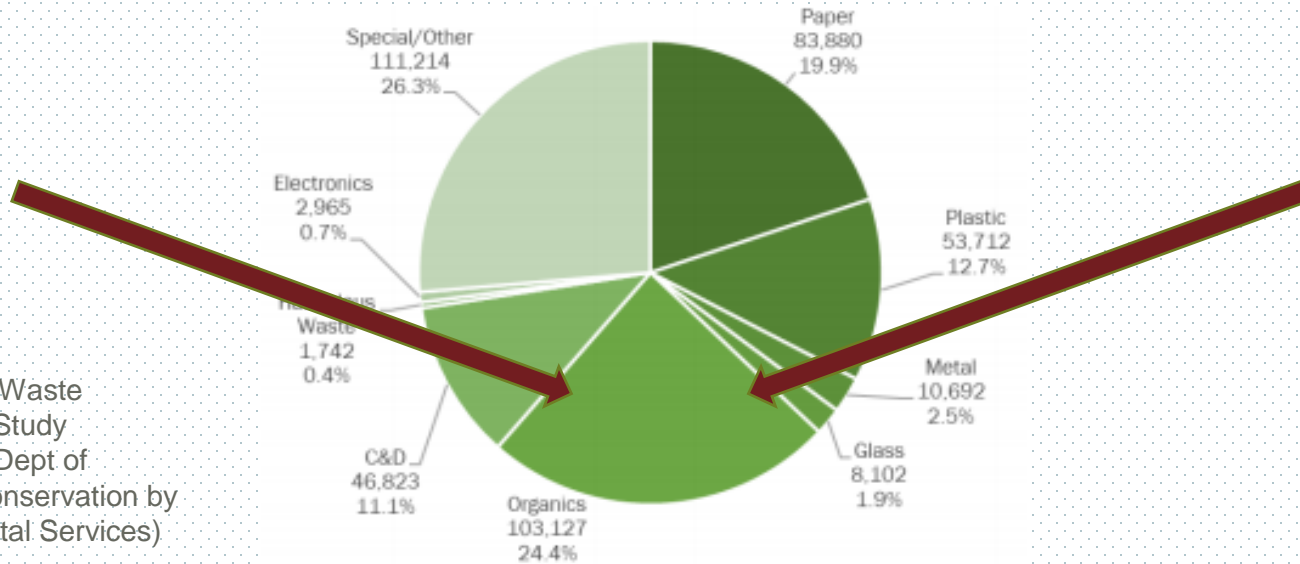
2019 Workplace Wellness Conference  
Strategies for a Greener Business

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CSWD BUSINESS OUTREACH



# Why do “organics” matter?



Source: 2018 VT Waste Characterization Study (prepared for VT Dept of Environmental Conservation by DSM Environmental Services)

Material	Estimated Percent	+ / -	Estimated Tons
<b>Organics</b>	<b>24.4%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>103,127</b>
Food Waste - Contained in Packaging	7.3%	1.0%	30,653
Food Waste - Loose	12.1%	1.5%	50,974
Leaves/Grass/Brush >1"	0.1%	0.4%	300
Leaves/Grass/Brush <1"	0.7%	0.8%	3,082
Pet Waste	2.9%	0.7%	12,089
Other Organics	1.4%	0.6%	6,028

**They represent a quarter of what Vermonters sent to landfill in 2018!**

# Why Should We Care Where Organics Wind Up?

## Landfill Impacts

- Landfill gas emissions. Methane, a potent greenhouse gas, is one of the primary outputs of a landfill.
- Leachate (AKA “garbage juice”) is another undesirable landfill output.
- Leachate must be pumped out, transported to a WWTP in tankers, and treated at a cost of approximately \$.08 per gallon.
- Very little decomposition takes place in the tomb-like environment of a landfill; organic material remains in place for decades.



# The alternative to recycling and composting

working face of the Waste USA Landfill  
Coventry, VT



**These carrots turned up in an excavated landfill—  
they'd been there for 10 years!**



# Why *Else* Do We Care?

- Transportation impacts of moving the material to landfill
  - thousands of miles of unnecessary trucking and wasted diesel fuel
- Food is a resource, even when no longer suitable for human consumption
- Food waste diversion is becoming the law!



# Act 148

## Vermont's universal recycling & composting law

- Passed unanimously by the Vermont Legislation in 2012
- 2014: beginning of phased-in ban on landfilling organics
  - Initially applied only to generators of 104 or more tons of food waste per yr
- 2015: statewide mandatory recycling goes into effect
- 2016: statewide ban on landfilling leaves or yard debris

# Act 148's Phased In Food Waste Requirements

## Where We Are Now

- **July 2017:** Mandatory food scrap diversion for generators of 18 or more tons of food waste annually
  - currently applies to most large institutions, groceries, and food processors
  - many restaurants and food service establishments are already composting
- **July 2020:** All Vermonters – individuals, households, businesses – will be **REQUIRED** to keep food waste out of the trash.



# Composting is not required; there are other options...

...but composting is often  
the most convenient way  
of managing food scraps  
that must be kept out  
of the trash.





# What is composting?

## Nature's recycling system:

transformation of organic materials into a nutrient-rich, biologically stable soil additive.

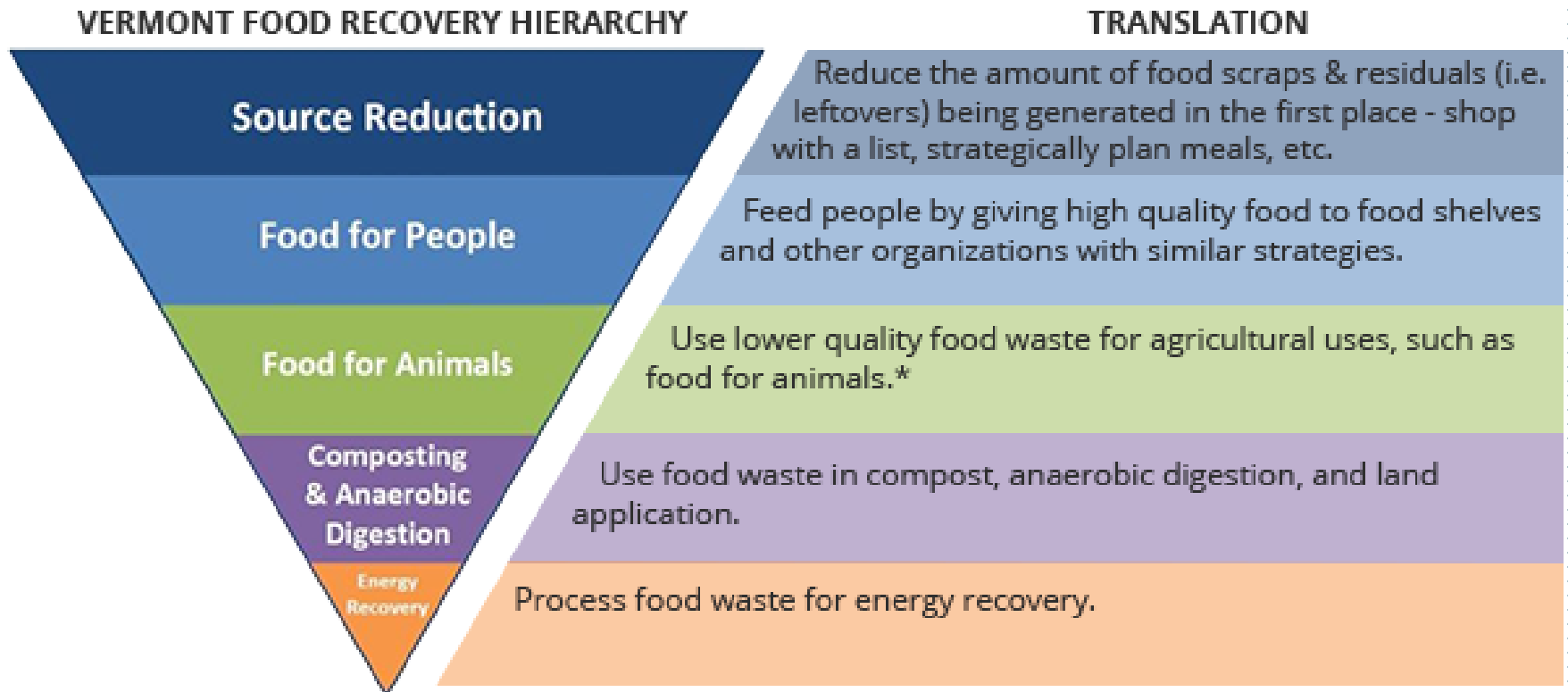


## Facilitated aerobic decomposition:

giving microbes what they need to thrive, including plenty of oxygen.



# The Equivalent of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle for Organics



\*See the Vermont Agency of Agriculture's *Swine Feeding Policy* before feeding scraps to pigs.

# Developing a Workplace Program for Food Scraps

## 1) Consider Your Participants

- Will your stream be accessible to the general public or only (trainable) staff?
- Are employees experienced composters or newbies?
- How big a barrier is the “ick” factor?
- Will anyone want the finished product?



# Developing a Workplace Program for Food Scraps

## 2) Understand Your Stream

- How much food waste is being produced at your workplace daily or weekly?
- Hoping to include any non-food organics or “compostables” in your program?
- Restroom hand-drying paper towels?



# Developing a Workplace Program for Food Scraps

## 3) Evaluate Your Options

- farm partnership
- employees take home
- on-site composting
- commercial composting
  - pick-up service OR drop-off program



# Developing a Workplace Program for Food Scraps

## 4) Estimate the Costs & Impacts

- **On-Site:** staff time or property management expenses
- **Pick-Up Service:** hauler charges
- **Drop-Off Program:** staff time & tip fees (disposal charges at facility)
- **Other Options**





# Developing a Workplace Program for Food Scraps

- 5) Choose a strategy for managing your food waste
- 6) Decide what items & materials can go in the stream
- 7) Educate your participants and provide staff training



# .... COMPOST ....

FOOD —○  
& scraps



NAPKINS —○  
& uncoated paper



CERTIFIED —○  
compostable products



BPI



## NO PLASTIC BAGS

Unless certified compostable.  
Instead: Put in trash or take  
back to grocery store.



## NO UTENSILS

Unless certified compostable.  
Instead: Put in trash.



## NO STICKERS

Remove produce stickers  
and put in trash.



MORE INFO  
(802) 872-8111  
[www.cswd.net/composting](http://www.cswd.net/composting)

**CSD**  
Chittenden Solid Waste District

# Thank You

Contact CSWD with any questions

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