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University of California, Riverside
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**Understanding Compost
Use in Agriculture**
April 15, 2009



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Presented by the California
Integrated Waste Management Board,
UC Cooperative Extension, and the Yolo
County Resource Conservation District

Understanding Compost Use in Agriculture

Spring 2009



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Management Board, UC Cooperative
Extension, and the Yolo County Resource
Conservation District**

This workshop is a segment of the Agricultural Compost Specifications Project. The funding and oversight is provided by the California Integrated Waste Management Board and the project is administered by University of California. The goal is to improve and expand compost use in agriculture by providing reliable scientifically-derived information on suitable compost properties to California farmers. The project represents an extension of the Association of Compost Producers Use Index, which is under continuing development by researchers and technical experts, industry professionals and advisors, and feedback from farmers and other end-users of composts.

Specific tasks to be completed in the project include:

1. The development of a comprehensive set of compost specifications tailored to each of five California crops identified as being promising compost receptors.
2. Incorporation of the newly developed specifications into the existing Association of Compost Producers Compost Use Index.
3. Promotion of the newly developed specifications to the agricultural community through workshops, brochures, and continuing education materials.

Pending approval for 4 hours of OTHER credit through the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. License categories PCA, QAL, and QAC.

Program Agenda

Morning Program

9:00 a.m.Welcome and Introductions

9:10 a.m.Background on Statewide Program

9:20 a.m.Compost Basics

Addresses the question, "What is compost?" and provides an overview of composting methods, the aspects of the chemical, physical and biological processes. The presentation explains the importance of thermophilic processes for reduced conversion time, pathogen reduction and nutrient recycling. Additionally, makes an important distinction between the types of compost uses of mulching versus soil amending.

9:45 a.m.Seal of Testing Assurance (STA) and Compost Use Index

Introduces the "Seal of Testing Assurance" (STA) program for testing compost, what it is, how it works, why it's important and how it provides the basic information for the Compost Use Index. The Compost Use Index is presented as a solution to guarding against having bad experiences with compost. The "product use index" and the specific crop specifications are presented for each of the important reference crops including tomatoes, grapes, strawberries, and others.

10:25 a.m.Morning Break

10:45 a.m.Economics of Compost Use

Discusses economic considerations for use of compost as a crop nutrient source compared to other sources, use in organic farming, variables that affect cost, crop examples.

11:15 a.m.Compost Production and STA

Discusses how a local, commercial compost producer works with the Seal of Testing Assurance standards and requirements, and the associated issues and benefits.

11:50 a.m.Lunch

Afternoon Program

1:00 p.m.Compost Production Case Study

Provides a real-world example of where compost is manufactured, source materials, the types of compost products provided, quality standards and expectations of the industry and those purchasing the final product. This presentation gives an overview of what is involved in direct work with landowners in providing a finished compost product to commercial conventional and organic growers of tomatoes, grapes, strawberries and other important regional crops.

1:30 p.m.Farmer Panel

A panel of 3-4 local farmers who use compost discuss various crops, reasons for compost use, economics and logistics of shipping and spreading, nutrient management decisions, compost types, neighbor issues, product variability, and other practical topics and considerations.

2:30 p.m.Workshop Evaluation and Wrap-up

Speakers include:

DR. DAVID CROHN, University of California, Riverside
DAN NOBLE, Association of Compost Producers
KAREN KLONSKY, University of California, Davis
STAN NADER, Nortech Waste, Roseville
SUELLEN WITHAM, Westside Spreading, Zamora
Local farmer panel of compost users



PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Phone: (530) 662-2037 ext. 117
Fax: (530) 662-4876
E-mail: pratt@yolorcd.org

Confirm your reservation! Seating is limited!

Please send your RSVP to Sheila Pratt by e-mail at pratt@yolorcd.org or phone at (530) 662-2037 ext. 117 or fax at (530) 662-4876 and provide the following information:

There is no fee to participate.

Name

Title

Agency/Company

Phone

Fax

E-mail Address

Mailing Address

Program includes lunch

Please check if you prefer a vegetarian lunch

Time/Date:

9 a.m.-3 p.m., April 15, 2009

Location:

Heidrick Ag History Center
1962 Hays Lane
Woodland, CA 95776

