

# COMPOST COMMUNICATOR™

The quarterly newsletter of the United States Composting Council – Spring 2004 Edition

## Presidents Greeting

*Kevin Tritz*

As we begin a new growing season, I feel it is a good time to review our progress from last year and share the 2004 US Composting Council goals with all of you. These goals were recently developed at the March 14th USCC Board meeting in Portland.

2003 was dedicated to increasing USCC membership and improving the distribution of resource information to our members. It was a very successful year for us. We now have a membership base of close to 400. The website has been improved and updated, and the USCC staff published 4 newsletters in 2003. We hope that you have found these to be both informative and interesting. Also, the USCC is

one of the first partners in the EPA's 'Greenscapes Alliance', a program to promote the use of recycled products. This is an exciting and meaningful accomplishment for our organization!

The Board of Directors committed to continue efforts to expand our membership and to improve member participation levels on the Council's committees, at the USCC planning meeting in Portland. Productive committees are fundamental to accomplishing a primary USCC goal, promoting our industry, and member participation is crucial for the continued viability of the USCC. The Board has asked for specific goals from committees, and committees will be responsible to the Board to accomplish their respective tasks. In this way, we, as an organization, can proceed more effectively to promote our industry and to meet our members' needs. We will be better positioned to take on the challenge of the important issues for our industry, such as compost standards and product

labeling, by having this input from membership through the committees. It is issues like these that will provide both huge challenges and great opportunities for the USCC. The only way that the USCC

will be effective in guiding our industry is to have strong, active and well-supported committee participation. I urge all of our members to lend their expertise and experience to our committees.



*Jean Schwab awards Kevin the Greenscapes Certificate*

Join us at the US Composting Council's  
13th Annual Conference and Trade Show

**DEEP IN THE  
HEART OF TEXAS!**

January 23-26, 2005 at the Crowne Plaza Riverwalk in  
San Antonio, Texas

The state of Texas has demonstrated innovative and unequalled support of the use of compost products. The TX Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the TX DOT have worked together to require the use of USCC, STA compost on all state DOT landscape projects! 27 of the 71 STA members are based in Texas. We can't think of a better way to say 'thanks,' than to host our 2005 annual conference there.

The Riverwalk area of San Antonio is a nationally recognized attraction, with lots of sightseeing and shopping opportunities. "Remember the Alamo" can be easily accessed from the conference hotel. We've already marked our calendars and hope that you have too!

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## Executive Director's Message

*Stu Buckner*

### Annual Conference & Trade Show: A Huge Success!

Nearly 500 composting industry professionals and 75 exhibitors attended the US Composting Council's 12th Annual Conference and Trade Show, January 25-28 in Las Vegas. Hosted by 26 sponsors, the Annual Conference attracted a national and international audience, with representatives from 46 states and 10 countries.

Three information packed days of training courses, educational and technical sessions were presented. This year's conference also featured the 1st Annual USCC Compost Showcase, allowing the comparison of a large variety of compost product samples by industry experts and conference attendees. More than 50 samples of compost products, produced from yard trimmings, food residuals, MSW, manure, biosolids, industrial organics and various blended products were available for review. The program was well received by attendees, as described in the article by George Perregrim.

This year's conference awards presented for outstanding achievements in the composting industry went to:

- Hi Kellogg Award for Outstanding Service to the Composting Industry, awarded to Rod Tyler, Filtrexx
- Rufus Chaney Award for Research Excellence, awarded to Frank Shields, Soil Control Lab
- H. Clark Gregory Award for Outstanding Grassroots Efforts to Promote Composting, awarded to Michele Young, City of San Jose

- Composter of the Year, awarded to George Belmont, Hawk Ridge Compost Facility, New England Organics
- USCC Clean Water Award Sponsored By Filtrexx, awarded to Jean Schwab, USEPA, for helping to create 'Programs that Positively Impact Water Quality through the Use of Compost'

The USCC will continue to build on the Annual Conference each year as a service to membership and the composting industry. Next year's conference is scheduled for January 23-26 in San Antonio, TX. *Mark your calendars now!* Planning is already underway. If you would like to get involved in planning a session or assisting in any other way, please contact Stu Buckner at buckstop@vdot.net. We hope to see you in San Antonio!



*Michele Young receives the H. Clark Gregory Award for 'Outstanding Grassroots Efforts to Promote Composting' from Stu Buckner, USCC Executive Director*



*Jim McNelly presents the Rufus Chaney Award for 'Research Excellence' to Frank Shields*

## Membership

There has been a significant increase in membership in the USCC, more than 125%, over the past two years! More and more composters, consultants, equipment suppliers and others affiliated with our industry are supporting the USCC, as well as the composting industry. Your help is still needed, however, despite our exciting membership expansion. Make a commitment this year to recruit just one new member, join a committee and become active in the association. Remember, if each member brought in just one new member, the organization would double in size. More members mean more possibilities for our future!

### Welcome New Members

Philip Riddle, **Neuenhauser, Inc.**, Greer, SC

John Shipley, **Geo Matrix, LLC**, Blanco, TX

Ralph Petruzzo, **Organic Materials, LLC**, Corinth, NY

Jeff Marsalla, **Earthworks Machinery Company**, Roseville, CA

Greg Kaknes, **Kaknes Wood Products & Landscape Express, Inc.**, Woburn, MA

Michael Simpson, **DSM Environmental Services, Inc.**, Ascutney, VT

Joseph Gho, **EPI Environmental Products, Inc.**, Vancouver, Canada

Bernard Schwab, **Schwab's Landscape Supply, Inc.**, Boulder City, NV

Dan Babl, **Weston Disposal & Recycling, Inc.**, Schofield, WI

Ron Sheets, **Ojai Valley Sanitary District**, Ojai, CA

Mark Ferguson, **Baker Canyon Green Recycling**, Silverado, CA

Anne Nile, **Oak Knoll Equestrian Center**, San Gregorio, CA

Bryan Harrison, **Bedminster International Ltd.**, Arizona Springs, NY

Bryan Imber, **International Composting Corporation**, Victoria, Canada

Tom Herlihy, **RT Solutions**, Greensboro, NC

Larry Hannon, **Nevada Forest Products**, Las Vegas, NV

Mike Inman, **City of Springfield Missouri**, Springfield, MO

George Hunerfauth, **Supreme International Limited**, Wetaskiwin, Canada

*Continued..*

### Welcome New Members

Jay Valkenberg, **Marion County Public Works**, Salem, OR

Garland Mayne, **Timpanogos Special Service District**,  
American Fork, UT

Steve Skinner, Chicago, IL

David Burnley, **CCL Organics LLC**, Benicia, CA

Ken Newman, **Royal Oak Farms, LLC.**, Evington, VA

Jennifer Kane, Denver, CO

Roc Rutledge, **ACE Compost LLC**, Yuma, CO

Jeff Beyer, **Producers Compost**, Stephenville, TX

Tim Liu, **Bridge International Marketing, Inc.**, Bayonne, NJ

Dan Matsch, **Eco-Cycle, Inc.**, Boulder, CO

Robert Maglia, **National Waste Recycler System**,  
Windhart, NH

Jim Ecker, **Benton County Environmental**, Bentonville, AR

Robert Tucker, **US Army**

David Cox, **BioMas Corp.**, Ridgefield, WA

Brian Madden, **Madden Bros, Inc.**, Brunswick, OH

John Jones, **Tulare County Compost & Bio-Mass, Inc.**,  
Tulare, CA

Earl Berryman, **Bio-Grow, LLC**, Reno, NV

Lin Wisikoski, **Georgetown County Department of Public  
Service**, Georgetown, SC

Andrew Gregory, **Harvest Quest International, Inc.**,  
Boulder, CO

Mollie Mangerich, **City of Lawrence**, Lawrence, KS

Ramani Narayan, East Lansing, MI

Sheryl Garling, **Energy Laboratories, Inc.**, Casper, WY

Kim Carrier, **Jepson Prairie Organics**, Vacaville, CA

Carla Vipond, **Cover-All Building Systems**, Saskatoon, SK

Lance Bowe, **Mulch Matters Inc.**, Houston, TX

Ken Bucholz, **Watertown Regional Landfill**, Watertown, SD

Leland Myers, **Central Davis Sewer District**, Kaysville, UT

Alan Marlof, **Long Island Compost Corp.**, Yaphank, NY

Mark Jenner, Mount Prospect, IL

Tim Nuse, **Starbucks Coffee Company**, Seattle, WA

Kathleen O'Hern, **West Yellowstone Compost Facility**,  
West Yellowstone, MT

Scott Helton, **Wyatt Leasing**, Wenatchee, WA

### 2004 USCC Officers, Board and Executive Director

The recent Board elections resulted in some new faces joining some familiar ones on the USCC Board of Directors. We welcome our new Board members, listed in bold print below:

#### President

Kevin Tritz, Specialized Environmental Technologies, Inc. (Bloomington, MN)

#### Vice President

David Hill, US Filter/ Baltimore City Composting Facility (Baltimore, MD)

#### Secretary

Matt Cotton, Integrated Waste Management Consulting (Nevada City, CA)

#### Treasurer

Ginny Black, Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance (St. Paul, MN)

#### Immediate Past Pres.

Jack Hoeck, Rexius Forest Products (Eugene, OR)

#### 2004 Board of Directors

Sharon Barnes, Barnes Nursery, Inc. (Huron, OH)

Dr. Eliot Epstein, Tetra Tech, Inc. (Stoughton, MA)

Wayne E. King, Sr., EARTH Products, LLC (Peachtree City, GA)

Carl Kipp, Paygro, a Division of Garick Corp. (S. Charleston, OH)

Dr. Robert Rynk (Emmaus, PA)

Dr. Scott Subler, Pacific Garden Co. (Millheim, PA)

**Jerry Bartlett, Cedar Grove Composting**, (Maple Valley, WA)

**Tom Kelley, Synagro**, (Corona, CA)

**Cindy Douglas, Oregon Tilth**, (Eugene, OR)

**Oley Sheremeta, SEC**, (Bellingham, WA)

#### Executive Director

Dr. Stuart Buckner



## USCC Committee Reports

### Communications –

Co-Chairs: Ginny Black and Bob Boyle

The USCC website and data base update is making good progress. This work includes the information needed to expedite invoicing, print the membership directory, identify STA members on the web and streamline various forms used by members. The target date for finishing this project is May 1, 2004. Future activities include continued development of a USCC STA page with an STA members' page. The committee also revisited both the USCC mission and that of the communications committee. An update will be provided in the summer newsletter.

### Marketing Committee -

Co-Chairs: David Hill and Tom Kelley

The committee reviewed their mission statement and the list of activities for 2004. These include: Increasing membership in the Marketing committee; Promoting compost to specifiers by leveraging relationships with the ASLA, State DOT's, PGA and PGMS; Identifying the number and location of commercial compost producers in the US; Identifying the volume, by state, of compost production; Produce and distribute a supply of STA Seals to Program participants; Work with nationally known companies to collaboratively promote compost, composting and com-

post usage and addressing the AAPFCO SUIP as it pertains to the STA Program.

**The Committee's proposed mission statement currently reads:** "Solidify, increase and broaden the value proposition associated with membership in the US Composting Council in a quantifiable, tangible manner. This will be achieved and reinforced through a unified, directed approach to establishing compost as the best-known, most widely used product of choice in the agricultural/horticultural marketplace." This, and the committee work plan, will be finalized in the near future.

### Legislative and Environmental Affairs Committee -

Co-Chairs: Jim McNelly and Bob Rynk

The general goal of the Committee for 2004 is to become more proactive in legislative and environmental affairs. The Committee will strive to engage in actions that promote the development of composting facilities and the use of compost, thus stimulating markets for USCC members, both producers and vendors.

There was discussion concerning how local, state and federal government can assist composting. Some ideas included: Direct the Department of Transportation to utilize compost in highway and building landscaping and erosion control projects under the "Buy Recycled and BioProduct" legislation; Require biofuel,

fertilizer and bio-product projects governed under Biomass Utilization Initiatives to use renewable nutrients for their fertilizer needs; Draft legislation calling for a ban on leaves, grass, brush and food products from landfills; Provide priority funding for compost utilization clearinghouse, education and technology transfer; Promote Class A composting over Class B liquid solids digestion at public and private wastewater treatment facilities; Promote cooperation among USEPA, NRCS, Extension offices, USDA-NOP, USDA-FAS, USDA-AAPFCO, and USDA-Research regarding definitions of composting and the use of compost.

### STA Subcommittee

The STA subcommittee has been revitalized to accommodate the needs of this nationally recognized and very successful USCC program. It is currently comprised of 3 Board members and 4 USCC members. The committee established several goals for 2004 including: Increasing the number of participants and demonstrating quantifiable value to participants, i.e., increased end user awareness of STA program (label recognition), increased understanding and increased demand for STA Labeled product. Specific objectives were identified within the Program's project tasks. They are directed at both increasing composter participation in the program and, *more importantly, promoting STA compost to specifiers and end-users.*

## CCQC joins the STA Program

**A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been signed between the USCC's STA program and the CCQC (California Compost Quality Council).** The overall goal of the merger is to combine the benefits of the two programs into one more easily manageable program, capitalizing on the strengths of both. CCQC and USCC will establish a Steering Committee comprised of four members from each association to oversee and resolve issues arising from the merger. In addition, CCQC will continue to serve as an Ad Hoc committee to advise the STA program regarding California issues. CCQC will cease operation of its Compost Verification Program and refer any facilities inquiring about the CCQC program to the USCC.

The California Compost Quality Council (CCQC) is an alliance of compost producers, scientists, farmers, landscape contractors, and recycling advocates that formed to administer compost quality guidelines in California. They are dedicated to developing uniform compost quality standards to increase the production and appropriate use of compost in California. The CCQC operates a voluntary product registration and verification program through which compost producers can assure consumers that compost quality claims have been verified.

Matt Cotton, current USCC Board member and one of

the founders of CCQC stated "When CCQC was started, there really weren't any similar programs. Now that the STA program is available, composters in California can benefit from the resources of a national program. CCQC will continue to advocate for compost whenever possible" "In addition CCQC will continue to promote the CCQC Maturity Index, which provides a useful new tool for composters", said Cotton.

The CCQC Maturity Index, which uses a series of indicators (rather than relying on just one), can be completed using the test results STA members regularly receive. In addition, the CCQC Maturity Index is listed in the USCC's Test Methods for the Examination of Compost and Composting (TMECC).

This is outstanding news for the STA program! It brings us one step closer to having a unified national compost testing and labeling program. We welcome and thank the CCQC for agreeing to this and look forward to working with their members and getting them enrolled in the STA program in 2004.

### **The STA Program - The next step? Compost Quality Data, Product Labeling and End-Use Recommendations** *Meeting summary submitted by George Savage, Standards & Practices Committee Co-chair*

There has been much conversation in both our industry and among STA members about the desire and/or need for numerical compost standards. How does the data obtained during STA testing equate to specific end uses? How does it tie into the 'Field Guide to Compost Use'? What do the numbers really mean in the way of practical compost application? These issues were discussed during two, hour and a half forums at the USCC annual conference. A summary of those meetings is found below.

The primary purpose of the open forum was to determine answers to the following key questions:

1. Are guidelines for compost end use needed?
2. If guidelines are needed, are reliable data available and compiled in a usable format?
3. If adequate reliable data are not readily available and compiled, should the US Composting Council pursue development of end use guidelines for the betterment of the composting industry?

An overwhelming majority (2/3 to 3/4) of the meeting attendees believed that there is a pressing need for compost end use guidelines, and that

steps should be taken to outline the process of developing guidelines as well as to present the actual end use guidelines themselves. The comments of attendees clearly indicated that there is substantial confusion and ambiguity concerning terms used to refer to compost and compost end uses, including the terms "standards" and "guidelines".

The following recommendations were offered for consideration to the Board of Directors of the US Composting Council:

1. The Board should go on record with a resolution that a substantial need exists for compost use guidelines, and that the Board is going to take a proactive role in meeting this important need.
2. The guidelines to be developed should be more detailed than those given in the publication "Field Guide to Compost Use" published by the USCC in 1996, and "guidelines" should be interpreted in the broadest possible sense, including all relevant topics related to feedstock characteristics, composting procedures, soil properties and conditions, requirements of plants, limiting conditions, and parameters and values for end uses. The initial effort should concentrate on establishment of guidelines for compost-only end products. The guidelines would subsequently be extended to encompass end uses based on mixtures of compost with other materials, including various types of soils.

3. The Standards and Practices Committee (SPC) should be the primary entity within the USCC that establishes the criteria for the compost guideline project. Based on the criteria that are established, the SPC should subsequently develop a grant proposal on behalf of the USCC.

### **International Compost Awareness Week- ICAW: A Time to Celebrate!** Teri Sorg-McManamon - ICAW Co-Chair

Compost awareness week continues to gain momentum, year after year, since observance began in 1999. Communities and public agencies, companies and members of the composting industry are all joining in this multimedia, educational initiative to showcase compost production and demonstrating the many benefits of compost. **Celebrations will be taking place nationwide from May 2-8, 2004.** Week long events are designed to turn the spotlight on composting and create enthusiasm for recycling organic materials, and increase the demand for compost and mulch products.

ICAW activities, happening around the United States and globally, serve the important role of bringing the compost message to the marketplace. **This year's poster, using the theme, "Be Resourceful, Compost!"** is the centerpiece of the USCC campaign and is a great way to get the message out.

Michele Young, Compost Program Coordinator with the City of San Jose, promotes compost awareness to residents all year long, but finds that Compost Awareness Week presents special opportunities that provides a great call to action for many of our stakeholders such as; landscapers, teachers, and compost processors as well. Young states that, "We have offered coupons for compost sales in landscaper newsletters, held field days to present compost trial results, and boosted our campaigns to get worms in the classrooms. International Compost Awareness Week is a call to action that creates timeliness and shows greater scope."

For resources to plan International Compost Awareness Week events in your area, visit the USCC web site at <http://www.compostingcouncil.org>. Members will receive a complimentary poster – additional copies are available through the U.S. Composting Council web site for \$5 each.

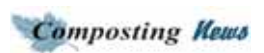
The U.S. Composting Council would like to thank the following companies for their generous support of International Compost Awareness Week, May 2-8, 2004. "Be Resourceful, Compost!"

**Barnes Nursery, Inc.**  
[www.barnesnursery.com](http://www.barnesnursery.com)  
**BioBag**  
[www.biogroupusa.com](http://www.biogroupusa.com)  
**BioCycle**  
[www.jgpress.com](http://www.jgpress.com)  
**Cargill Dow, LLC**  
[www.NatureWorksPLA.com](http://www.NatureWorksPLA.com)  
**Chick-fil-A**  
[www.chick-fil-a.com](http://www.chick-fil-a.com)



## International Compost Awareness Week May 2-8, 2004

The USCC would like to thank the following ICAW sponsors



**Composting News**

www.recycle.cc

**Cortec Corp.**

www.cortecvci.com

**ERTH Products**

www.earthproducts.com

**Filtrexx International**

www.filtrexx.com

**MSW Management Magazine**

www.forester.net

**Plastics Solutions, Inc.**

www.degradableplastics.com

**SEC**

www.compost-technologies.com

**STARBUCKS COFFEE**

www.starbucks.com

**Synagro**

www.synagro.com

**US Environmental**

**Protection Agency**

www.epa.gov

**W.L. Gore & Associates, Gmbh**

www.compost-technologies.com/gore.html

**Member Profile -  
EKO Systems says,  
"Thanks"**

EKO Compost, with facilities in Hawaii, Idaho and Montana "turn dirt into soil". They are a manufacturer of Class A, "Exceptional Quality" biosolids based compost, suitable for unrestricted use of all crops, including food crops. They are one of the founding members of the USCC's STA program. They would like to use this space to thank the USCC Legislative and Environmental Affairs Committee and Executive Director, Stu Buckner, for his support.

In early 2003, EKO Systems

in Maui, Hawaii was told of proposed Hawaiian Senate and House bills banning the use of biosolids or composted biosolids on any and all public properties. The reason for the ban was that there were perceived dangers in the use of biosolids; and, that composted biosolids were just as dangerous as non-composted biosolids. EKO asked Stuart Buckner, Executive Director of the USCC, for a letter with supporting scientific evidence showing that such was not the case, and that the use of either directly applied biosolids or composted biosolids posed no threat to human health.

The letter from the Committee, citing 30 years of

empirical evidence showing no adverse effects of usage, as well as anecdotal pictures of biosolids based compost used on White House lawns, Disney World, and many other public properties, convinced the Legislators of Hawaii that the proposed legislation should not be enacted. Both bills were dismissed without merit prior to vote.

In early 2004, 'deja vu'. The same small vocal minority penned some worrisome language and sent it to their Senators and Legislators for enactment. Senate Bill 2797 and House Bill 2957, banning the use of biosolids or composted biosolids on public grounds, schools, and agri-

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cultural land was proposed. Background information was requested by a senator's aid. He also asked what impact this would have on EKO Systems if it were enacted. We told him it would put us out of business. He asked what impact a temporary ban would have until a study could be done. We told him it would put us out of business.

Once again we sent the Legislative Committee's letter, as well as recent information from the Water Environment Federation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Once again, they proved their efficacy and the bills died before they went to vote.

We expect this to happen yet again in future years. In the interim, we give a very big thank you to Stu and to the USCC Legislative Committee for helping us dispel misinformation and prevent misguided legislation from being enacted. Stu's and the Council's efforts literally kept one of our plants from going out of business.  
*Mike Hegedus, Vice President EKO Systems, Inc.*

## USCC Joins the GreenScapes Alliance

**The US Composting Council signed on as a Charter Ally in the new US EPA GreenScapes Alliance at its National Conference in Las Vegas.** Here's what this program is all about.

**GreenScapes Overview**  
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) has launched a new initiative entitled "GreenScapes." The purpose of GreenScapes is to promote environmentally beneficial landscaping practices for large land-use activities such as shopping and retail centers, recreational facilities, roads and highways, abandoned industrial sites, large university campuses, and military installations.

GreenScapes is designed to help preserve natural resources and prevent waste and pollution by encouraging companies, government agencies, and other entities to make more holistic decisions regarding waste generation and disposal, and the use of land, water, pesticides, and energy. By focusing on the "4 R's" - reduce,

reuse, recycle, and 'rebuy' - this program can help improve both an organization's bottom-line and the environment. (Rebuying means re-thinking current purchasing habits.) GreenScapes will promote practices and products that still meet the users needs but have a better environmental profile than current product purchases. Consideration of biobased, recycled content, and other environmentally preferable aspects in landscape construction, operation, and maintenance purchasing decisions is a key element. Compost obviously fits this description perfectly!

**GreenScapes Alliance**  
The GreenScapes Alliance is a major effort to broaden and enhance waste reduction in nationwide land use. The Alliance aims to combine government and industry into a powerful, unified influence over the reduction, reuse, and recycling of waste materials in land use activities that include 4 million miles of roadside landscaping, Brownfields land revitalization, and the beautification and maintenance of office complexes, golf courses, and parks. More than 100,000 businesses are involved in these land use activities, and are potential participants in the Alliance.

The GreenScapes Alliance emphasizes a holistic multimedia view of environmental impacts and stewardship. This includes: providing information about the cost savings that can be achieved from reducing material use and waste, resource conservation,

and on the performance and durability of environmentally preferable products such as recycled-content and biobased products; educating land managers that environmentally beneficial landscaping efforts yield water and energy savings, conserves landfill space, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions; publicizes case studies, success stories, and technical assistance to help alleviate concerns regarding alternative practices and products; promotes market expansion and growth of recycled-content and biobased products and awards organizations that achieve environmental excellence in reduction, reuse, recycling, and rebuying for waste prevention and pollution prevention. Organizations can participate in the GreenScapes Alliance as Partners and/or Allies:

1. Partners include companies, agencies, and others who, in joining the program, commit to undertaking a minimum of two GreenScapes activities
2. Allies include professional groups, trade associations, research organizations, and product manufacturers or marketers who, in joining the program, will work with their affiliated organizations to promote greater use of GreenScapes activities.

**The USCC signed on as a project Ally on January 26, 2004.** The USCC will work towards making compost procurement easier and more understandable for those interested in using compost, but who are not compost experts. The US EPA will work to promote the use of compost

## What's Missing Here? Your Company's Advertisement!

Where else can you find an advertising medium this specific, going to the compost market only, at very competitive pricing?! Contact the USCC office by telephone or e-mail ([uscc@compostingcouncil.org](mailto:uscc@compostingcouncil.org)) to reserve space for the next edition of the Compost Communicator.

in large scale landscaping across the nation - to both the Federal and private sectors. The GreenScapes web page ([www.epa.gov/greenscapes](http://www.epa.gov/greenscapes)) already has links to the USCC web page along with numerous compost use publications. GreenScapes plans to link to the USCC list of STA compost providers to make it easier for those looking for compost to find high-quality products that meet their needs. The GreenScapes contact person is: Jean Schwab, GreenScapes Program Manager, 703/308-8669 or [schwab.jean@epa.gov](mailto:schwab.jean@epa.gov)



*Hi Kellogg Award winner, Rod Tyler, presents the USCC Clean Water Award to Jean Schwab, USEPA, for helping to create 'Programs that Positively Impact Water Quality through the Use of Compost'*

## USCC Responds to EPA Guideline

TO: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency CPG Staff  
February 6, 2004

Via this letter, the U.S. Composting Council (USCC) wishes to respond to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) request for comments regarding Comprehensive Procurement Guideline (CPG) under the

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act proposed rule, Docket ID No. RCRA-2003-0005.

The USCC strongly supports the proposed amendment to the (CPG). The proposed revision appropriately broadens the definition of compost to include compost products made from a variety of source materials beyond yard trimmings and food wastes – what are commonly referred to as “feedstocks” within the compost industry. Most compost feedstocks represent “recovered materials” – materials that would otherwise become solid waste if composting and similar outlets were not available. In addition to biosolids and manure, which are specifically mentioned in the amendment, recovered materials used for compost production include agricultural crop residuals, food processing by-products, wood residuals (e.g., sawdust, pallets, construction wastes) and a variety of commercial and industrial by-products (e.g., paper mill residuals). Thus, the proposed, more generic designation that defines compost as “compost made from recovered organic materials” is more accurate and encompassing. In addition, the proposed designation simplifies the situation for both procuring agencies and compost suppliers. Furthermore, the proposed designation will make more products available to procuring agencies within a practical distance. The effect will be to increase choices for procuring agencies, increase competition among suppliers, allow users to better match compost qualities to end uses

and reduce transportation impacts and costs. The USCC agrees that the EPA's broader definition of compost will result in more potential feedstocks being composted and used for value-added, environmentally beneficial products. Composting of manure from farms in nutrient-limiting areas is a prime example.

The USCC recognizes that there may be some controversy regarding the explicit inclusion of biosolids in the proposed designation of compost. The USCC solidly supports including biosolids in the definition. The USCC considers biosolids as an under-utilized resource and an excellent compost feedstock. Compost products made from biosolids, following the guidelines prescribed in existing regulations (e.g. EPA Part 503), are both safe and effective.

Without diminishing its support for the proposed amendment, the USCC has the following minor concerns regarding a few details and the language in the current amendment.

- The proposed amendment defines compost as “a thermophilic converted product ...” Most commercial compost products do result from a thermophilic process. In many cases, compost products legally must be produced from a thermophilic process (e.g., all biosolids composts, yard trimmings compost in California). However, high quality composts can be produced without achieving thermophilic conditions.

Thermophilic conditions are often beneficial, but they are not necessary to compost production, depending on the risks associated with the feedstocks. In particular, EPA should recognize that vermicomposting (i.e., digestion via earthworms) converts “recovered organic materials” into a high quality compost-like product typically at mesophilic temperatures (in fact thermophilic temperatures would be detrimental). The USCC is not necessarily recommending that “thermophilic” be excluded from the definition but rather that EPA should include some means to acknowledge and evaluate compost products that are produced at lower temperatures, short of thermophilic.

- The proposed amendment states that “compost is not a complete fertilizer unless amended ...” In fact, compost can be a sole source of plant nutrients when applied at sufficient application rates. Several research projects have demonstrated that compost alone can result in yields equivalent to those obtained with chemical fertilizers (see references below). While the compost application rate required to obtain optimal yields is typically greater than commonly used for agricultural application of compost, these rates are nevertheless reasonable. In addition, even at low application rates, compost can supply enough nutrients for optimal plant growth after successive annual applications (due to storage of slow release nutrients in the soil). The USCC requests

that EPA correct this misconception in its background statement.

- It is stated in the discussion of the proposed amendment that “biosolids can be used in the production of organic fertilizers ...” We assume that EPA is using the term “organic fertilizer” in the broader sense – that is, as an organic soil product that releases nutrients (i.e., not a chemical fertilizer). However, calling biosolids an “organic fertilizer” might imply that it could be a nutrient source for organic agriculture. Current federal regulations, and most organic agriculture guidelines, prohibit biosolids and biosolids compost from being used for the production of certified organic crops. Therefore, the USCC recommends that this language be changed to eliminate this potential confusion. Again, the USCC believes that biosolids-based compost is a safe and effective nutrient source for plants.
- The proposed amendment mentions that “EPA does not have specific data on the amount of fertilizers procured by government agencies...” The USCC recommends that EPA gather such information -- not only data on the amount of compost procured by the government but also on the size of the market for various compost products made from recovered materials and the sources and the supply of compost products. The USCC is ready to assist in this effort.

In summary, the USCC strongly supports the proposed

amendment to the CPG under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (Docket ID No. RCRA-2003-0005). We believe that it appropriately broadens the definition of compost and will result in better products, less waste and greater efficiency for both compost users and compost producers. We request that EPA consider the additional minor comments offered above to clarify and improve the amendment.

**FORCE –  
New Organics Bibliography  
Available On-line**  
*By Miriam Zimms, Kessler  
Consulting, Inc.*

The Florida Organics Recycling Center for Excellence (FORCE) project continues to move forward through the efforts of Project Director Garry Breeden of Sumter County, Florida. Program partners recently developed and uploaded an Organics Bibliography on the FORCE Website at [www.floridaforce.org](http://www.floridaforce.org) at the Activities-Education section. The bibliography contains numerous articles on a variety of different topics relating to organics. Also available on the FORCE website is a comprehensive list of the State Regulations pertaining to organics. If you have an organics research document that you would like uploaded on this

Website (hyperlink required), please contact Shane Barrett at Kessler Consulting, Inc. at 813-971-8333, ext. 18.

The FORCE partnership is a cooperative effort of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, UF/IFAS, and Sumter County. The legislatively funded FORCE Center provides a framework for organics recycling and research to help advance compost processing and centralize compost research, demonstration, marketing and education activities in Florida. For further information about FORCE, please contact Miriam Zimms, Project Manager, at 813-971-8333, ext. 22.

**First Annual Compost  
Showcase**

*By George Peregrim*

The USCC offered its first Annual Compost Showcase at the USCC Conference in January. The purpose of the

event was to provide an opportunity for producers and users to review and experience the range of compost and compost products from across the country. The response was dramatic and welcomed. The Showcase presented 72 compost products from 45 different companies, government facilities, and individual producers. Samples were received for each of the 10 compost product categories listed below and included compost from a wide range of old and new composting methods.

The value of the Showcase was evident even before the Showcase opened for business. To have such a large number of diverse compost products that could be seen, felt and smelled in one location was unparalleled at any conference or tradeshow. The Showcase provided value in depicting various marketing techniques and product literature. Most importantly, it provided an opportunity for people to share ideas and compare notes on producing and marketing com-



*A view of some of the 72 compost products displayed during the 1st Annual Compost Showcase.*

post products. It was clear that the Showcase brought together people and provided the opportunity to share ideas that will only help the composting industry as we look to the future.

Compost and compost products were received in the following categories:

1. Biosolids
2. Yard waste (green waste mix)
3. Yard waste (leaves only compost)
4. MSW
5. Animal manure/mortalities
6. Food waste
7. Industrial (includes pharmaceutical, pulp and paper, industrial biosolids, etc.)
8. Worm/insect castings
9. Home composting
10. Blended Products (that include compost as an ingredient)

Please share your thoughts on what you liked or disliked at this year's event and what you would like to see different in the future by emailing George Peregrim at [glm2p@aol.com](mailto:glm2p@aol.com).



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