

Logo/Your organization's name

Name of the project

FARM LOGISTICS and ASSESSMENT

Introduction

This project aims to develop a sustainable, community-oriented composting site with each Farmer Partner to manage food scraps, farm residues, manures, and other organics. Completing this Farm Logistics and Assessment will help [your organization's name] and Farmer Partners begin to focus on the parameters necessary for site sustainability. It will help ensure that the training and site technical assistance provided through the project builds upon existing farm strengths and resources and results in the development of a compost operation that is maintained and managed within the regulatory framework in a way that benefits the farm and its community.

The farm's values and goals outlined in the Assessment will help inform the beginnings of an On-Farm Composting Business Plan. Developing a business plan lays the groundwork for sustainability for Farmer Partners as they establish and grow their compost operation. [your organization's name] will work with each Farmer Partner to complete the Assessment.

The "Farm Logistics and Assessment" will assist the Farmer Partners participants to:

- Describe existing farm infrastructure, practices, resources, and community support available for on-farm composting of food scraps.
- Identify farm and community resources, strengths, support, and opportunities for sustainability and success.
- Recognize needs, challenges, and particular concerns or barriers associated with collecting and composting food scraps.
- Develop mission and vision statements and articulate goals and priorities for integrating food scrap collection and composting into farm operations.
- Plan the compost site design, composting system(s), and maintenance needs.



Parts of this document were adapted from the Northeast Recycling Council's [Local Opportunities Issues and Priorities Evaluation](#) and the [Vermont Food Cycle Coalition](#) Farm Survey. The Composting Association of Vermont is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. The On-Farm Composting Toolkit was funded by a USDA Rural Utilities Solid Waste Management Grant. Get the full toolkit at www.onfarmcomposting.org.

1. General Farm Overview and Practices

Contact and Background Information

Name of Farm:

Farm owner(s):

Farm address:

Phone:

Email:

Preferred method of contact:

Best times to contact:

Do you currently participate in virtual learning opportunities, such as through Zoom?

Yes

No

Farm History (When did you begin farming? How long has your farm been operating? Other notable history):

Farm Description (general layout - physical features, including buildings, pasture areas, crop areas, irrigation, existing or proposed compost area, wellhead, slope, etc.; share a map, if possible):

Farm location (include proximity of neighbors, approximate distances from town center, farmer's market, or other pertinent locations):

Is your farm certified organic?

Yes

No - If not, do you use pesticides? Do you practice IPM?



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Describe your current farming activities (types of crops, livestock, acres of land, etc.)

Crop production

- Acres cultivated:
- Commodities grown:
- Crops for on-farm use:

Livestock and poultry

- Acres devoted to livestock grazing:
- Types and Numbers of each livestock:
- What is your pasture management:
- Do you practice rotational grazing:
- Do you regularly scrape manure on pasture to spread it:
- How is livestock manure/bedding stored:
- Do you have a farm biosecurity plan or procedures?

Other value-added agricultural products:

Current Practices - General:

Describe your general practices for things such as conservation, tillage, and environmental impact:

Describe your water system (Do you irrigate? Do you use a water tank? Is there access to water at your current or proposed compost site?):

List your existing farm equipment (big or small):

Approximately how much do you spend per growing season on soil amendments and fertilizers?:

Do you post signs or notices for CSA, U-Pick participants, or other farm visitors?

- Yes
- No



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Current Practices - Marketing:

Do you operate a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)?

- Yes - If yes, do you offer produce? Meat?
- No

Do you offer a U-pick (or Pick Your Own)?

- Yes
- No

Do you operate a farm stand on your farm property?

- Yes
- No

Do you have a booth/stand at a farmers market?

- Yes - If yes, which one? How frequently are you there? Which seasons?
- No

Do you partner with neighbor farms, food producers, craftspeople, or others?

- Yes - If yes, please describe
- No

Are you certified or working on certification through the Community Accreditation for Produce Safety (CAPS) program?

- Yes
- No

Current Practices - Organic Resources Management

Do you use the compost as a soil amendment?

- Yes - If yes, and you don't produce it yourself, where do you get it from?
- No

How do you handle your organic waste (food scraps, crop residue, manure,...)? Select all that apply and briefly describe.

- Stockpile animal manure and bedding (use, giveaway, or sell)
- Compost animal manure and bedding (use, giveaway, or sell)
- Feed food scraps, crop residue to livestock
- No food scraps or crop residue waste generated
- Crop residue remains in field
- Organic waste is sent off farm
- Other [please specify]:

On a scale of 1 - 5 (1 poor - 5 expert), rate your composting knowledge

1 2 3 4 5



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Do you have an active compost system on your farm?

- Yes
- No

Do you have a regular source of any of these ingredients on your farm? (select all that apply):

- hay
- straw
- forest products
- leaves paper
- other:

Do you know if you have an appropriate location for composting on your farm?

- Yes
- No

Things to think about:

- Year-round access
- Space for 2 - 3 windrow piles with alleys between for mechanized turning (or other composting system set-up)
- A relatively dry, well-draining area (so it doesn't produce ponding around the piles or promote leachate runoff from the site)
- An area that gently slopes towards a naturally vegetated area and meets standard setbacks from property lines, residences and water sources.

2. Relevant regulations to keep in mind

Ensure your farmers establish and manage their compost sites within the bounds of state and/or municipal regulations. Below are examples of regulations in VT and NH.

Vermont On-Farm Food Scrap Composting Regulations

On-farm community-scale food scrap composting is exempt from the Vermont Solid Waste Management Rules under the following guidelines:

Up to 2,000 cubic yards per year of food residuals or food processing residuals if:

More than half of the compost is used on the farm where it is produced

- A "farm" has to meet the RAP threshold: at least 4 contiguous acres in size; producing at least \$2,000 annual gross income from the sale of agricultural products; or (for example) having at least 100 laying hens or 250 broilers.
- 51% of the compost has to be land applied on the farm ("principally used")

OR



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The compost is produced on a small farm that raises or manages poultry

- A “small farm” that has at least 10 acres devoted to farming
- At least 100 but no more than 24,999 laying hens (see RAPs, 6 V.S.A. § 4871).

New Hampshire On-Farm Food Scrap Composting Regulations

Solid Waste Management Rules include permit exemptions for food waste drop-off sites and community composting, specifically for small-scale organics collection and processing:

Env-Sw 608.05 Community Composting Facilities

(a) Subject to Env-Sw 608.02, no permit shall be required for a composting facility that receives solid waste from off-site generators, provided that:

- (1) The aggregate area of the facility’s waste collection, storage and processing areas, including areas used for feedstock mixing and active composting, does not exceed six hundred square feet;
- (2) The facility receives for composting no more than five cubic yards of solid waste during any thirty-day period; and
- (3) The composting process is conducted in a manner consistent with “Community Composting Done Right: A Guide to Best Management Practices,” March 2019, published by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance.

(b) Facilities described in (a) above may compost any combination of the following:

- (1) Yard waste or farming crop residuals;
- (2) Source-separated food waste, including meat and dairy matter;
- (3) Compostable paper, packaging, containers, bags and serviceware;
- (4) Animal manure; or
- (5) Approved bulking agents as defined in Env-Sw 102.

[Here are some more general examples of regulations to be aware of:](#)

Local Health Codes

Local Health Codes, Building Codes, or other local regulations may apply to your site or any structures constructed onsite, such as fencing; irrigation connections; and buildings. Regardless of the regulations, it is important that the Board of Health and other town/municipal staff be informed of the composting site plans in advance.

Whether establishing a new compost site or expanding/redesigning an existing one, there are several very important underlying considerations when initiating the design process. The site needs to factor in existing farm operations and traffic flow both around the farm and in and out of the composting area. Consideration needs to be given to the size of your site footprint and the appropriate layout for the composting system.



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Setbacks and Other Considerations

Also crucial are appropriate setbacks (distances) from other property owners, wellheads, and streams. Access to water must be considered. The public visibility of the composting site and aesthetics should be factored in. The design needs to allow for a flow of materials that is consistent and doesn't require unnecessary movement of materials. The site should be well-planned, organized, and constructed. Room for expansion should be considered, if possible. A site contingency plan for emergencies and site closure is also a component of the site design plan.

Collection and drop-off logistics need to be factored in. If food scraps are to be dropped off at the farm, it's important that customers/food scrap generators have a safe place to do so. Members of the public *should not* have access to the actual compost site. Biosecurity cautions should also be observed. A bucket swap or cart for food scraps to be tipped in can be placed in a secure location near the farm entrance. The location needs to be accessible for easy transport of the materials to the compost area.

3. Site Assessment, Design and Planning

*Please answer the following questions **IF** you currently have an active compost site on your farm.*

Materials/feedstocks typically composted (select all that apply):

- Livestock manure (cow, horse, goat, sheep, chicken, other)
- Livestock bedding
- On-farm-generated food scraps
- Other on-farm sources, including grass, leaves, ground brush
- Food scraps or residuals from off-farm sources
- Other off-farm sources, please describe:

Do you track compost temperature? How often?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- I do not track

Do you track compost moisture? How often?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- I do not track



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Do you track compost turning? How often?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- I do not track

If you do not track any of these, why not?

How do you turn your compost?

- Skid Steer ("Bobcat")
- Tractor front loader
- Wheel loader
- Shovel
- Windrow turner
- Other
- I do not turn the compost

Estimated weekly amount of ingredients produced on your farm (not collected or dropped off):
(please specify the unit of measurement - lbs, cubic yards, 5-gallon buckets, 35-gallon totes, 50-gallon totes, or bucket loader size)

- "Greens" (food scraps, plant residuals, food waste):
- Livestock or poultry manure:
- "Browns" (straw, hay, forestry waste):

Estimated weekly amount of ingredients collected by or dropped off at your farm:
(please specify the unit of measurement - lbs, cubic yards, 5-gallon buckets, 35-gallon totes, 50-gallon totes, or bucket loader size)

- "Greens" (food scraps, plant residuals, food waste):
- Livestock or poultry manure:
- "Browns" (straw, hay, forestry waste):

Which of these carbon feedstocks - also known as "Browns" (hay, straw, forestry products, leaves, paper...) - do you have a regular supply of from either on- or off-farm sources?

- Hay
- Straw
- Forest products
- Leaves
- Paper
- None
- Other (please specify)



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Do you sell the compost?

- Yes
- No

When you think about labor involved in your composting activities, how many hours per month would you estimate you or your staff spend:

- Collecting food scraps from off the farm:
- Handling dropped-off or collected food scraps on the farm:
- Handling the farm's own compost ingredients:
- Managing the composting process:
- Applying or selling the finished compost:

Do you consider your composting operation:

- An income source
- A savings on expenses
- A net expense

Why?

Do you currently accept food scraps from your community/from off-farm sources for your on-farm composting?

- Yes
- No

If Yes:

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Do you currently accept food scraps that people drop off at your farm? | Yes | No |
| Do you pick up food scraps from nearby businesses or homes? | Yes | No |
| Do you charge a fee for this? | Yes | No |

Do you collect primarily from (select all that apply):

- CSA members
- Other customers (e.g. farmers market customers)
- Local school
- Food processor hub
- Restaurant(s)
- Other businesses
- Peoples homes



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Are the food scraps you collect from the community contaminated by non-compostable materials?

- Yes, this is an issue
- Somewhat, but this is not a big issue
- No, they are not usually contaminated

How do you handle contamination?:

4. Barriers and Needs

Which of the following do you consider as challenges to accepting food scraps from the community? (Select all that apply):

- The regulations are confusing or unsure what is allowed
- Concerns about contaminants
- Concerns about the labor required to manage compost properly
- Concerned it would be another expense rather than cost-saver or income source
- Not sure how to set up logistics (fee structure, collection point or collection route, partnering with a hauler, etc.)
- Not sure how to market the services or build the partnerships with local food scrap generators
- Don't think there would be interest from the community
- Not sure what I would do with/how to use the finished compost
- Other [please specify]:

What questions do you have about regulations that apply to on-farm composting?



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