

COMPOSTING

CENTRALLY LOCATED MANURE COMPOSTING AND WASTE RECYCLING

Earthworks, Claverack, Columbia County



Windrows at Earthworks
compost facility.



Liquid manure is added to
a windrow

A centralized
composting facility
may provide a
business model for
managing a variety
of wastes.

OBJECTIVE

Develop and demonstrate an on-farm composting facility, centrally located to handle manure from multiple farms.

OVERVIEW

Composting reduces the volume and weight of livestock manure and can also produce a marketable product to increase farm revenues. While some farms are unable to take advantage of this technology, others may realize the benefits of composting through a centrally located composting facility. A manure composting and waste recycling management service has been proposed at Wil-Rock Farm, located in the Mill Creek Watershed of Columbia County. The Mill Creek Watershed has 3,000 animals on six dairy farms, producing waste equivalent to that of 150,000 humans. Project objectives include demonstrating an outdoor windrow composting operation, developing and demonstrating an innovative strategy for manure and waste collection, documenting material flows and energy usage, and assessing the overall costs and benefits of the collection and composting operation. This centralized composting facility, established by Earthworks, may provide a business model for managing not only manure, but also hard-to-recycle wastes such as waxed corrugated cardboard and food wastes. Waxed corrugated cardboard is used as both cow bedding and as a compost ingredient. The centralized composting operation model may provide better opportunities to market the compost product, and to realize a new income source through tipping fees derived from introducing food wastes into the composting process.

OUTCOME

Nine months of successful operation have been completed. One drawback of the stabilized earth pad used by Earthworks is that it is slippery in wet weather, however, the surface stays firm in all weather conditions.

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