



Food Waste Diversion and Your Environment

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTS

The environment isn't some far-away place—it's where we all live. **By diverting food scraps to composting you can help make the environment healthier for everyone in your extended community.**

- Composting reduces methane gas production by keeping food waste out of the landfill; methane is a greenhouse gas.
- Composting reduces the pressure on existing landfill space and reduces the need to site new landfills in our extended community.
- Composting transforms food waste into a rich soil amendment that's sold to local farmers, market gardeners and home gardeners to grow healthy food.

How you can benefit from the CVSWMD Business Organics Program:

- We all share in the environmental benefits!
- The opportunity to reduce your trash disposal costs; see the *Food Waste Diversion and Your Bottom Line* fact sheet for details.
- Promotion of your restaurant/cafeteria/school! There are "table talkers" for placing on restaurant and cafeteria tables which explain your participation to your patrons; and "We Compost!" window stickers to let everyone know you're composting!



Questions?

Call Lydia Menendez or Tom Anderson, Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District program staff, at 802-229-9383.

Here are some of the facts:

FACT: Food waste makes up between 56% and 60% of restaurant waste, by weight, in Vermont.* (And more than 20%*, by weight, of residential waste.) If it's not composted, all that waste is trucked to a landfill.

FACT: In a landfill, organic materials slowly decay, forming methane gas—a greenhouse gas. Methane migrates underground and will collect where it can—in pockets under the earth, in nearby buildings. Methane also combusts easily, causing explosions.

To avoid these dangerous situations, methane must be vented from landfills. It can be released into the air, burned or captured to produce energy. Although it's better to use the methane produced via food waste decay than to simply burn it off, it's best to keep organic materials out of the landfill in the first place.

FACT: Farmers and gardeners use compost to help build healthy soil for growing healthy plants. Healthy plants suffer from less pest pressure—which means less botanical and chemical fertilizers and pesticides are needed to grow the vegetables and fruits you serve—and that's good for all of us.

* Source: *Vermont Waste Composition Study: Final Report*, June 2002; prepared by DSM Environmental Services for Vermont Dept. of Environmental Conservation Solid Waste Program.

