



## CENTRAL VERMONT SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Dear Teachers:

### Re: CVSWMD Chicken-Food Waste Signage for Schools & Background Information on the Role of Chickens in Processing Vermont's Food Waste, Including Food Scraps Generated by Schools

The majority of schools located with the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District have their collected food scraps removed by a food waste hauler and transported to either an anaerobic digester or a composting facility.

An **anaerobic digester** (see image on right) is often located on a large dairy farm. Manure produced by cows on the farm is mixed with food scraps and fed into the digester. Inside the digester, a controlled process of fermentation takes place and gases that are produced (including methane) can be refined and burned to produce heat or electricity, to power vehicles, or for other uses. The materials leftover from the biodigestion process (digestate) can be used as animal bedding and fertilizer on the farm.



Biodigester, located on the Goodrich Family Farm, Salisbury, VT.

Food scraps taken to a **compost facility** are converted into compost products. Chickens often play an integral role in this process, and large-scale composting facilities in Vermont may host flocks of hundreds of hens and roosters.

Before food waste is provided to chickens, it is often mixed with other materials (e.g., tree bark and animal manures), which are all part of the composting process. As the chickens scratch through this mix, foraging for food scraps and bugs (see image on right), they enhance the compost by adding their droppings and mixing all the materials together. Among other benefits, the final compost product can be used to enhance soil health and grow more food. Additionally, the composting facility can sell the eggs their chickens produce.



Chickens feeding at a composting facility.

**This makes for an amazing reciprocal relationship between Vermonters and the chickens:**

Benefit to Chickens	Benefits to Vermonters
The mix of materials the chickens are fed, including our food waste, enables them to forage naturally on a diverse and nutritious food source.	Our <i>food waste</i> is kept out of the landfill
	Compost is created, providing many benefits, including supporting the growing of more food
	We get nutritious and delicious eggs to eat

**The Signage:** Because your school\* has its food scraps processed at a composting facility, which involves chickens, keeping your classroom and cafeteria compost receptacles as free as possible of non-food items (silverware, condiment packages, single-use plastic cups, etc.) will only benefit the chickens and the entire composting process. That's where this signage comes in.

The larger sign (below on left) can be used to introduce the chicken/food waste relationship to your students, and the importance of keeping non-food items out of compost buckets. The smaller sign (below on right), which lists food items for composting, can be placed near compost bucket to serve as reference for your students.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I'm glad to visit classrooms and cafeterias to introduce this signage to your students and how it relates to the importance of keeping non-food items out of your school's food scrap receptacles.

I can be reached at [johnj@cvswwmd.org](mailto:johnj@cvswwmd.org) or 802-461-9246. Thank you.

Sincerely,

*John Jose*

School Zero Waste Coordinator  
Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District

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**FOOD SCRAPS ONLY, PLEASE!!!**  
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**HELLO, KIDS!**  
Help us chickens do our job, turning your leftover food scraps into compost!  
**Put *only* food scraps** into your compost buckets!  
Nothing else, please!



**FOOD SCRAPS**



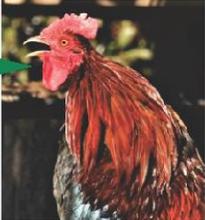
**HELLO OUT THERE!**  
It's just us food scraps in here!  
No forks, napkins or other trash!

**YUM, YUM!**  
Love ❤️ those school food scraps!  
Thanks for caring by putting **food scraps in**, and **keeping trash out**, of your compost buckets!



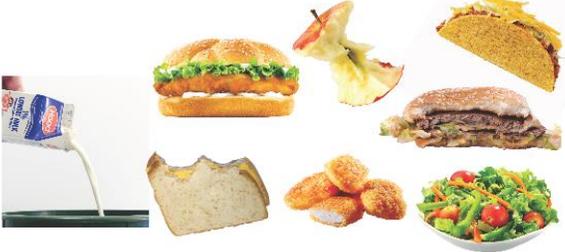
Photo Credit: VT DEC

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**FOOD SCRAPS ONLY, PLEASE!!!**

**WHAT GOES INTO YOUR COMPOST BUCKET:**



- FRUIT & VEGGIES
- MILK, YOGURT & CHEESE
- MEAT & BONES
- BREAD
- SOUPS

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\*This chicken-food scrap signage applies to those schools that have their food scraps disposed of via a composting facility where chickens are part of the composting process. These schools include Bradford ES, Hardwick ES, Hazen Union, Oxbow HS, River Bend CTC, and Walden School.