## Aerated Static Pile Composting Applications and Opportunities

#### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

#### MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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PETER MOON, P.E. - O2COMPOST





## **Using the Aerated Static Pile Method**



Sonoma Valley Stables, Petaluma, CA

# What is Composting?

## This is Not Composting



# This is Composting



# This is Not Composting



## This is Composting





## This is Not Composting



# This is Composting



## **One Definition of Composting**

WA Solid Waste Handling Standards: WAC 173-350-100

**"Composting"** means the biological degradation and transformation of organic solid waste under <u>controlled</u> conditions designed to promote <u>aerobic</u> decomposition."

## **One Definition of Composting**

WA Solid Waste Handling Standards: WAC 173-350-100

# "Natural decay of organic solid waste under uncontrolled conditions is not composting."

#### Front End Loader Turned Windrows



## **Tow Behind Windrow Turner**





## Aerated Static Pile (ASP) Composting



#### Horse Manure w/ Shavings

# **ASP Composting**

- First Developed in the Early 1970's Beltsville Method
- Maintains Aerobic Conditions Throughout the Pile
- Controls Pile Temperatures by Adjusting Airflow
- Eliminates the Need to Turn the Compost Pile
- Saves Time and Reduces the Cost of Labor and Fuel

Advantages of ASP Composting?

WITH ASP COMPOSTING, WE:

- > Construct the compost pile over a network of aeration pipes and
- > Induce airflow into the pile using an electric blower / timer
- ➢ Do not turn the pile during the first 21 − 30 days (Active Phase)
- Adjust the airflow to manage pile temperatures and optimize the biology of the composting process; and
- > Operate the blower using either grid power or solar power

## The Anatomy of an Aerated Static Pile



#### Horse Manure w/ Shavings





















ASP Hands-on Workshop





# Extended ASP Composting



Upper Valley Disposal Service, Rutherford, CA

## **The Importance of Aeration**

BY INDUCING AIRFLOW INTO THE COMPOST PILE WE ARE ABLE TO:

- > Maintain aerobic conditions without turning the pile
- > Optimize the biology of the composting process
- Manage pile temperatures
- > Reduce offensive odors and neighbor complaints
- > Expedite the rate of composting
- > Produce a high quality compost product in less time

## **Top-Down Aerated Bay System**



## Liberty Bell Farm, Snohomish



#### **Completed Aeration System**


## Cross Section of an Aerated Bin

Raw Mix

~ 30-days to fill

Moisture ~ 60 – 65%

# **Cross Section of an Aerated Bin**

#### **Compost Cover**

- Thermal Blanket
- Odor Control
- Fly Control
- Retains Moisture





## **Cleaning Out Wet Bedding**



### **Removing Solid Manure**



#### Moisture Conditioning the Mix



#### Dumping Cart into Compost System



#### Adding Final Cover Layer



## Adding the Final Touch



#### Monitoring Compost Temperatures









# The Evolution of O<sub>2</sub>Compost Systems Since 1998



# **Chicken Mortality Composting**



#### Draper Valley Farms, Mt. Vernon, WA

# **Chicken Mortality Composting**



#### Draper Valley Farms, Mt. Vernon, WA

# **Chicken Mortality Composting**



Draper Valley Farms, Mt. Vernon, WA

### Prototype Compost System



O<sub>2</sub>Compost "Research Laboratory"

#### **On-Grade Aerated Compost Systems**



#### Sonoma Valley Worm Farm, CA

## **On-Grade Aerated Compost Systems**



#### Greenville, NC

## **On-Grade Aerated Compost Systems**



#### Camden, NC

# **Top-Down Compost Systems**





#### Adding Raw Manure from Above



#### Removing Compost from Below



# **Top Down 3-Bin Compost Structure**

Nickerson Farm – Sterling, MA

# Aerated Static Pile Composting

PART 2

#### VIRTUAL TOUR OF ASP COMPOST FACILITIES

#### **O2Compost Micro-Bin System**





#### Plywood & 2 x 6 Tongue & Groove Bins

# Top Down, Sliding Lid Compost System



Low Profile, Aesthetically Pleasing



Edwards Equestrian Center, MT



Mohican Farm, Cooperstown, NY

Quaker Smith Point, VT



Silver Oaks Stable, Long Island, NY



Thacher School – Ojai, CA



Detweiler Homestead Farm, PA



Micro-Green Farm, NJ
#### **Extended Aerated Static Pile**



Two Particular Acres – Royersford, PA

# **Simple On-Grade Pipe System**

Bailey Compost, WA



Lenz Enterprises – Stanwood, WA

The Benefits of ASP Composting

#### WITH ASP COMPOSTING, WE:

- > Reduce the footprint of the Active compost pad
- Increase site capacity as well as the throughput of a given facility
- Reduce the cost of processing (less equipment, labor and fuel)
- Resolve off-site odor impacts and neighbor complaints
- > Process more challenging feedstocks
- > Improve product quality and increase the selling price

## **Pop Quiz**

The three layers within an Aerated Static Pile Include:

- The Plenum Layer Why is this important?
  To help distribute airflow uniformly across the base of the pile
- The Mix Layer What are the Key Parameters
  - Nutrient Balance (Carbon to Nitrogen Ratio)
  - Bulk Density as an indirect measure of Porosity
  - Moisture Content
- The Biofilter Layer What are the two key reasons
   Insulate the mix layer > pile temperatures over 131°F for 3 days
   Manage odors and off-site impacts to neighbors

## Aerated Static Pile Composting

#### PART 3

#### COMPOSTING IS A BIOLOGIC PROCESS







## Aeration

Allows the Operator to:

- Maintain Aerobic Conditions
- Mitigate Impacts from Objectionable Odors
- Manage Pile Temperatures
- Reduce the Loss of Nutrients
- Facilitate the Rate of Composting & Curing
- Produce Superior Compost Products

## **Compost Mix – The Key to Success**

#### **4 Critical Parameters**

1. Carbon to Nitrogen Ratio (C:N ~ 30:1)

#### 2. Porosity: Volume of Void Space

- Bulk Density: 550 950 pounds per cubic yard
- Free Airspace: 35 to 60%
- 3. Moisture Content (60 65%)
- 4. pH
  - Bacterial decomposers prefer pH 6.0 to 7.5.
  - Fungal decomposers prefer pH 5.5 to 8.0.
  - Ideal range is 5.8 to 7.2

## **Requirements for Aerobic Composting**

Parameter	Reasonable Range	ASP Preferred Range		
C:N Ratio	20:1 to 40:1	25:1 to 30:1		
Moisture	40% to 65%	60% to 65%		
Bulk Density	650 to 1,250 pcy	950 pcy (max)		
Free Air Space	35% to 60%	35% to 50%		
рН	5.5 to 8.5	6.5 to 8.0		
Particle Size	1/16" to 3"	>50% 1/8" to 2" (max)		
O <sub>2</sub> Concentration	>5%	>10%		
Temperature	131° to 170°F	131° to 150°F		





#### **Mid-Term Exam**

• After turning a compost pile, or when the blower for an Aerated Static Pile turns off, how quickly does the oxygen deplete in the core of the pile?

- What percentage of O2 do we want to maintain in an aerobic system?
- Active Composting is primarily a \_\_\_\_\_ driven process whereas Curing is primarily a \_\_\_\_\_ driven process.

#### **Mid-Term Exam**

• True or False: Curing starts at an exact point in time

• PFRP means a Process to \_\_\_\_

• What are the criteria for PFRP with ASP Composting?

• Our objective in meeting PFRP conditions are to "destroy" \_\_\_\_\_\_. At these temperatures we also effectively eliminate \_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **Bonus Points**

# What is the one correct answer to all composting questions?

# It Depends!

## Aerated Static Pile Composting

#### PART 4

#### **COMPOSTING AS A MANUFACTURING PROCESS**



## Mass Balance Analysis

#### Tilz Soil & Compost

In-Bound Green Waste per Year	7,000	tons / yr	125%	Peaking Value
Process Mass Balance	Average Condition		Peak Condition	
Monthly Tonnage	583	tons / mo.	729	tons / mo.
Shredded Bulk Density	650	pounds / cubic yard	650	pounds / cubic yard
Monthly Volume	1,795	cy / avg. mo.	2,244	cy / peak mo.
Volume Loss w/ Active Composting	25%		25%	
Volume After Active Composting	1,346	cy / avg. mo.	1,683	cy / avg. mo.
Volume Loss w/ Curing	10%		10%	
Volume After Curing	1,212	cy / avg. mo.	1,514	cy / peak mo.
Screened Fines Proportion	60%		60%	
Screened Product Volume	727	cy / avg. mo.	909	cy / peak mo.
Screen "Overs" Proportion	45%		45%	
Screened "Overs" Volume	545	cy / avg. mo.	681	cy / peak mo.
Curing Time	1.5	months	1.5	months
Curing Storage Volume	2,019	су	2,524	су
Screened Product Storage Time	3	months	4	months
Screened Product Storage Volume	2,181	су	2,726	су
Screen Overs Storage Time	3	months	4	months
Screen Overs Storage Volume	1,636	су	2,044	су

#### **Continuous** Flow



## Materials Handling

When the method of mixing and processing is successful at meeting the biological requirements for composting:

- The primary focus of composting then becomes materials handling.
- Composting is a manufacturing process, and
- The objective should be to produce a high quality product.

## Adaptability

Your Method of Operating Will Evolve Over Time

Recommendations:

- Start small and grow in planned increments.
- Define your key objectives & set goals.
- Always strive to improve product quality.

## Adaptability

Your Method of Operating Will Evolve Over Time

- Always work to reduce materials handling;
- Identify and manage constraints in your system;
- Respond to regulatory changes;
- Be a good neighbor; and
- Keep it Simple Stupid (KISS).

### Summary – Keys to Success

- Manage the compost facility based on a continuous yet variable flow of materials (i.e., Flow Diagram);
- Handle raw feedstocks promptly;
- Pay particular attention to: 1) aeration; and 2) the amount of moisture in the system;
- Do not lose sight of the big picture; manage the site by practicing good housekeeping techniques; and
- Always strive to improve product quality!

## Aerated Static Pile Composting

PART 5

#### CONDUCTING AN ASP PILOT PROJECT

#### **The Four Stages of Learning**

- Unconscious Incompetence
- Conscious Competence
- Conscious Incompetence
- Unconscious Competence

- Don't know what you don't know
- Know what you know
- Know what you don't know
- Don't know what you know

## Learning by Doing

#### Bridging the Gap Between Knowledge and Understanding



## **Small Volume Pilot Projects**

- Quick and Inexpensive to Construct & Start-up
- Prototype Compost Mix
  - C:N Ratio
  - Bulk Density
  - Moisture Content
- Confirm Suitability Before Setting up a Larger Pile
- Get Stakeholder Buy-In



#### O2Compost Micro-Bin System

## **Large Volume Pilot Projects**



#### O2Compost Aerated Bay System

- Provide Operator Training
- Resolve Logistical Constraints
- Test a Variety of Mixes
- Establish Standard Operating Procedures
- Reveal Permit Requirements
- Establish Regulatory Confidence.

#### Logistical Constraints

- Feedstock Sources
- Transportation
- Aeration System
- Equipment
- Operators
- Power/Water
- Permits





#### Salt Lake City Pilot Project

#### Stakeholder Buy-In

- Partners
- Investors
- Employees
- Regulators
- Neighbors
- Customers
- End-Users









Fish Waste Compost Demonstration Project

## Aerated Static Pile Composting

#### PART 6

#### INCREASING SITE CAPACITY BY REDUCING OPERATING FOOTPRINT

## Windrow Turners



# Self Propelled Straddle Type ~16-feet wide by 7-feet high

## Windrow Turners



# PTO Powered - Tow Beside ~16-feet wide by 7-feet high

#### **Example Turned Windrow Compost Facilities**





Compost Facility in New York Yard Waste & Leaves Compost Facility in California Yard Waste & Food Waste
## **Turned Windrow Compost Facility**



Compost Facility in Texas Biosolids with Shredded Wood



15 Windrows ~ 7,500 cy Problem: No Room to Expand



#### Site Dimensions and Turned Windrow Capacity

- Site Dimensions: 350-feet x 300-feet: ~2.4 Acres
- Windrows: 16-feet wide, 6-feet high, 300-feet long
- Windrow Volume: ~ 500 cubic yards / windrow
- 15 Windrows: Total Volume ~7,500 cubic yard





Bailey Compost, Snohomish, Washington



## **Extended Aerated Static Piles**



## Site Dimensions and EASP Capacity

- Site Dimensions: 350-feet x 300-feet: ~2.4 Acres
- EASP: 80-feet wide, 135-feet long, 10-feet high
- EASP Volume: ~ 3,250 cubic yards / EASP
- 7 EASP's: Total Volume ~22,750 cubic yards
- Increased Capacity: 22,750 cy / 7,500 cy = 3x
- Tow Beside Windrow Turners: 6x 8x

#### **Extended Aerated Static Piles**





Bailey Compost, Snohomish, Washington

#### Continuous Flow "Wedge" Method



#### Envirofert Compost, Auckland, New Zealand



Auckland, New Zealand

## Advancing / Receding Faces



Auckland, New Zealand

## Advancing / Receding Faces



Auckland, New Zealand

# Aerated Static Pile Composting

#### PART 7

#### RESOLVING ODOR IMPACTS & NEIGHBOR COMPLAINTS

## The Challenge

Offensive Odors are the single most common reason for compost facility closure.

Impacted neighbors become upset, organized and relentless in their goal to shut down offending compost facilities.

Despite this, they are not the enemy!

#### Turning Windrows

Core Gases Released from an anaerobic compost windrow in an effort to reestablish aerobic conditions within the pile.

Odors can be particularly strong and offensive when the feedstocks consist of high nitrogen manure, grass clippings and food waste.

Photo: BioCycle Magazine



#### Extended Aerated Static Pile

No Pile Turning during the first 30days of Active Composting

Blowers Operated by On/Off Cycle Timers

Easy to Maintain Aerobic Conditions Throughout the Pile

Photo: Ned Foley Two Particular Acres Compost, Royersford, PA





#### Most Odors are By-Products of Anaerobic Respiration

- Rotten Eggs dimethyl sulfide, hydrogen sulfide.
- Rancid Fats, Oils & Grease butyric acid.
- Dead Animals putrescine, cadaverine
- Fishy trimethyl amine
- Pine terpene.
- > Ammonia not  $O_2$







Source: "Sensory Assessment and Characterization of Odor Nuisance Emissions during the Composting of Wastewater Biosolids," Water Environment Research, Volume 81, Number 7

#### How Do Anaerobic Compounds Form?

Under conditions that restrict the entry of oxygen into feedstocks or compost piles.

- High moisture content
- Inadequate porosity (high bulk density)
- Rapidly degrading substrates
- Excessive pile size

# How do you remediate anaerobic metabolism?







Tulare, CA 2012

#### Odor Evaluation

Gathered Representative Samples from the Surface of Compost Piles

Evaluated Odor Character and Strength by Off-Site Odor Panel

Evaluated Constituent Gases

Measured VOC and GHG Emissions.



C.E. Schmidt Environmental Consultants

# The Benefits of ASP Composting with a Biofilter Cover Layer

Pollutant	Reduction
Volatile Organic Compounds – VOC's	98.8 %
Ammonia – NH <sub>3</sub>	83.2 %
Carbon Dioxide - $CO_2$	71.9 %
Methane - CH <sub>4</sub>	13.0 %
Nitrous Oxide - $N_2O$	88.8%

Table ES-1: Results in emissions testing in pounds of pollutant per ton of feedstock over the 22-day active composting period

#### Steps to Minimize Offensive Odors

- 1. Receive and Process Odorous Wastes Promptly
- 2. Provide Adequate Carbon-Rich Bulking Material
- 3. Establish a Bulk Density of 650 950 pcy
- 4. Place on an Aeration System ASAP
- 5. Cover with a Biofilter Layer (unscreened compost)
- 6. Maintain Aerobic Conditions for the first 30-days

## People "Smell with Their Eyes"

- Good Housekeeping
- ✤ Clean-up Receiving Areas
- Temporary Covers on top of Raw Feedstocks Overnight
- Clean Ditches and Puddles
- Aerate Stormwater & Leachate
  Ponds
- Correlate Meteorological
  Conditions and On-Site
  Activities with Complaints



Lenz Enterprises - Stanwood, WA

# Aerated Static Pile Composting

#### PART 8

#### REDUCING OPERATING COSTS

## **Extended Aerated Static Piles**





## Site Dimensions and EASP Capacity

- Site Dimensions: 350-feet x 300-feet: ~2.4 Acres
- Windrow Volume: ~ 7,500 cubic yards
- 7 EASP's: Total Volume ~22,750 cubic yards
- Increased Capacity: 22,750 cy / 7,500 cy = 3x
- Tow Beside Windrow Turners: 6x 8x
- Increased Cycle Time: 1 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> 2x cubic yards / year





## **Process Comparison**

#### **Turned Windrows**

- Windrow Construction
- Windrow Turning 8-16x
- Time on Pad: 6 8 wks
- Pile Deconstruction
- Move to Curing

#### **Aerated Static Piles**

- Pile Construction
- No Pile Turning
- Time on Pad: 4 6 wks
- Pile Deconstruction
- Move to Curing
#### **Process Comparison**

#### **Turned Windrows**

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- Pile Construction
- No Pile Turning
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- Move to Curing

## Windrow Turners



Self Propelled Straddle Type Windrow Turner 16-feet wide by 7-feet high

#### Turned Windrows – 22,750 Cubic Yards

- Investment:
- Life Expectancy
- Labor:
- Fuel Cost:
- Routine Maintenance:
- Major Repairs:
- Insurance:

- \$600,000 \$850,000
- 4 6 years
- 80 hrs/mo.
- \$YY / mo.
- \$ZZ / mo.
- \$10,000 \$20,000/yr
- Strongly Recommended

#### Aerated Static Piles – 22,750 Cubic Yards

- Investment:
- Life Expectancy
- Labor / Site Inspections:
- Power Installation Cost:
- Power Operating Cost:
- Maintenance & Repairs
- Insurance:

- \$25,000 \$50,000
- 20 years (plus)
- 2 hrs/wk or 8 hrs/mo.
- \$15,000 \$30,000
- \$100 \$250 / month
- Incidental
- None Recommended

#### How Much Will My Compost System Cost to Build?

#### There are Three Cost Components:

- O2Compost Training Program
- Construction Materials
- Construction Equipment and Labor

## Average System Costs

		02C		Constructio	
O2Compost System	Style	Training	Materials	n	Total Cost
Micro-Bin	Portable	\$675	\$325	0	\$1,000
Macro-Bin	Fixed	\$1,675	\$500	\$250	\$2,425
Cornerstone ASP	Portable	\$2,475	\$250	0	\$2,725
Cornerstone 3-Bay	On-Grade	\$2,475	\$2,525	0	\$5,000
Cornerstone 3-Bay	Top-Down	\$2,475	\$2,500	0	\$4,950
Sterling 3-Bay	On-Grade	\$3,975	\$3,525	\$2,500	\$10,000
Sterling 3-Bay	Top-Down	\$3,975	\$3,525	\$4,000	11,500
Paragon	On-Grade	\$3,000	\$5,250	\$2,500	\$10,750

## How Much Will My Compost System Cost to Operate?

#### There are Four Cost Components:

- Time to Prepare the Mix and Fill the Bin
- Time to Monitor the Composting Process
- Time and Equipment to Remove the Compost
- Electrical Power

## What About Getting a Grant to Help Pay for My Compost System?

- Paper Work, Paper Work, Paper Work
- This Process Can Take 12 to 18 months
- More Stringent Construction Standards
- Cost Share of \$1 : \$1 After Construction
- Often it's "Hurry-up and Wait"
- Open Invitation to Visitors

#### **Return on Your Investment**

#### **Reduce** Expenses

- Hard Costs
- Soft Costs
- Environmental Costs
- Intangible Costs

**Create Benefits** 

- Product Sales & Profits
- Improve Horses' Health
- Improved Aesthetics
- Sustainable Agriculture



#### Eliminate Disposal Expense

#### **Soft Costs**

- Owner's Time and Effort
- Inefficient Use of Labor
- Excessive Bedding
- Fuel Costs
- Equipment Maintenance & Repairs
- Veterinarian Bills

#### **Improving Horses' Health**



Lush Pasture Grass - Parasites and Weeds?

#### When to Call Your Vet?

- Soft Costs
  - owners' time,
    fuel and equipment,
    horses' health,





#### Ascarid Impaction of SI



#### **Protecting Aquatic Life**

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is 64,000 square miles.

It has 11,600 miles of tidal shoreline, including tidal wetlands and islands.

The watershed encompasses parts of six states.

Approximately 17 million people live in the watershed.

About 10 million people live along its shores or near them.



#### **Chesapeake Bay Watershed**





#### **Protecting Aquatic Life**



Ammonia in Small Concentrations is Toxic to Salmonoids

#### **Protecting Aquatic Life**



High BOD and Nutrients in Runoff

#### **Intangible Costs**

o Human Health

Neighbor Complaints

Regulatory Compliance

Poor Aesthetics & Lost Business

Deferred Maintenance

**o** Frustration and Sleepless Nights

#### **Protecting Human Health**





Nitrates in the Ground Water

#### **Benefits of Using Compost**

- Convert Nutrients to plant available forms
- Increase soil organic content
- Decrease soil compaction
- Improve pasture grass, reduce weeds
- Increase infiltration and moisture retention in soil
- Decrease soil erosion

#### Soil Horizons

Topsoil is

a Complex

Living

Organism



#### **Organic Soil**

Mineral Soil

Parent Material



#### Soil is a Complex Living Organism



Oklahoma



# Q&A



Massachusetts



New Jersey



Washington

Maryland



#### Aerated Static Pile Composting Applications and Opportunities

## **THANK YOU**

PETER MOON - O2COMPOST