

Consents Guide for Composting Operations in New Zealand goes online

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Compost NZ achieved a milestone in June, when the consents guide for composting operations was finalised and the online version hit the website.

The guide was the brainchild of the Compost NZ steering committee. Discussions between members identified a huge variation in consent processing costs across the country - from the thousands to the million dollar mark for the same type of composting operation. Consent conditions also varied markedly. The committee decided to work with operators and councils to develop a guide to assist people with the consents process.

The committee would like to thank those operators and regional council staff who gave their time freely to ensure we had a solid piece of work. WasteMINZ and the Ministry for the Environment engaged a consultant to prepare the first draft of the document and run four workshops. The committee then revised the draft and consulted in more detail before finalising it. We hope you like the end result.

SO WHAT'S IN IT?

The guide sets out what is required for the consent process including the consents needed, what the application should include, and what to expect in any conditions - particularly for monitoring environmental effects.

Some of the nuances of the composting process are then explored. Organics is one of the largest components of the waste stream that can potentially be diverted from landfill to a great end product. So it is important for all of us, as waste



managers, to have at least a basic understanding of the fundamentals of organics processing. Feedstock preparation, initial mixing of materials, active composting and compost maturing all make for an interesting and informative read. Go ahead, try it!

There are of course, a variety of composting technologies available. The ins and outs of static aerated windrows, in-vessel systems and windrows are briefly described.

The major issues for composting operations are then assessed in some detail. The guide covers principles behind feedstock and run-off management; dust and odour control; land use consents; and product quality. The guide examines issues that should be addressed in consent conditions and what to include in a site management plan. Worked examples of consent conditions and site management plans are provided in appendices.

WHERE TO NEXT?

A well run organics processing plant relies on sound operator performance. Compost NZ has worked to develop some good information for the industry. We now have an excellent New Zealand Standard, a guide on how to implement the standard, an informative introduction to the science behind compost and the beginnings of an industry training programme in partnership with EXITO.

Compost NZ is looking forward to working with councils and plant operators on a variety of new initiatives. Plans are dependent upon successful funding applications, but include the appointment of industry development officers, marketing product to end users and effective R&D to name a few.

If you as an operator or council staff member want to join us (and make good use of some of that levy money!) then please contact us at info@wasteminz.org.nz. Working collaboratively we can make improvements for the industry as a whole.

The guide is available on the Compost NZ section of the WasteMINZ website: www.wasteminz.org.nz/sectorgroups/compost/Compost