

Organic Materials

Date: 10 April 2018

Time: 1pm – 3pm

Location: Teleconference

Present: Chris Purchas (Tonkin and Taylor), Daniel O’Carroll (Living Earth), Daniel Yallop (Auckland Council), Dawn Smith (Scion), Gavin Sole (Jacobs)

Facilitator: Jenny Marshall (WasteMINZ)

Apologies: Joanne MacGregor (Transvalue Consultants); Mike Lord (EnviroNZ); Darren Hoskins (Wellington City Council);

No.	Agenda item	Action point
1.	Adoption of New Strategic Plan and Work plan	The committee signed off on the updated plans which can be viewed here https://www.wasteminz.org.nz/sector-groups/compost-nz/
2.	Packaging Forum Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Packaging Forum has convened a working group to seek adoption of compostable packaging standards in New Zealand to improve the end of life opportunities for compostable packaging in New Zealand. Dawn Smith, Daniel O’Carroll, Mike Lord and Jenny Marshall have all agreed to sit on the group to represent the diverse viewpoints of the WasteMINZ Organic Materials Sector Group.• To date the exact scope of the working group has yet to be agreed. <p>Items currently under discussion include:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the scope include only compostable food packaging and serviceware e.g. plates, coffee cups or should it include all compostable packaging e.g. mailers, shampoo bottles, nappies etc. It was noted that overseas compostable packaging that is accepted in composting facilities is limited to compostable food packaging only. It was also noted that in Europe compostable packaging and food waste are mainly being used to generate electricity via incineration rather than returned to the soil as compost. • Do products need to be tested in their final form or is it sufficient that their constituent elements meet a standard? • At the working group meeting two possible options for standards were discussed <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Try to create a standard where products can be accepted in any type of composting facility including open windrow with turners. This could mean that potentially only a very limited range of products may meet the standard given the current difficulties that some composting facilities have. There would need to be practical trials at the most problematic sites not just in lab testing if this was the preferred option. 2. Recognise that some types of composting facilities as they are currently set up will never be able to successfully compost packaging and create a standard only for facilities that operate in vessel composting / or have the appropriate infrastructure. This would limit the number of facilities which could potentially take compostable packaging but a wider range of products would potentially meet the standard. • At the Organic Materials Steering Committee meeting these two options were discussed and then a third option mooted. The current issue with the international standards is that whilst they can prove that the components of a product are not toxic, they aren't particularly effective in predicting whether a product will actually break down in a particular type of composting facility. • This is the case with a windrow composting facility in New Zealand who has recently been trialling composting foodscraps collected in compostable plastic bags. Of three different brands trialled. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In sample 1 after 54 days particles less than 5 mm were still visible in the surrounding compost. • In sample 2 whilst after 54 days no visible sign of the bag in the surrounding compost. The yellow cotton thread
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		<p>used to sew up the sides and bottom of the bag remained intact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In sample 3 after 54 days the bag was still intact and the contents of banana skins and orange peels was still identifiable. • Using a windrow turner for mixing and turning of the row tore the bags into pieces. The shredding of the bags could contribute to “leakage “with the plastic shreds being blown around the site where they would visually and physically pollute the environment and would break down very slowly. Turning appeared to bring the light weight plastic to the surface of the row where the temperatures are lower. • In America the Compost Manufacturing Alliance are tackling this issue by testing different products via different composting processes. • Firstly, a standard or standards could be agreed upon as the standard would ensure that there were no toxic inputs. The standard then acts as a tickbox for compost manufacturers which means they are willing to consider accepting the product. The compost manufacturer would then run pilot tests on site to make sure the products will break down in a timely manner in their facility. • If it is then accepted by their facility that is then recorded in an open access online database that this product is approved for acceptance in their facility. Other compost manufacturers are then more informed as to whether the product could work in their facility. • This kind of database would enable event organisers and industry to easily see which compostable products can be composted where. • This suggestion will be raised at the next Packaging Forum Coffee Cup working group meeting. • If you have views on any of the issues raised above please feel to send your views through to Jenny@wasteminz.org.nz
3.	Terminology around compostable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of WasteMINZ members have expressed concern over the terminology used to describe shopping bags and other “green” products. In particular there appears to be confusion over the terms “compostable vs. biodegradable vs. degradable”. A number of retailers have been sold degradable bags thinking

	products	<p>they were buying compostable bags.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options to tackle this issue could include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a code of practise • Creating a factsheet which explains the differences. In Australia the Commerce Commission has issued the following factsheet https://www.accc.gov.au/system/files/Biodegradable%2C%20degradable%20and%20recyclable%20claims%20on%20plastic%20bags.pdf • Contacting the Commerce Commission to investigate claims • Contacting Consumer to see if they would be interested in investigating this further. • Publishing articles in industry magazines such as Consumer • If you are interested in being part of a working group to look at this issue and what can be done please email Jenny@wasteminz.org.nz
4.	Clopyralid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An email from the EPA stated <p>“We have considered your query regarding the control that was added to certain clopyralid formulations during the 2017 reassessment, i.e. “The person in charge of a place where the substance is sold may sell the substance to a person only if he or she has received confirmation that there is an approved handler at the place where the substance is to be used”</p> <p>After due consideration, our view is that this control was not “replaced” by the tracking provisions in HSW HS Regulations as it manages ecotoxic risk. It therefore remains as a HSNO control on any clopyralid substances that had this control prior to 1 December 2017, i.e the following substance approvals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSR007682 • HSR000760 • HSR000761 • HSR000762

		<p>If you check the EPA Controls Database for these substances, this control will be listed under “HSNO additional controls”.</p> <p>We acknowledge that this control refers to “approved handler” and that class 9 AH certificates are no longer be able to be obtained / renewed. However, the actual wording of the control cannot be changed until these substances are re-issued and/or reassessed. This issue is mitigated by the fact that the HPC Notice has grandfathered (relevant) approved handler certificates until their expiry date or 30 December 2020 (whichever occurs later). “</p> <p>So in essence what that means is that the approved handler certificates can no longer be used at proof of purchase to restrict the sale of these products to the general public..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Evans had a meeting with Mark Ross Chief Executive Agcarm – representing NZ’s animal medicines and crop protection industries. They met to talk about product stewardship for agrichemicals but they also discussed clopyralid. Agcarm may be interested in corralling the industry to take a joint approach <p>“It does look like different companies are interpreting the requirements for clopyralid differently, and a unified industry approach is needed.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vivendi 300 is still in breach of the EPA guidelines; however it is not an Agcharm member. • Vivendi 300 is not sold by an Agcarm member. However, a number of the products are Agcarm member brands. • Working with industry and Agcarm to improve labelling and messaging on appropriate product use is likely to bring greater behaviour change. However, it is still important to have proof of competency at point of sale to restrict access to the products by home gardeners. A Growsafe certification could be shown at point of sale. • In order for proof of competency at point of sale to be reinstated after 2020 an official EPA reassessment would need to be undertaken. Typically the EPA charges between \$10,000 -\$20,000 for a reassessment. In this instance the committee feels strongly that the cost of the reassessment should be free or significantly reduced given that it was an EPA oversight that the controls were dismantled in the first instance. <p>Next steps:</p>
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5.	Guidelines for beneficially reusing organic materials on productive land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A submission was made on behalf of the sector group to increase the proposed zinc limit from 180ppm for urban soils to 300 ppm. Do we need to do anything else to ensure that the limits for zinc are increased? • Daniel Yallop will talk to George Fietje to find out is anyone on the working group pushing for the lower limit? Are there any gaps in the information that George needs to help him convince the committee to go with the higher limit. Both Watercare and Auckland Council made very similar submissions and are both in favour of higher limits.
6.	Microplastics in Compost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has anyone done any research into this here in New Zealand? And should we be? • Research in this area is very new, however overseas people are starting to test for microplastic in soil and also absorption of microplastics by plants. A floatation test can be used to find microplastics in soil. • One of the ISO standards is up for review at the moment so it will be interesting to see if they will be tackling this issue. • In New Zealand the leading experts on microplastics are Sally Gaw from Canterbury University – Grant Northcote - Northcott Research Consultants Ltd . ESR and Scion are also working in this area. This kind of research could make for a good Master’s student project. • Dawn will continue to liaise with experts working in this field and keep the committee updated.
7.	Compostable Nappies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A business is looking at importing compostable nappies into New Zealand. You require a permit to process biosolid waste as it changes the nature of the risk profile and dangers significantly. This is another example of where the plastics industry is moving far faster than the composting industry in terms of their ability to deal with the wave of new compostable products.

8.	General Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daniel O'Carroll is continuing to work with Asure Quality to see if some PLA inputs can be approved under organic certification. He is also investigating paper- based alternatives for kitchen caddies and bin liners. E.g. https://weareobeo.com/
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