

# ORGANIC MATERIALS SECTOR GROUP MEETING/TELECONFERENCE

**Date and time:** 24 May 2018

**Location:** Teleconference

**Present:** Chris Purchas (Tonkin and Taylor), Daniel O'Carroll (Living Earth), Daniel Yallop (Auckland Council), Dawn Smith (Scion), Gavin Sole (Jacobs); Sarah Pritchett (WasteMINZ)

**Apologies:** Joanne MacGregor, Mike Lord (EnviroNZ);

**Absent:** Darren Hoskins (Wellington City Council)

**Facilitator:** Jenny Marshall (WasteMINZ)

## Agenda:

No.	Agenda item	Action point
1.	Adoption of minutes from April meeting as accurate	Moved: Gavin Sole Seconded: Daniel Yallop
2.	Labelling and standards for compostable plastics	<b>Feedback needed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Packaging Forum is leading a working group looking at the labelling and certification of compostable products. The Organics Materials Steering Committee were asked for feedback on the scope of this working group.</li><li>• It was agreed that only items which contain food e.g. compostable packaging or items which serve food e.g. compostable plates cups etc should be included in the scope of the working group.</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Should other items which don't contain food be made out of compostable material in the first place? Overseas postal mailers and even shampoo bottles are being produced from compostable materials. The danger with these types of products is that if not rinsed completely clean they may contain substances which could affect the quality of the compost or they may use inks dyes and labelling which haven't been certified as suitable for composting. It is worth noting that some composting facilities have specified on their resource consents what materials they can and can't accept. In order to accept food and compostable packaging as an input, facilities may need to apply for a change in consent conditions. A notified consent can cost up to \$500,000.</li><li>• It was agreed that a wider number of composters should be consulted as to their views on this topic. If there is widespread agreement that non-food compostable packaging wouldn't be acceptable as inputs for composting facilities this needs to be clearly communicated to the packaging industry and manufacturers.</li><li>• All agreed that unless the coffee cup group comes up with a more robust standard than the AS4736-2006 the standard for plastic bags should remain as AS4736-2006.</li></ul> <p><b>What's happening overseas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Daniel O'Carroll and Mike Lord have been overseas looking at composting infrastructure and compostable packaging. Daniel visited four different compost facilities in Europe including wet and dry anaerobic digestion. In all four facilities compostable packaging and bags were screened out and sent for incineration. There is a growing trend of moving to fermentation before composting and the fermentation process doesn't lend itself to dealing with packaging.</li><li>• In Italy all food waste and compostable packaging is burned for energy as they have a shortage of electricity.</li></ul>
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		<p>compostable packaging or to establish new composting facilities for compostable packaging is significant and is not economically viable for most composters at the moment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compostable products add only limited (if any value) to both composting facilities or landfill and may in fact have adverse effects. Compostable materials do not compost in landfills. Compostable packaging will either degrade releasing methane or remain inert. Depending on landfill design international research suggests only that 70-90% of methane is captured from a landfill. Whilst there are some modern landfills that capture methane and convert it to power, at many sites the gas is just flared.</li> <li>• Messaging on the topic in the media is very simplistic at the moment, but the subject is very complex and there are no easy solutions</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> it was agreed that the committee would write up a discussion paper outlining the key issues. This would then form a basis for further industry discussions. All committee members to send through their key points of view. Jenny and Chris Purchas would then work on writing up a discussion paper.</p>
3.	Terminology to describe compostable products	<p>A working group is being set up to make it easier for the public and manufacturers to understand what products are legitimately compostable. What should the scope of the working group include? Suggestions include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing guidelines and a code of practise for advertising</li> <li>• Identifying which if any existing products are making misleading claims around their packaging and reporting them to the Commerce Commission</li> </ul> <p>The New Zealand Commerce Commission issued some guidance around recycling claims back in 2008 which states</p> <p><i>“These claims can be potentially dangerous if the product is not recyclable or if the facilities to recycle it are not readily available in New Zealand. Manufacturers and retailers should verify that their product can actually be collected and recycled across most of New Zealand before using such claims. Consumers are likely to understand</i></p>

		<p><i>the term ‘recyclable’ or recycling symbols on products to mean that the product is likely to end up in a recycle facility. The use of the term or symbols may be misleading if there are very few or no facilities, facilities are not available to the public or they exist only as pilot plants.”</i></p> <p>The same could be applied to the term compostable.</p> <p>Therefore, if NZ composting facilities do not accept compostable packaging then products labelled “commercially compostable” could fall foul of these guidelines.</p>
4.	Guidelines for beneficially reusing organic materials on productive land	<p>Composters have been contacted and asked to send through test results if their limits for zinc can exceed 180 ppm. Jenny has sent a letter out to composters regarding their tests results and preference and has heard back from two so far, who both require a limit of 300ppm.</p> <p>Jenny will go back to composters across the country and check in with them as we need to make sure that any new limits are acceptable for the majority.</p>
5.	Clopyralid	<p>Jenny contacted Agria Pro regarding updating their material datasheets. They replied promptly and have said it will be fixed by 5<sup>th</sup> June (Jenny will check on this date).</p> <p>AgCarm is interested in ensuring suppliers of products containing clopyralid are meeting EPA guidelines and will follow up with.</p>
6.	General Business	<p>Recyclable Coffee Cups</p> <p>In Munich half the cafes use reusable, recyclable coffee cups: <a href="#">Recup</a> when purchasing a cup of takeaway coffee customers are charged an extra dollar. If they return the cup they get their money back. If they forget to return it, the cup can be placed in a recycling bin. Their service is not financed by the sale of the cups, but a daily fee of € 1 per site (plus VAT). Each of their partners contributes to sustainably maintaining the deposit system. If the customer brings it back elsewhere, the RECUP has cost you nothing and you have saved the costs of a disposable cup! If the mug comes back to you, you can just rinse it and spend it again.</p>

		<p>The more RECUPs you use, the lower your spending on disposable cups</p> 
7.		Next meeting/teleconference