

Organic Materials Sector Group Minutes, Tuesday 9 March 2021

Location: teleconference

Present: Chris Purchas (Tonkin + Taylor); Daniel O’Carroll (Living Earth); Daniel Yallop (Envirowaste); Joe Buist (Revital Group); Lisa Hack (SLR Consulting Ltd); Richard Fine (Biopak), Paul McGuire (Envirofert Limited); Dawn Smith (Scion), Elena Izaguirre (Auckland Council),

In attendance: Sarah Pritchett (Facilitator) WasteMINZ

Apologies: Daniel O’Carroll, Alec McNeil, Wayne Plummer (WasteMINZ Board Chair), Liz Stanway (Xtreme Zero Waste);

1. Meeting open, apologies and agenda:

Daniel O’Carroll, Alec McNeil, Wayne Plummer

No response: Liz Stanway

2. Previous minutes of 20 November

Accepted/accepted with amendments

Change action 5 to “Investigate the costs and steps involved to sample compost that **includes** compostable packaging to determine what the levels of risk are for New Zealand producers of compost.

Uncompleted Actions from 20 November meeting

Date raised	Action Point	Deadline	Allocated to	Status
20/11/21	Conduct a literature review to understand the extent of the issue globally and in New Zealand	December	Kim Renshaw	In progress

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20/11/21	Investigate the costs and steps involved to sample compost made from compostable packaging to determine what the levels of risk are for New Zealand producers of compost.	December	Sarah	In progress
20/11/21	Examine proposed changes to New Zealand Standard for the Management of Agrichemicals to determine the impact on clopyralid containing products	December	Chris	In progress (Gayle Holmes from EPA is looking into it)
20/11/21	Create a check list for councils wanting to establish food waste collections and processing facilities – composter receive end of things	December	Liz and Daniel Yallop	In progress
20/11/21	Draw up a list of consultants who can provide assistance for councils wanting to investigate diversion of food waste from landfill	January	Sarah	In progress

3. Agenda items

Updates

- **PFAS in compostable packaging (Sarah)**

Kim Renshaw has subcontracted the literature review of this to another contractor and the work has not been completed yet.

Daniel O'Carroll emailed the following:

PFAS is a growing issue it seems and there are standards that exist for land application under organic standards. We have tested at LE CHC as potential for higher risk for food waste and non-plastic packaging (a USA study indicated this has higher risk than many other inputs), review pending with my tech team.

There is also a global PFAS in compost study that is underway (USA based) that I am trying to find the full details of and see if LE CHC can participate so we measure but also get access to data. We require compostable packaging to be plastic free, we are looking to see if there is readily available testing so we can potentially require packaging suppliers to prove PFAS free materials. Something for those involved in compostable packaging to consider.

Richard: There is also an Australian study which is testing compostable packaging to investigate PFAS. Richard will share the study with the committee.

Decision: The committee will produce a paragraph about the issue to be put on the WasteMINZ Organic Materials webpage so that it is obvious work is being done to investigate the issue.

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Post meeting update

Assure quality in Wellington (WellingtonReporting@asurequality.com) will test a minimum of 250g compost for PFAS for \$230.00. Sarah to check if there is some budget that could be used to do some testing from different facilities.

- **Food Waste Summit focus (Sarah)**

Te Hui Taumata Moumou Kai o Aotearoa – NZ Food Waste Summit is on 22nd March and is focusing on the reduction of food waste created at all aspects of the food chain. What to do with food waste leftover at the end is not being covered but will be at the WasteMINZ conference.

- **Home composting project – Scion, MPA and Packaging Forum**

The Scion home composting and industrial composting trial is going on at the same time. Scion is doing the home disintegration one and the industrial one is being held through Xtreme Zero waste, Revital Mt Maunganui, Southern Landfill in Wellington. Paul updated the group that the planned one at Envirofert will not be able to begin until mid to late June at the earliest due to major reconstruction activity. There has been no confirmation from Living Earth, Christchurch yet.

Three home composting trials had been proposed separately - one was the one Jenny had planned and which Kim Renshaw has taken on, one was through the Magazine Publishers Association and one was Scion's. Sarah introduced them all to each other so they can collaborate and use the same methodology, and Kim will support MPA's rather than do her own. MPA are doing a trial because their members favoured home compostable wrap in a survey last year. The MPA want to take their readers on a journey that will educate them on the realities of using a home compostable magazine wrap.

- **Clopyralid (Sarah/Chris)**

Consumer NZ is doing work on this and some of the compost they tested is positive for clopyralid so this was the impetus for the press release from the Organic Material Sector group last week. Further to this, Chris met up with EPA who are setting up a new compliance department and reminded them of their reluctance to do anything about clopyralid in the past. EPA are aware of the press release and are open to talking further. Clopyralid is a useful product which breaks down well where it has been applied but increases in concentration through composting process and then kills tomato plants when they are planted in that compost. This is really an issue for EPA to address.

Post meeting update

Chris met with EPA on Monday 15 March.

- EPA clarified that Worksafe are regulators of Certified Handlers and EPA will try to bring them into the discussion
- Asked WasteMINZ to complete work on mapping how Clopyralid may get into compost.

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- **New Zealand Standard for the Management of Agrichemicals (Chris)**

In progress, no further update.

- **Assistance for councils looking into organic collections and processing (Sarah)**

In progress: Sarah wrote an article in the latest revolve which was written from the perspective of 3 councils who have recently set up food waste only collections. An item will go in e-news asking member consultants to email Sarah if they want to be on a list to be shared with TAs when they are investigating organic collections.

Daniel Yallop has drafted the checklist and sent it to Liz, will send to the whole committee so composters can provide feedback.

Submissions

- Climate Change Commission submission 28 March (click [here](#) to read).

Sarah, Chris and Lisa will draft it for circulation.

Regarding landfill ban of organic waste it may not be helpful for the composting industry because it is difficult getting resource consent for composting food scraps and a massive capital investment is required to compost food scraps. Composters want to do their bit to reduce emission but need to be part of the circular solution, not *the* solution. More investment is needed in infrastructure and investment in reducing food waste across the food chain so that an increased diversion in food scraps does not overwhelm the sector. The focus needs to be on the sector as a manufacturer of a valuable product not a waste treatment sector.

In Australia a study has been done of the capacity of the industry to meet the requirements of the carbon reduction targets and it was surprisingly positive.

- Infrastructure commission's report (click [here](#) to read)

Focused on waste and what do we do with it whereas it should be about inputs and creating value, returning to a Circular Economy.

Work Plan for 2021

- Clopyralid
- Emerging contaminants
- Compostable packaging
- Role of soil conditioning and soil sequestration in decarbonizing the economy (research proposal)
- Submissions on MfE and other government consultations

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- Sustainable end markets as diverting from landfill leads to increased organic material products – infrastructure that is needed and relationship to climate change commission act?

Existing and planned activities will be added to the work plan.

Other

Jenny Marshall joined and provided an MfE update:

The government’s emissions reduction plan will follow on from the CCC’s recommendations.

Jenny asked if the sector has a plan to grow markets because estimates of food scraps that could be diverted range from 140,000 tonnes - 272,000 tonnes and 8-10 times that amount would be needed in greenwaste for it to be able to be processed via composting. AD is another option but it is still a new technology for New Zealand. There will be an increased focus on diverting household food waste via TAs and momentum around AD to replace artificial fertilizer or as a soil conditioner. There could be opportunities for compost and soil sequestration.

The committee noted that there has been some success in Sydney with an AD Site which is primarily W2E with a biochar end product. In New Zealand Auckland Council is using the Reparoa AD facility (EcoStock/Turners & Growers) and there may be some complications around the viability and applicability of the end product. The main issues are that there needs to be change in perception from the composting sector being the receiver of a “waste product” to one that captures a quality material that can have value added to it and become a valuable input into soil for horticulture and farming. There also needs to be work done to work out what to do with more organic waste diverted from landfill then can currently be processed.

AOB

- Revolve article: Lisa Hack will help Sarah write an article on climate change for the 9 April deadline
- Identify opportunities to get articles in other more end market (compost or digestate users) facing magazines.

Action items from this meeting:

Date raised	Action Point	Deadline	Allocated to	Status
9/3/21	Richard to send Australian study on PFAS to group	15 March	Richard	
9/3/21	Richard to send Australian study on capacity of sector to meet carbon emission reduction targets	15 March	Richard	

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Date raised	Action Point	Deadline	Allocated to	Status
9/3/21	Sarah, Chris and Lisa to draft submissions on CCC and Investment Plan	19 March for review by committee	Sarah/Lisa/Chris	CCC drafted
9/3/21	Sarah and Lisa to draft revolve article/s on organics sector and climate change	1 April for review by committee	Sarah/Lisa	
9/3/21	Identify to get articles out further	ongoing	All	Ongoing
9/3/21	Send other ideas for revolve articles to Sarah	ongoing	All	Ongoing
9/3/21	Sarah, Chris to draft item on PFAS for Organic Materials Sector Group	24 March	Sarah/Chris	
9/3/21	Daniel to update group on the review of PFAS study from technical group	22 March	Daniel	
9/3/21	A copy of the CCC submission to also be sent to MfE so issues the sector phases can be raised	28 March	Sarah	

DRAFT