

Composting



Composting History

History of Dartmouth Composting

Since the spring term 1988 Environmental Studies 50 class addressed solid waste generation and management at Dartmouth, the College has made significant efforts at waste reduction, product reuse, and recycling. Part of these efforts toward a more sustainable future have included actively researching and increasing the composting component of all solid waste generated on campus. There have also been further studies of composting opportunities by subsequent Environmental Studies classes and Tuck Managerial Economics classes. These studies indicate the need to expand the type and amount of feed stocks and to establish a year round program.

In April of 1992, the Facilities Operations and Management (FO&M) Department secured a "Certificate for Reuse" from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. Each year since 1992, from April through November, FO&M composted selected feed stocks using this permit. All of the compost produced was tested and then used on the Dartmouth Organic Garden or on the Dartmouth athletic fields.

The scope of the College compost program was restricted since the permit is site specific to a 100' X 100' plot at the Fullington Farm .

Recognizing these seasonal and outdoor process limitations, early in 1994, FO&M proposed a comprehensive College compost program to be built at the Fullington site. The Hanover Selectboard, Planning Commission, and Conservation Commission were informed of this proposal which included a single bay Resource Optimization Technologies (ROT) box built into a 24' X 50' pole barn building with concrete floor and knee walls. This proposal received widespread support but the site had previous easements which precluded building any structures. After the College dropped the Fullington proposal in November 1994, Hanover Town Manager Cliff Vermilya suggested that perhaps a community compost program could be established with a reexamination of potential feed stocks and site locations, while using the same process. Early in 1995, after further experimentation and investigation by the College, a proposal supported by the College was floated by Resource Optimization Technologies of Cornish, whereby ROT would provide the building, equipment, and management of a compost facility to handle College feed stock in one row and Town feed stock in another row in an enclosed facility located adjacent to the old Hanover landfill site.

The facility was designed for an annual throughput of 16,000 cubic yards including: sludge (2,400 cubic yards approximately), food wastes (4,000 cubic yards), and amendments such as paper wastes, yard wastes, and saw dust (9,600 cubic yards).

Committed to achieving a more sustainable solid waste program, which includes a compost program, the College and the Town partnered with Casella Waste Management to finance, build and manage the new compost facility. Dartmouth College and Casella Waste Management, Inc provided the capital necessary to build and bring the facility on-line. DSM Environmental ran the facility (then called ROT) for two years. New England Organics a division of Casella Waste Management took over operation of the facility in the early summer of 2000. The facility, now known as the Hanover-Dartmouth Compost Facility, produced a high quality compost that was mostly used on construction projects on the Dartmouth College campus and sold to local landscapers.

In April of 2004 the partners agreed to dissolve the partnership. Dartmouth College made the decision to take over management of the facility. On 1 December 2004 the College re-opened the facility to receive food waste and yard waste from college sources and from Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center.