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Container Recycling Case Study

Davis Farmland, Sterling, MA

Summary: "Preserving for a Brighter Future" is the Davis' philosophy for Davis Family Farm Adventures, and recycling fits right into that vision. The Davis family responded to customer requests and initiated a bottle recycling program and used RecyclingWorks assistance to help them implement the program.

Business Profile: In 1996, after seven generations running a working dairy farm, the Davis' opened Children's Discovery Farm. This was later expanded to include a water park, hayride, apple picking and Imagine-Acres. Across the street, the annually changing cornfield maze, Davis Mega Maze, opened in 1998, drawing visitors from all over New England.

Baseline Assessment: Davis Farmland and Mega Maze adventure parks are open to visitors and school groups from April through November. Patrons may bring picnic food and drinks or purchase from one of three snack bars. Even though there are water stations for refilling reusable containers, hundreds of beverage containers are discarded each day.

Plan Improvements: In response to customer inquiries the parks purchased a dozen 5-foot tall, bottle shaped recycling bins from their water distributor and located them in high-traffic areas. The original plan was to return the empty bottles back to the distributor. Because the majority of the bottles were non-deposit, the take back program was cancelled and bags of bottles started to pile up. Scott Tefft, the food and beverage manager, called RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts to inquire about recycling services for bottles and cans. After a brief conversation with a RecyclingWorks specialist, and review of the new RecyclingWorks webpage on "How to start a recycling program", Tefft called his hauler to inquire about additional services. Their hauler, Sons of Kristoff, delivered a 10 yard container dedicated to recycling bottles.

Implementation: Signage, training and communication were the key to a successful recycling program for Davis Farm.

Signage: The fun shape of the recycling containers encourages participation from the park visitors and acts as a sign in itself. There are not enough to pair up with every trash can, so other recycling receptacles are used. Barrels with holes cut in the lids and laundry baskets



High-Visibility Container Recycling

At a Glance:

- *Business: Davis Farmland Children's Discovery Farm & Davis Mega Maze*

- *Installed 5 large, highly visible bottle and can recycling containers*

- *Saves an estimated \$660 annually in waste disposal costs*

RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts is funded by MassDEP and delivered under contract by the Center for EcoTechnology



Branded Bottle Recycling Station

act as inexpensive alternatives. An easy to read sign on the dumpster clearly designates it from the cardboard recycling or trash dumpsters.

Employee Training: Employees were briefed on the new recycling programs. Trash and recycling is collected daily and delivered to the designated dumpsters.

Communication: In the busy season the hauler adjusted his pick ups to be responsive to the needs of Davis Farms, emptying each dumpster as needed and billing accordingly. The good relationship between Davis Family Farm and their hauler, Sons of Kristoff, allowed them to decrease the frequency of waste hauls and increase diversion of recyclables.

Evaluation: The trash dumpsters were emptied half as often saving an estimated \$660 dollars in disposal costs.

Approximately 100 yards of bottles and cans were diverted from the waste stream in just the first season.

Next Steps: Davis Family Farm Adventures is looking into using clear plastic bags to better distinguish the recyclables. They also plan to order more giant water bottle recycling stations for next season.

Tips for Replication:

- Place recycling bins near every trash can.
- Be creative and have fun with your program.
- Check www.RecyclingWorksMA.com for frequently asked questions.