



Agricultural Composting

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

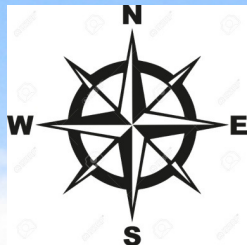
Sean Bowen, Agricultural Composting Coordinator

MDAR Encourages Farms to Compost!

Two Main Categories of Ag- Composters:

- **Crop Farms**

- Soil tilth
- Water holding capacity,
- Adds nutrients/micronutrients



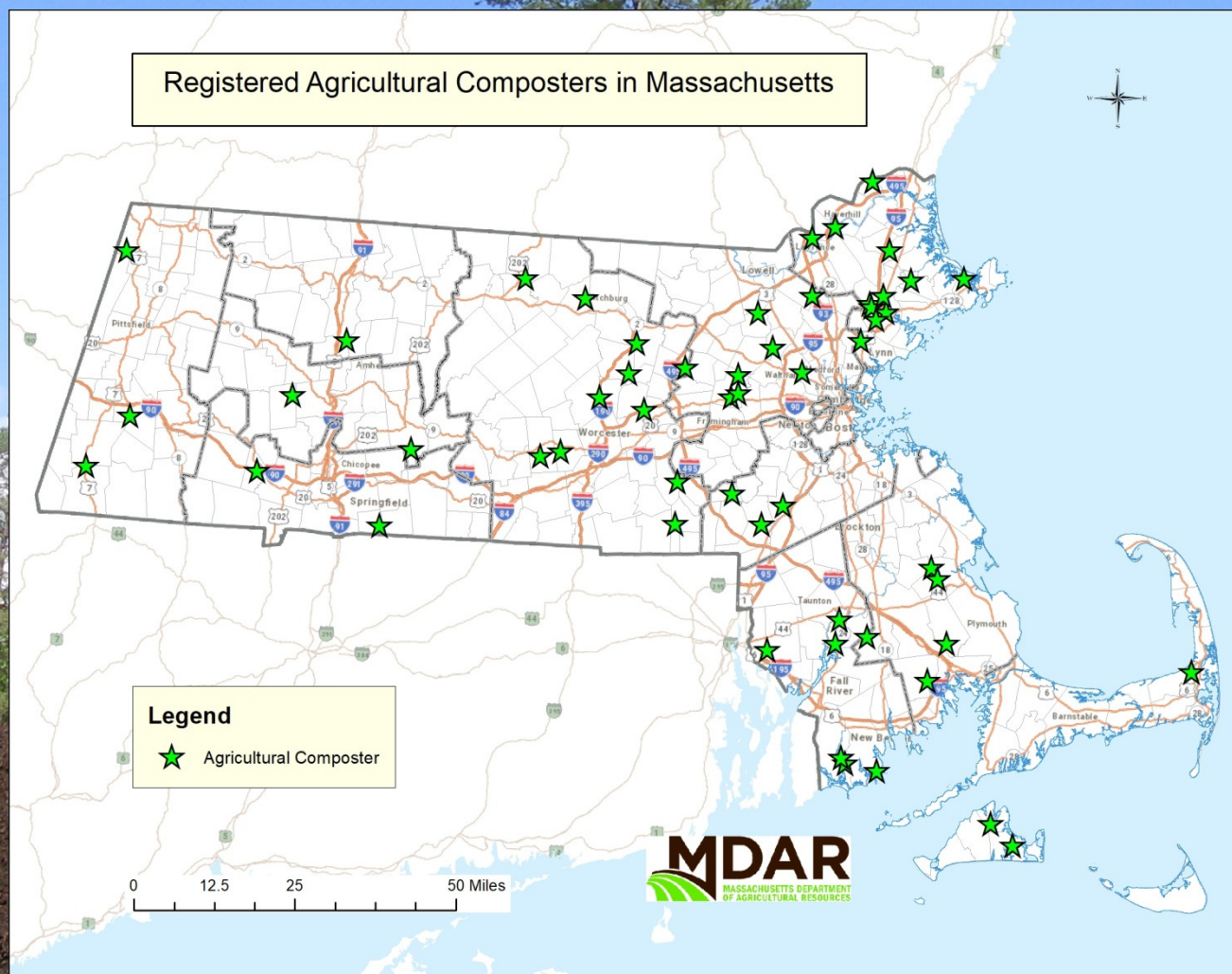
- **Animal Farms - Nutrient management**

- More stable than manure
- No odors
- Less leaching
- Lighter – easier to handle and spread

MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

- MDAR Agricultural Program operates under an *exemption* in MassDEP Solid Waste regulation
- MDAR (or MassDEP) registration allows farms to accept organic material from offsite *for purpose of composting*.
- Registration (with MDAR or MassDEP) only necessary if bringing material from off-site

MDAR Registered Composters





MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

- Can often register with *EITHER* MDAR or MassDEP
- Default is MassDEP, even if a Farm
- MassDEP General Permit Registration is no cost
- MDAR Costs \$250 initial, \$200 annual



Agricultural Composting or Solid Waste Management???



MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

Farm First

- Located on an Agricultural Unit (MGL Ch 128 § 1A)
- Must not **prevent** the ability to maintain as an agricultural unit



MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

VOLUNTARY Program!

- ***Conditional Exemption*** from MassDEP regulation
- MDAR Registration is NOT a license to pollute!!
- MDAR Registered Composters must:
 - Incorporate Best Management Practices
 - Prevent unpermitted discharge of pollutants to water, air
 - Not create a public nuisance
- Comply with MDAR Regulation and Guidelines.

MassDEP Exemption

If **MDAR** determines that the Composting Operation is no longer regulated by MDAR, then the owner and operator **shall be subject to 310 CMR 16.00.**



MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

MDAR conducts Technical Assistance site visits:

- Random
- By request of farm
- **COMPLAINTS**
- Site selection, layout, and methods
- Recipe Development
- **Troubleshooting**
- Guidance

MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

Agricultural Composting Improvement Program

- Goal to help agricultural composters improve the overall management of their agricultural composting operations and facilitate on-farm compost use.
 - Screeners
 - Spreaders
 - Turners
 - Mixers
 - Windrow Covers
 - Compost Pads
 - Improved Technology Systems



Agricultural Composting Improvement Program

- MDAR Registered Composters
- Exempt farms (no inputs from off-farm)
- **Not** open to operations with MassDEP registration
- Up to \$75,000 with 25% match
- FY 2019: \$140,000 Awarded to 5 farms
- FY 2020, \$240,000 Awarded to 10 Farms
- FY 2021 \$185,000 Awarded to 6 Farms
- FY 2022 Aiming for spring RFP

New MDAR Regulations

330 CMR 25.00: Agricultural Composting Program Certain Restrictions and Operational Changes

In effect as of February 21, 2020...



Primary Changes to Regulation

Restrictions

Volume Restriction:

- 5,000 cubic yards per acre of compost site
- 15,000 cubic yards
- Max 75 Tons per week of Group 2 Material (high nitrogen)

Primary Changes to Regulation

Restrictions

Size Restriction:

- Composting operation located on area no more than 10% of Commercial Production Area
- Less Than 10 Acres

Setback Restriction:

- 250 feet from well
- 100 feet from property line

Primary Changes to Regulation

Operational Changes

- 25% Rule: 25% from or 25% applied to farm
- Mandatory Training – on hold for now...
- Odor Management Plan
- Operational Changes: LBOH Notification



MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

Information Application Guide to Agricultural Composting

Found online at:

www.mass.gov/agricultural-composting-program



Agricultural Composting Program
Division of Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Sean.Bowen@mass.gov
617-626-1724