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MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

...first a bit about the MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

- MDAR encourages farms to compost!
 - Crop farms - improve soil
 - Animal farms – as part of nutrient management

MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

- 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 – otherwise not required.
- If bringing material from off-site and not registered with MDAR, default regulatory authority is with MassDEP

MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

- Located on an Agricultural Unit
- Submitted a completed application
- Must not **prevent** the ability to maintain as an agricultural unit
- Application includes practices to ensure it does not result in an unpermitted discharge to air, water, or natural resources.
- Site must be capable of handling the operation – size and volume.
- Surface (pad) must be appropriate for operation size and nature.

MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

- VOLUNTARY Program!
- Operates under an exemption in 310 CMR 16.00 (Mass DEP Site Assignment Regulations for Solid Waste Facilities)
- Offers a ***conditional*** exemption from MassDEP

From 310 CMR 16.03:

...provided that the owner...incorporates best management practices in a manner that prevents an unpermitted discharge of pollutants to air, water or other natural resources of the Commonwealth, does not create a public nuisance, and does not present a significant threat to public health, safety or the environment

MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

- MDAR Agricultural Composting Coordinator position – located within the Division of Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance (DACTA)
- Regulation through technical assistance, until...

Activities Located at an Agricultural Unit ...provided that the owner...comply with the regulations and guidelines of the Department of Agricultural Resources.

If **MDAR** determines that the activity at a specific agricultural unit is no longer regulated by the MDAR, then the owner and operator **shall be subject to 310 CMR 16.00.**

MDAR Agricultural Composting Program

- MDAR conducts site visits:
 - Random
 - by request of farm
 - complaints

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

330 CMR 25.00: Agricultural Composting Program

In effect as of February 21, 2020

Primary Changes to Regulation

- Volume restriction: 15,000 cubic yards
 - Includes finished compost
 - Can be increased if farm has need for more

Represents approximately 75 windrows of 6' x 12' x 100'



Primary Changes to Regulation

- Volume Restriction – 5,000 cubic yards per acre of compost site



Primary Changes to Regulation

- Volume Restriction:
 - Less than 75 Tons per week of Group 2 Material (high nitrogen) for composting
 - Previous was 15 Tons per day (105/week)



Primary Changes to Regulation

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



Primary Changes to Regulation

- Setbacks:
 - 300 feet from residence (previous was 250 feet)
 - 250 feet from well (same)
 - 100 feet from property line (previous was 50 feet)



Primary Changes to Regulation

- Operational Changes:
 - Mandatory training –
Pittsfield, North Grafton, Beverly, Wareham
 - Odor Management Plan
 - 25% Rule
 - 25% Inputs **from** farm OR 25% **used** on farm



Primary Changes to Regulation

- Operational Change:
 - Odor Management Plan: A plan that is appropriate for the size and type of the operation that will minimize the production and migration of odorous compounds...

More detail to follow...

Primary Changes to Regulation

- Operational Changes:
 - New operations must submit a copy of their registration to the local Board of Health at least 30 days prior to commencement of operations.

Information Application Guide to Agricultural Composting

Found online at:

www.mass.gov/agricultural-composting-program