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 Composting 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????
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.
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
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
• Spreader
• 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 $185,000 Awarded to 7 Farms
- FY 2023... Hoping for late spring
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
Information
Application
Guide to Agricultural Composting

Found online at:

www.mass.gov/agricultural-composting-program
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