



# Agricultural Composting

*Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources*

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# MDAR Encourages Farms to Compost!

Two Main Categories of Ag- Composters:

- **Crop Farms**

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



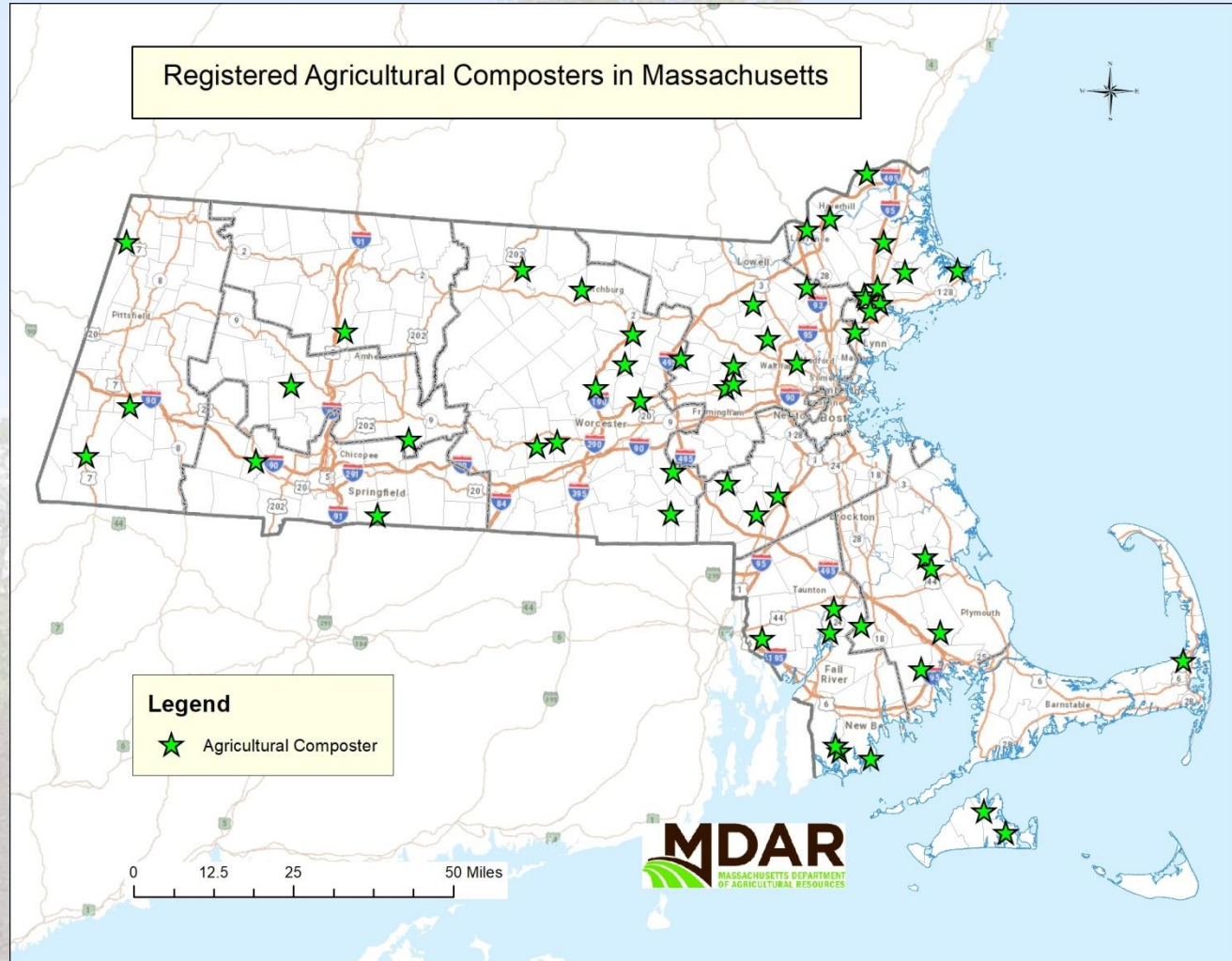
- **Animal Farms - Nutrient management**

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

- MDAR Agricultural Composting Program 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

### **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 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
  - Spreaders
  - Turners
  - Mixers
  - Windrow Covers
  - Compost Pads
  - Improved Technology Systems



### Agricultural Composting Improvement Program

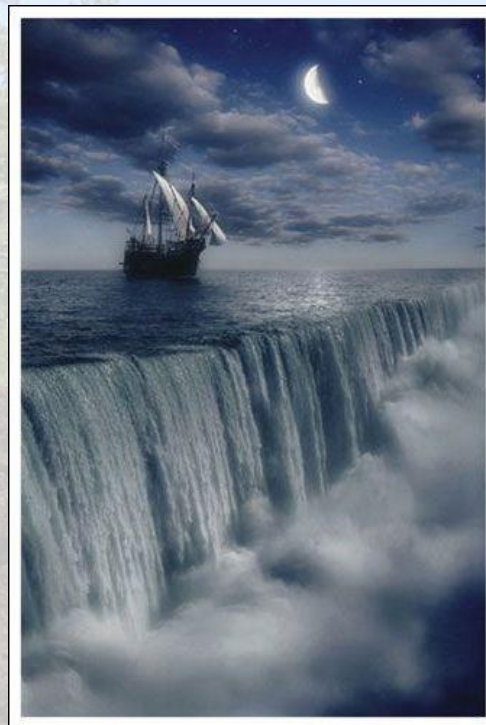
- MDAR Registered Composters
- Exempt farms (no inputs from off-farm)
- **Not** open to operations with MassDEP registration
- Up to \$75,000 with 25% match
- FY 2019: \$140,000 Awarded to 5 farms
- FY 2020, \$240,000 Awarded to 10 Farms
- FY 2021 \$185,000 Awarded to 6 Farms
- FY 2022 \$185,000 Awarded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



## 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)



## 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](http://www.mass.gov/agricultural-composting-program)





## **Agricultural Composting Program**

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