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ProjectHighlight:

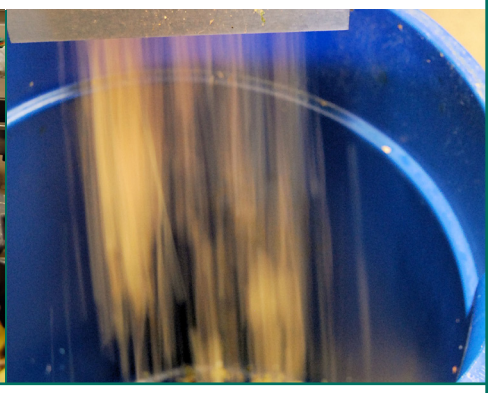
Elizabethtown College is a small liberal arts college situated in the heart of South Central Pennsylvania. The College's 1,600 full-time students eat approximately 2,300 meals per day – that's a lot of food and consequently, a lot of food waste. In 2009, the College realized it needed a way to cut food operation costs and find a more efficient way to dispose food waste. Around the same time, Somat Company was looking for a place to test a new pulping system. Thus, a partnership was born.

The pulping system at Etown works as follows: organic food waste is ground in the kitchen and then travels though copper piping into a pulping system where the food waste and water are separated. The unique aspect at Etown is that its system recycles the wastewater– 4,400 gallons per week. This reduces the need for fresh water. Next, any excess water is pumped into a truck along with 1,200 pounds of pulped organic waste. Twice a week, the waste is transported to Brubaker Farms in Mount Joy, Pennsylvania.

Once at Brubaker Farms, the liquid and solid food waste is added to a cow manure digester where the waste and manure are mixed together. This mixture produces methane gas, which provides electricity for the farm. The excess electricity is sold back to Pennsylvania Power and Light Company. Currently, Brubaker Farms produces enough electricity to power 200 homes.

Since the pulping system has been installed, Elizabethtown has cut the dining facilities water consumption by 80 percent and annual waste hauling charges in half to $15,000.

"We wanted to use Elizabethtown College as an example of best managing practices for food waste, " said Somat General Manager Lin Sensenig. "I believe co-digestion is the future, and Elizabethtown is a great case to illustrate that for other clients."



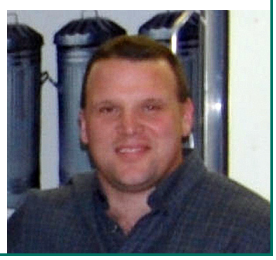
ANoteFromLin:

Hello Everyone, There are a lot of noteworthy and interesting projects happening at Somat right now, and I'd like to share a few of them with you.

I just returned from the US Composting Council Conference and Trade Show in Santa Clara, California. I attended a few breakout sessions on compostable disposable products, and it appears that a big concern among composters is the reliability of composting claims by some manufacturers. The Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) and compliance with ASTM spec 6400 are deemed prerequisites by any composter. In fact, I met with composters who told me that they do not allow any disposable products in their operations because of misinformation and false claims by some companies.

BPI determines if products and materials are completely compostable. Additionally, the ASTM spec 6400 is a set of criteria that determines whether or not a certain material is compostable. However, it seems like many big name disposable cutlery products are not compliant to ASTM 6400 or BPI. Therefore, make sure that when you call on a Food Service Director that you ask if all products meet compostibility standards.
Also, I am very excited about the press we have gotten regarding our R&D project at Elizabethtown College. It all started with a TV segment on WGAL – a local television station in the Lancaster area. From there, things seemed to skyrocket, and a front page story in the *Lancaster New Era/Intelligencer Journal*, an article in *Keystone Edge* (an online publication targeted across Pennsylvania), and an additional story on FOX 43 in York followed.

Lin Sensenig
General Manager



MythsAboutHomeComposting:

- **I can't compost because I need a certain type of expensive bin:** There are many different types of bins on the market, however, a pile or heap works fine. If you'd like to keep your compost pile neat and tidy, consider using wire mesh, lumber, or cinder blocks to keep everything contained in one area.
- **I can't compost because my compost pile is going to smell:** Correctly building and maintaining a compost pile will yield a humus-rich forest floor like odor. Unpleasant odors come from com posting mistakes. For example, attempting to compost only grass clippings, adding protein rich food scraps, or allowing too much water or too little air to penetrate the pile.
- **I can't compost because it will attract rodents:** Compost piles that contain only garden waste rarely attract pests. However, in urban areas where rodents are prevalent, avoid adding food scraps and turn your pile on a monthly basis. Also, covering food scraps with a scoop of garden soil may reduce the pest problem.

If backyard composting isn't your style, visit www.findacomposter.com

Employeespotlight:

This month's employee spotlight features Service Manager Tom Dalkiewicz. Dalkiewicz has worked at Somat for 16 years, and was an integral part of the Elizabethtown College project.

"The experience with Elizabethtown has been great," Dalkiewicz said. Dalkiewicz worked directly with Eric Turzai (Etown's Head of Dining Services) and Joe Metro (Etown's Director of Facilities) in order to provide Etown with a custom solution to their food waste dilemma. Dalkiewicz collaborated with the men regarding issues with the local waste water treatment plant, so they could make their desire to work with Brubaker Farms a reality.

"The Etown project was one I was told I could run with if I thought I could get it to work, and it paid off," he said. "I would like to get more involved with other R&D projects in the future."

Outside of the office, Dalkiewicz enjoys snow-boarding, skiing, woodworking, gardening, and home wine making. Currently, he is working towards getting his Master Dive Certificate to scuba dive.

SanFranciscoLegislation:

In 2009, San Francisco became the first city in the United States to require mandatory composting for all residents and businesses. The city requires three separate bins for waste: blue for recycling, green for compost, and black for trash.

The city cited that 36 percent of what residents send to landfills is com-postable (food scraps) and 31 percent is recyclable (mostly paper). The city's goal is to not send any waste to landfills or incinerators by 2020. If the city collected everything that could be composted or recycled, 90 percent of the waste stream would be diverted.

Failing to properly dispose of waste could result in fines ranging from $100 to $1,000. Appropriate composting materials include items like grains, coffee grounds, pizza boxes, and lawn clippings – to name a few. However, it is the city's stance on bodily fluids that have raised eyebrows in the Bay Area.

For example, city environmental officials have outlawed blood and semen from the compost bin. But feel free to throw in a snotty tissue because snot is the only bodily fluid that San Francisco has deemed compostable. For more information, visit www.sfenvironment.org .