

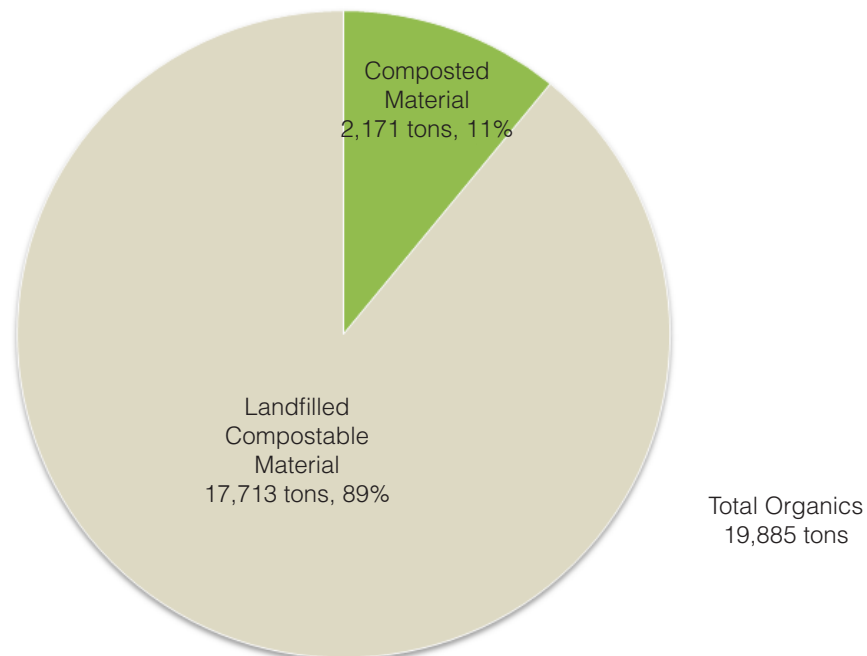
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## ORGANICS

The organic waste stream includes items that biodegrade quickly enough to be composted. Yard waste, animal waste, food waste, and certified compostable service ware are included in this category. In the state of Ohio, landfills cannot accept source separated yard waste unless it has been rejected by a composting facility<sup>1</sup>. Yard waste is not banned from the landfill, but yard waste diversion programs must be offered locally and at the landfill to conserve landfill space<sup>2</sup>. According to the US EPA, 27.5% of the waste stream in the United States is organics. This estimate is very similar to the ODNR study conducted in 2004 that showed 28% of landfill waste in the Athens Hocking Solid Waste District is food or yard waste. To stay consistent with other categories in this document, the US EPA estimate is applied to AHSWD's organics recycling numbers<sup>3</sup> reported in the 2012 ADR. The District is only capturing 11% of the organic waste stream available leaving over 17,000 tons available for capture.

The anaerobic break-down of food waste and other organic material releases methane, a greenhouse gas that according to the US EPA, has a global warming potential 21 times higher than carbon dioxide.<sup>4</sup> Putting organic material in a landfill restricts air flow and results in high methane emissions. Conversely, composting these organic materials at facilities or in backyards creates nutrient rich soil that enhances gardens for growing food or planting herbaceous species. When rotated regularly and aerated appropriately, composting organic material in backyard piles, windrows, and in-vessel systems eliminates or greatly reduces methane emissions. Furthermore, if biodigestion is how the material is being composted, technology is available to capture the released methane and use it as a local energy and fuel source.

### 2012 ORGANIC MATERIAL COMPOSTING RATE IN AHSWD



1 Ohio Admin Code: 3745-27-19 Paragraph O – Yard Waste Management

2 Phone conversation with Barry Chapman, OEPA, on July 22, 2013.

3 Yard waste and food waste from the 2012 ADR were the categories that were included in this organics number.

4 <http://epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/gases/ch4.html>

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## Baseline for Organics

Athens and Hocking Counties have a number of class IV composting sites that accept yard waste including Ohio University, Latta Earth Works, and Horn Excavating. There are also two class II compost facilities in Athens and Hocking Counties that are able to accept food waste in addition to yard waste: Ohio University (accepts university material only) and The Compost Exchange (services residences and businesses in the Athens City area). In addition, many citizens compost in their own backyard. Community Foods Initiatives (CFI) hosts backyard composting workshops regularly for the community. In addition, AOZWI, and the AHSWD are available to support residents who would like to start composting by providing information, workshops, and advice.

### **ACTION STEPS FOR ORGANICS**

#### **1. PROMOTE EXISTING COMPOSTING RESOURCES THROUGHOUT ATHENS AND HOCKING COUNTIES**

- a. Maintain an up-to-date guide of services available.
- b. Expand backyard composting and vermicomposting education efforts with attention to pest control in tight quarters.

#### **2. IDENTIFY THE GAPS IN COMPOSTING SERVICES SUCH AS PROCESSING FACILITIES, MATERIALS ACCEPTED, COLLECTION, AND HAULING IN ATHENS AND HOCKING COUNTIES.**

- a. Support entrepreneurs to diversify existing composting services and offer locally-made supplies such as tumblers and multi-pallet systems.
- b. Explore a partnership between Ohio University and area residents and businesses to expand AHSWD's ability to capture organic material. Ensure impact to local businesses is taken into account.

#### **3. INCREASE COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL CURBSIDE SERVICES.**

- a. Survey residents and businesses to gauge interest in curbside composting service.
- b. Recruit and/or support an existing local compost hauling service to offer a collection program for residents and businesses in the District.
- c. Once proper infrastructure is in place, set goals to increase residential composting every year for the next 10 years.

#### **4. EXPLORE THE POTENTIAL FOR CAPTURING METHANE FROM ORGANIC MATERIAL THROUGH ANAEROBIC DIGESTION AND THE USE OF THE METHANE AS A FUEL SOURCE.**

#### **5. ASSUMING PROPER INFRASTRUCTURE IS IN PLACE, BUILD POLITICAL SUPPORT TO BAN ALL ORGANICS FROM THE LANDFILL AT THE STATE LEVEL.**