

Florida Organics Recycling Center for Excellence (FORCE) – SW204
YEAR 1 QUARTERLY REPORT
For the Period Ending *March 31, 2002*

1.0 Design:

1.1 Engineering, Planning, Construction, and Inspection:

FORCE staff monitored and coordinated the progress and completion of some of the digester components, including delivery of the motor, rotary coupling, coupling guards, depth gauge, and control panels.

1.2 Plan Certification and Permitting:

Activities performed in the first quarter of 2002 included preparing and submitting a Modification of Permit to DEP for construction of ancillary equipment to accommodate the material flow through the digester. Additionally, it is planned to extend the building over the existing discharge area to encompass the discharge area of the new digester. The modification was submitted and RAI comments were received. The County response to comments will be sent to DEP by mid-April.

2.0 Construction and Maintenance:

2.1 Office Space Trailer:

Donated laboratory cabinets and refrigerator were picked up from the donors, University of Florida (UF) Austin Cary Memorial Forest, and the residence of Dr. Wayne Smith, by a crew from Sumter County. The items were delivered to the office/laboratory and readied for installation.

2.2 Demonstration Farm Site Preparation and Maintenance

The area of the farm that will be the initial development site was identified. Signage is being developed that will be placed at the entrance to the Sumter County Solid Waste Facility, and at the FORCE building, to properly identify the FORCE site and provide directions to visitors.

2.3 Installation and Maintenance of Digester:

The electrical wiring for the digester motor was installed. The motor, the rotary coupling, coupling guards, and control panels were delivered and installed during this period. The depth gauge was delivered. The top layers of the pier caps were poured.

2.4 Laboratory:

The design and equipping of the laboratory and office furniture is complete. Final installation and securing office and laboratory supplies and equipment will occur in the next quarter.

2.5 Irrigation System and Maintenance

After reviewing the current system, it was determined that a 6-8 inch pipe at the demonstration farm site gate will adequately meet expected irrigation needs.

3.0 Operation

3.1 Process Technology Procurement and Testing:

The technology review process has been initiated. A comprehensive list of information is being preliminarily reviewed. Identified vendors, who can provide innovative technologies or processes under the preliminary checklist of parameters, will be contacted in order to obtain further details about their products and determine their interest in becoming involved with the FORCE project. A database will house the information gathered.

3.2 Feedstock Procurement/Processing:

Ongoing planning and program development is underway for the initial compost feedstock procurement and processing.

3.3 Administrative Costs – Supplies and Travel:

No activity to report for the period.

4.0 Market Development, Education, and Training

4.1 Educational Analysis and Outreach, Website

To aid in identifying composting education sources and outlets in the state, Drs. Emino and Zinati, with the cooperation of Ms. Liz Felter, Apopka/Orange County Faculty, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, visited three major ornamental and foliage production facilities to learn about the production process and the possibilities of using compost in the production process.

A KCI representative and a TAG member attended the lecture portion of the workshop, Training in the Production and Utilization of Compost for Horticultural Cropping Systems, conducted by Dr. Monica Ozores-Hampton at the UF/IFAS Southwest Florida Research and Education Center in Immokalee. TAG member Chris Snow spoke to the approximately 125 attendees about the FORCE project.

Dr. Zinati continues to compile a bibliography of major publications on compost in Florida, the

purpose of which is to: 1) provide compost producers and end-users with a comprehensive guide to published compost information, and 2) to identify gaps in the research literature, in order to allow the FORCE project an opportunity to make innovative contributions.

The FORCE website URL is www.floridaforce.org. Minor enhancements were made to the website. A “Conferences” sub-page was added to the Activities page. This sub-page lists industry conferences for the coming year along with a link to the conference website or its sponsoring organization. An icon was added to the home page to make the e-mail link more visible. A “hit counter” was added to allow FORCE staff to track the interest in the site. As of March 31, 2002, more than 13,200 visits had been recorded (since the website’s inception in September 2001). During this quarter, drafting of text was begun for the Activities pages, which will be significantly enhanced in the months to come.

Kessler Consulting, Inc. submitted a short article to RecycleFlorida Today, Inc. for inclusion in their newsletter, Renewable News. The article appeared in the January 2002 issue.

The FORCE project was highlighted in an episode of the Florida Crossroads program entitled “Talking Trash”. The episode examined the various ways Florida deals with its waste. The FORCE project was mentioned during the portion of the program discussing composting and other recycling options. Florida Crossroads is a production of The Florida Channel, a service of WFSU in Tallahassee. The Florida Crossroads series is broadcast weekly on PBS television stations throughout the state. The “Talking Trash” segment was broadcast during the week of February 11-17, 2002. The TAG and other interested parties were notified, in early February, of the upcoming broadcast.

The final design of the FORCE letterhead was reviewed and approved. The letterhead has been provided, in electronic format, to the project partners. The letterhead is one means of reinforcing, to the public and the composting industry, the identity of the project.

The toll-free telephone number established for the project, 800-566-4413, is receiving calls from interested vendors, remote project associates wishing to reach other project associates, and members of the public. Messages are taken and routed appropriately, and project information is shared through this venue.

Co-Director Wayne Smith drafted and distributed a letter describing the FORCE project to Univ. of Florida professors and staff in an effort to gain more visibility for the project through and to streamline compost outreach and education through FORCE within the expansive UF community.

In the previous quarterly report (for the period ending December 31, 2002), mention of two news articles about the FORCE project were inadvertently omitted. The Monticello News, published an

article about the project in their Oct. 3, 2001 edition. The Sumter County Times published an article about the project in their Oct. 11, 2001 edition.

4.2 Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Committee Meetings:

The TAG meeting was held on January 23, 2002, at the Sumter County Solid Waste Facility. Updates were provided on the various start-up activities that had occurred over the past several months. Presentations were made on research and demonstration projects. The preliminary Operating Plan and Budget for Year 2 were presented and feedback was solicited. TAG members were also invited to make recommendations for research and demonstration projects, to review the list of represented industries on the TAG and make suggestions for additional representation, and to assist in identifying potential funding sources to target for additional projects. The meeting concluded with a tour of the FORCE digester and the office and laboratory.

4.3 Market Development

With the first supply of FORCE brochures nearly depleted, a sponsor was sought to underwrite a second printing. The Organics Division of RecycleFlorida Today, Inc. agreed to provide most of the funds needed to accomplish the reprint.

4.4. Conferences and Meetings

FORCE is sponsoring the Composting in the Southeast Conference and Expo “Recycle Organics ‘02”. The latest information on this Conference, scheduled for October 2002, can be found on the conference website: <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/compost/index.html>. The Steering Committee met at the conference site, the Westin Innisbrook in Palm Harbor, Florida, in early February 2002. Progress and strategies for attracting sponsors and exhibitors were discussed. The submitted abstracts were reviewed and gaps in program coverage identified. A brochure created and sponsored by UF entitled “First Announcement and Call for Abstracts” was mailed out in early January.

Preparations continued for the presentation of papers at several industry meetings in 2002. Two presentations are scheduled for May and June 2002:

1. Zinati* Gladis and Everett R. Emino. 2002. Florida Organics Recycling Center for Excellence (FORCE): Research and Education Programs on Composting Waste Streams for Florida. *To be presented at the 2002 International Symposium on Composting and Compost Utilization*, May 6-8, 2002, Columbus, Ohio.
2. Zinati*, Gladis and Everett R. Emino. 2002. Effect of co-compost on organic carbon accumulation in sandy soils for specialty cutflower production. *To be presented at the 2002 Florida State Horticultural Society*, June 2-4, Marco Island Marriott, Florida.

Additionally, an update on the FORCE project will be given at RecycleFlorida Today’s Annual

Conference on June 4, 2002 in Stuart, Florida.

4.5 Demonstration Farm Operations

A preliminary cropping plan has been developed for the first growing season. This cropping plan is being reviewed by the FORCE project team.

5.0 Evaluation, Monitoring, and Testing

5.1 SAC Protocol Development

The selection of the Scientific Advisory Council members drew to a close. The qualifications of the identified candidates were presented to the TAG at their January 2002 meeting. Drs. Rufus Chaney, Lewis Carr, and George Fries met with the approval of the TAG and, subsequently, with concurrence of the DEP Project Manager. The three were formally invited to form the SAC. Preliminary discussions were held to determine a feasible date for the first meeting of the SAC. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 29, 2002 in Sumter County. Appropriate project and contractual background information has been provided to the SAC members so that, at their first meeting, productive discussions can be held concerning environmental measure priorities and protocols.

5.2 Feedstock and Products Testing:

No activity to report for the period.

5.3 Environmental Monitoring

No activity to report for the period.

6.0 Project Management

6.1 Personnel:

Two candidates were interviewed for the position of Extension Agent Faculty. An offer was made to and accepted by Erik Spalvins from the University of Tennessee. The Agricultural Technician position description was submitted to the University Human Resources Department for posting and is expected to be filled in the next quarter.

Dr. Dennis McConnell will replace Dr. Everett Emino as the FORCE – UF/IFAS Project Manager. Once the Agricultural Technician position is filled, a press release will be distributed throughout Florida to introduce the FORCE UF/IFAS Research and Education team.

6.2 Administrative Fees – Indirect Costs:

No activity to report for the period.

6.3 Annual Work Plans and Budgets:

The project team efforts on the Year 2 Work Plan and Budget, and projected Year 3-5 activities were concluded. The Annual Report for Year 1 was initiated and submitted. Subsequent to the TAG meeting on January 23, 2002, discussions and correspondence occurred with TAG members relative to their input on these documents. Discussions were held, and agreement was reached, with the DEP project manager regarding modification of annual reporting dates. A requested modification will be made relative to the Annual Work Plan & Budget Reporting dates.

6.4 Project Coordination and Administration:

The co-directors, Garry Breeden, Sumter County, and Dr. Wayne Smith, UF/IFAS, meet on the second Wednesday of every month and generally hold their meetings at the SCSWF. FORCE Project Manager, Everett Emino; FORCE Research Manager, Gladis Zinati; SCSWF Manager, Terry Hurst; and Sumter County subcontractor, Kessler Consulting, also attend these monthly planning meetings.

If it is not possible to meet in person, a telephone conference call is scheduled at a day and time convenient for all parties involved.

A Co-Director's Project Management Manual was developed, produced, and distributed to the project management team at the February Co-Directors' meeting. The Manual contains reference documents such as Operating Plans, Budgets, and Contracts; Contact Lists; and Contract Activity Reports. Samples of brochures are included in this manual, as well as minutes of TAG and SAC meetings. The Manual will be utilized during the monthly management meetings and be utilized by the Co-Director's for current and future planning and development work for the project.