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B e y o n d R e c y c l i n g

RDN CURBSIDE FOOD WASTE COLLECTION PILOT PROJECT

A partnership of the
Regional District of Nanaimo
City of Nanaimo
Town of Qualicum Beach
Waste Services Inc.
International Composting Corporation

Spring 2008

PILOT PROJECT SURVEY RESULTS

Respondents give Food Waste Pilot Project a big "thumbs up"

More than 450 households completed the recent food waste collection pilot project survey. That's 23% of those on three participating routes, an excellent response rate.

Thanks to everyone who took the time to rate and comment on the project's communications, schedule, and the equipment provided. The Regional District of Nanaimo, City of Nanaimo and Town of Qualicum Beach will use your input to assess the program and identify improvements before considering if, how and when curbside food waste collection becomes a region-wide service. More than 80% of respondents saw a reduction in the amount of garbage they take to the curb. Asked for your likes and dislikes about food waste collection, the overwhelming majority of responses were positive. Many said it complemented curbside recycling and supported continuation of the program. A smaller number expressed concerns about having non-compostable garbage collected once every two weeks. These issues were raised by people with large families or those who chose not to participate in the program.

Thanks again for your input on the pilot project!

Visit www.rdnfoodwaste.ca for a full summary of the survey's results. Note, a password is no longer required to access the food waste pilot project Website.

Here's a summary of the survey results:

Location of survey respondents

Chartwell: 130
Nanaimo (Route E-3): 153
Cedar (Route 52): 173

Household composition

1-2 people: 75% 3-5 people: 24%
6 or more people: 1%

Green bin set out rate

Weekly: 78% Every two weeks:
15% Seldom: 2%
Don't participate: 5%

Rating of green bin

Excellent: 78% Good: 11%
Adequate: 6% Fair: 1% Don't
like at all: 3%

People reported some design problems, noting that the short handle makes it difficult to pull and that the wheels could be larger. This information will be provided to the manufacturer.

Rating of kitchen catcher

Excellent: 68% Good: 17%
Adequate: 9% Fair: 2%
Don't like at all: 4%

It was suggested that it be redesigned to securely hold a liner bag. This information will be provided to the manufacturer.

Rating of compostable bags provided

Excellent: 67% Good: 20%
Adequate: 9% Fair: 2%
Poor: 2%

Common concerns included the cost, problems with the size of bags and tying them. This has been discussed with suppliers. The regional district and its partners are exploring options.

Use of backyard composters

Compost and use green bin: 59%
Don't compost: 36%
Compost everything, don't use
green bin: 5%

SURVEY DRAW PRIZES AWARDED

More than 400 households entered the prize draw for completing the survey. One name has been drawn from each collection route and the winning households have been sent a \$50 grocery certificate.

FOCUS GROUP ADDS THEIR INPUT

On May 6th, a selection of pilot project participants attended a focus group session at the RDN. The participants represented a range of household sizes, routes, and rural and urban areas. They were selected from 92 individuals who put their names forward in the food waste collection survey. The focus group explored issues not covered in the survey and helped identify ways to gain greater participation in the food waste collection program.

**QUESTIONS & ISSUES RAISED
ABOUT THE FOOD WASTE PILOT PROJECT**

How does food waste collection and composting reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Landfills are among the largest emitters of human generated methane gas, which has more than 20 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide. In a landfill, food waste and other compostable material decomposes in the absence of oxygen resulting in methane gas emissions.

International Composting Corporation's (ICC) facility uses forced air in its aerobic composting process and does not produce methane. Recent testing by a Malaspina University student researcher confirmed this. Furthermore, the compost produced at ICC improves soil health, sequesters carbon in the soil, and reduces the need for chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

As of March 31, 2008, 100 tonnes of food waste and other compostable material has been collected through the pilot project. That results in an equal reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and important contribution to conserving valuable space at the region's only landfill.

Where can I buy fertilizer and compost produced through the pilot project?

Fertilizers for lawns and plants produced from food waste and compostables is sold under the R-Earth brand. The product is free of residues and sold in 5 lb resealable bags.

It's available in Nanaimo at Art Knapp Plantland, Dig This, and Turley's Florist, Qualicum Foods in Qualicum Beach, and at Home Hardware and Thrifty Foods locations throughout the regional district. Compost is sold in bulk and is available at ICC, 981 Maughan Road in Nanaimo.

Why is garbage and food waste collected in the same truck?

The truck used to collect garbage and food waste on the same day has separate storage compartments. Having one truck and driver simultaneously collect both materials reduces the cost and resulting air emissions of running two vehicles.



A baffle separates food waste and garbage when they are collected using a single truck.

**WARM WEATHER TIPS FOR
PREVENTING ODOURS AND INSECTS**

- Frequently empty your kitchen catcher – Avoid leaving food waste exposed.
- Keep kitchen container and green bin lids tightly closed.
- Put your green bin at the curb on every collection day even if it is not full.
- Store your green bin in a cool ventilated area.
- Use newspaper or other paper to line your kitchen catcher and green bin. Newspaper is a source of carbon which reduces odours. A paper liner can also prolong the life of compostable bags by absorbing any moisture that may condense outside of the bag. Remember, soiled newspaper and other types of soiled paper can be included in your green bin.
- Freeze meat and fish waste until collection day.
- Rinse your kitchen catcher and tote frequently using vinegar or hot water or biodegradable detergent.
- Keep odours at bay the natural way by sprinkling a small amount of baking soda, garden lime or vinegar in your kitchen catcher and tote.



**B e y o n d
R e c y c l i n g**

For more information about the Residential Food Waste Collection Pilot Project please contact:

**RDN Environmental Services,
Solid Waste Department**

6300 Hammond Bay Road
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6N2

Ph. 250-390-6560
(Nanaimo area) or
250-954-3792

(Parksville-Qualicum area)

Email:
foodwastepilot@rdn.bc.ca

www.rdnfoodwaste.ca



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