



US Composting Council Newsletter • Fall 2017

## From the Top of the Compost Pile

Frank Franciosi, Executive Director



It should normally be a simple run-up to the changing of the seasons, shorter days and cool, crisp nights. Instead, our members and people across the country are still cleaning up from a hurricane season

that won't be forgotten.

The compost community stepped in to help others with moral support, equipment, and supplies. With many family

businesses as core USCC members, that feeling of family translates to our organization when some of us are hit by misfortune. Our thoughts are with all our members and their employees who have been affected so far by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. I hope that you are all on the road to recovery and back in operation.

Fall is also a time when our team swings into high gear to prepare for our next national conference, COMPOST2018, in Atlanta, Georgia. We've caught the fever of the new Falcons stadium with tours, discus-

sions around organics collection, and our opening keynote by the General Manager of the new Mercedes Benz Stadium, Scott Jenkins! Even Delta Airlines has gotten into the act by offering discounted flights for our attendees (see [compostconference.com](http://compostconference.com) for everything about the conference). You can also hear Laura Turner Seydel, (of the Captain Planet Foundation) and  
*Continues on page 28*

The US Composting Council's *Compost Communicator* newsletter is published quarterly in *BioCycle*, the official magazine of the USCC.

## Foundation News

**Compost: Building A Better Future!**  
2018 ICAW Poster Contest!

Entries closed November 6 for the annual International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW) poster contest. The winning entry becomes the ICAW poster for 2018. It is sent to thousands of people throughout the country; a \$500 prize is awarded to the winner. Companies show their support by becoming ICAW sponsors. Sponsors' logos are on the poster and the companies are promoted throughout the months leading to ICAW. To sponsor, contact Beth at [bethsimone@compostfoundation.org](mailto:bethsimone@compostfoundation.org)

**2018 International Compost Awareness Week:**  
May 6-12, 2018

### Impact of Soluble Salts On Compost

The Foundation issued an RFP for a white paper compiling research on the subject of soluble salts, with the purpose of illustrating that compost with high electrical conductivity due to total nutrient content rather than potentially detrimental salts (sodium and/or chloride) is not harmful in most applications. The paper will include scientific references and issues surrounding end use. A number of businesses and organizations are generously sponsoring this project,  
*Continues on page 28*

**We've Got One Up On the NFL**

**THE USCC BOWL**

WATCH AS OUR EQUIPMENT SUPPLIER MEMBERS COMPETE HEAD-TO-HEAD

**VS**

Komtech America | Ecoverse  
Vermeer | DiamondZ

**MAY THE BEST SUPPLIER WIN!**

[CLICK HERE TO FIND OUT MORE.](#)

If the NFL and politics have you weary, tune into the USCC Bowl!  
*Continues on page 29*

## USCC Certification Commission Expanded Website, New CCOM™ Components

The USCC Certification Commission has unveiled its expanded website, [certificationsuscc.org](http://certificationsuscc.org). "It's like adding an addition to your house, except the addition is twice as big as the original," exclaims Cary Oshins, Director of Certification.



This logo identifies an approved training provider

The expansion was prompted by the need to launch two new elements of the Certified Compost Operations Manager™ (CCOM) Program: Credential Renewal and Authorized Training Providers (ATP).

- In order to maintain certification, a CCOM has to document 30 hours of continuing education over three years. The expanded website provides a method for each CCOM™ to log in, record and track progress towards that goal.
- The ATP Program also allows composter educators to have their trainings (courses, webinars, conferences, etc.) be preapproved as appropriate continuing education for CCOMs.

As an incentive for listing courses and registering as ATPs, USCC is waiving the per-hour fees for applying for credit approval until the end of 2017. Point your browser to [www.certificationsuscc.org](http://www.certificationsuscc.org) for details.

**MEMBER SPOTLIGHT**

**Soiland Co./Grab 'N Grow**

Santa Rosa, California

*Compost Communicator spoke with Tom Shearer, R&D Director of Soiland Co., about issues and the USCC.*

**CC: What are challenges to being successful in the compost industry, and are there special challenges in your region, market or feedstock mix? Are there ways that being involved in USCC is helping you meet those challenges?**

**Soiland:** Grab N' Grow, which became part of the Soiland family of companies in 2010, has been producing soil products in Sonoma County since 1960. We are located in a diverse area with agriculture that includes traditional organic farming, ornamental growers, and cannabis growers, as well as homeowner and commercial landscapers. This creates great opportunities and pressures to perform. We produce six standard composts and have a catalog of over 100 compost-soil blends for specialty



**Grab 'N Grow's bunkers of product!**

uses, based on clean feedstock, agricultural manures and the art/science of compost production. Northern California has an issue with herbicide and pesticide contaminated manures that are a great threat to production demands and require incurring costs for contamination testing. We rely on

USCC to be our voice to US EPA and other national regulatory bodies on the prevalence of herbicides and pesticides and their negative impacts on our business.

**CC: What are some of the features that USCC offers that you find most useful?**

**Soiland:** Grab N' Grow depends on USCC for industry standard training, industry updates and views from other operations on the challenges they face.

**CC: If you could sit down with another member to discuss any issue, what would it be and why?**

**Soiland:** All composting operations need to work together in California to meet the required recycling mandate and talk about how we can all work together to create markets for our products.

**CC: What do you think is a key challenge to the successful future of the compost industry in the U.S.?**

**Soiland:** The continued regulatory demands coming from multiple agencies that do not speak to each other can be challenging, balanced against the need to increase the amount of materials that should be recycled into compost.

**MEMBER NEWS**

**Harvest Power**

Harvest successfully received the first — and currently only — “Individual Composting Facility Permit” from the State of Maryland’s Department of Environment (MDE). The MDE’s 2016 regulations update requires an individual permit compared to the more common “general” permit due to Harvest’s large and unique operations in Woodbine, MD. Permitting success is due to close communications between Harvest’s team and MDE. Kudos for compliance and collaboration!

Harvest’s Woodbine operation recycles all leaves from the residential green waste collection program of Anne Arundel County, MD, which began prohibiting plastic bags in January 2017. This has greatly reduced inert material contamination, the amount of material going to landfill, and has improved final compost product quality.

**Cold Creek Compost**

U.S. Congressman Jared Huffman recently visited Cold Creek Compost in Ukiah, CA and presented owner Martin Mileck with a Sustainable North Coast Award.

**From The Top Of The Compost Pile**  
*(continued from page 27)*

Liza Milagro, Resilience & Sustainability Manager of Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

At COMPOST2018, the USCC will focus a lot of attention on growing our industry, from sessions helping compost manufacturers in employee recruitment/retention; bottom line issues like lean manufacturing, contracts and materials handling; and safety and maintenance. We also have programs on policy, collection at venues and events, how to minimize con-

tamination, compost product marketing, compost’s role in sustainable soils, composting facility BMPs and the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Cultivating Community Compost Forum. All this capped by our Annual Awards Presentation and closing keynote speakers. We have something for everybody and the event that makes it all tangible — Demo Day, this year at DeKalb County’s Compost Facility.

Get those cool season crops and ornamentals in the ground — then go complete your Early Bird registration for COMPOST2018!

See ya’ll in Atlanta!

**Foundation News**

*(continued from page 27)*

recognizing the need for this type of valuable research. To help, contact Beth at [bethsimone@compostfoundation.org](mailto:bethsimone@compostfoundation.org).

**First North Carolina Young Investigator Scholarship**

Thanks to the North Carolina Composting Council (NCCC), a student at St. Andrews University in Laurinburg, NC and an Army veteran, has won the first North



**Seth Heffern**

Carolina Chapter scholarship, funded by NCCC. Student Seth Heffern’s project is transforming a closed prison into a sustainable farm and educational center. The composting unit will be at the core of the farming operation. Seth plans to demonstrate the importance of compost in this vital agricultural region, while producing a replicable model that he hopes could expand composting production on 24 other closed prisons in NC alone.

# Hurricanes Harvey and Irma Impact Composters

**The Ground Up**, Houston, TX: Storm surges swamped the families of five employees, two of whom had to be airlifted and one rescued by boat when Hurricane Harvey hit Texas in August. Vendors, customers, well-wishers and USCC members sent clothing, toiletries and other items to help them in the first days of recovery, including a pallet of T-shirts from Neuenhauser NA/Neustarr. Three operators, a manager and a mechanic were affected.

“In one production facility we had four feet of water which receded fast; we tried to put all the machines on higher ground or on surfaces 2 or 3 feet up,” explains Luis Chamorro, vice president of marketing and sales, whose home was one of the five affected. He says while they had basic preparedness plans in place for weather events, “you really cannot prepare anybody for 50 inches of rain in 3 days.”

The Ground Up used social media, texting and video extensively to communicate with employees, customers and vendors throughout the process. The families are still working to get back into their homes. “Our number one priority was to help our people,” adds Chamorro. They also employed donations of leave to a leave bank for employees who needed time to work on their homes.

**MW Horticulture**, Fort Myers, FL: Winds of more than 100 mph from Hurricane Irma pounded the area surrounding MW Horticulture’s composting facility. Owner Denise Houghtaling and her team had the foresight to move all equipment

to dispersed locations — including the owner and the facility manager’s homes — which protected it and ensured they were ready to “dig in” after Hurricane Irma left town.

While everyone in the company suffered wind damage to their homes and one of the facilities had roof damage, fortunately no one was devastated or homeless



MW Horticulture’s Mountain of Hurricane Irma debris

after Irma. But mountains of debris, and up to two weeks of downed power lines, have kept the facility’s employees busy into October. “We already knew we were going to help the fire department get roads and power lines cleared so that they would be able to get people out in an emergency,” Denise notes. The clearing that MW Horticulture did in the first week afterward was done as a community service; after that, it had to raise prices just enough to cover the escalated cost of gas, rentals and overtime.

Houghtaling’s team, even in dire circumstances, was heartened by being part of “people helping people.” Vermeer Southeast even brought in lunch for their whole crew one day during the cleanup. “This was a good reminder, we’re all in this big world together,” she says.

## “We’re All In” Voting Kicks Off Nov. 1!

If You’re All In for the USCC, we want to hear from you — and we want your vote!

As of press-time, The Ground Up, A1 Organics, Living Earth/LETCO, Komptech, Ecoverse and Vision Recycling submitted video stories about their favorite things about the USCC for a competition that launched in October for Best We’re

All In video. Voting continues up through December 31, so we will accept entries all the way until the deadline.

The winner will be announced at COMPOST2018 and will receive a prize of \$250 in Soilbuilder Bucks — to spend on USCC products/programs including Conference, Membership and Compost Operations Training Course training!

## The USCC Bowl!

(continued from page 27)

So far, competitors Komptech Americas, Ecoverse and Vermeer have risen to the challenge, and one touchdown has been scored by Komptech in a first quarter drive!

**The USCC Bowl** is our fall member drive by Equipment Supplier companies who are supporting *your* organization by going above and beyond to help the future of our industry. They are reaching out through their sales and dealer networks to explain the value of the USCC to cities and counties and private sector facility operators to grow our community.

We welcome other Equipment Suppliers who want to join the competition. Contact Membership Manager Linda Norris-Waldt at [lnorriswaldt@compostingcouncil.org/301-508-7577](mailto:lnorriswaldt@compostingcouncil.org/301-508-7577), to get in the game!

## MEMBER NEWS

### Organix Solutions, Maple Grove, MN

Congratulations to Organix Solutions, which received a full patent for its organics co-collection program.

The patent covers Organix’s method of collecting and processing of compostable organic waste, where a single waste collection vehicle can collect both organics and municipal solid waste (MSW) in a single trip. Eliminating the need for multiple trucks, on even a relatively small scale, has a significant environmental impact.



Organics in the same cart as MSW

### Q3 New Members

AEG Worldwide, Agri Organics, Aldea Verde, Arborganic Acres, Bar HJ Ranch, Big Red Worms, Chester County PA, City of Amarillo, City of Nixa, MO, City of Oakland PWA Environmental Service Division, College of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Common Ground Compost, LLC, Compost Manufacturing Alliance, Compost with Me, DSM Environmental Services, Earthsaver Equipment, Inc, Fick Supply, Food Well Alliance, Garden-Ville, GreenForest Recycling Systems, Hidden Acres Farm, Jacky Bins, Java Composting, Laurens County Composting, SC, Joe Lucas, Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority, Millwood, Inc, Motzz Laboratory, NCSU, Petersburg Indian Association, Scott Equipment Company, SWSCC, Tulsa Topsoil, University of Dayton, Urban Soils Texas, Zero Waste Energy.



## STA Market Development News

Meet Joe Lamp'l at COMPOST2018 in the Compost Marketing tract on Wed. Jan. 24! 'Joe Gardener' will highlight a half-day session focusing on compost markets and marketing. Compost without markets is just more costly waste.

The annual Market Development Committee/Seal of Testing Assurance (STA) meeting will also be part of this session.

And be on the lookout for new and more user friendly STA websites coming soon. A lot of very useful information and tools are on our websites, but it's sometimes difficult to find. That's going to change, thank to a website designer who is

revising the STA website.

Have you directed the landscape architects in your marketing area to COMPOSTforLAs.com? This site was created exclusively for them and landscape designers and contains useful tools and specifications.

We welcome new participants to the STA program since our last newsletter: Perdue Agribusiness, Millwood, Thelin Recycling, Hawaiian Earth, Urban Soil, Dr. Gobbler and the City of Columbus Ohio.

*Remember* – The STA program's validity is based on regular compost testing. Please adhere to your contractual compost testing schedule!

## Compost Operations Training Courses Sell Out!



The first NYC Course!

In late July, the Foundation trained 34 students during our summer Compost Operations Training Course (COTC) at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) in New York City (NYC). This is the first time training was offered in the Big

Apple, and it was a huge success! The NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) and BBG are eager for USCC's return and we'll be ready to accommodate them.

Not even Hurricane Irma could stop the North Carolina COTC! A few students deferred due to weather conditions in their areas, but 22 participants still came to Raleigh to learn about all things compost. In late October the 5-day course was brought to another new location — Ft. Collins, CO. This class had the earliest sellout ever!

In 2018 COTCs return to Davis, CA in March and Raleigh, NC in September. Mid-summer will take place at another new location, in East Lansing, Michigan. The late fall location is still under review.

For registration and more information, go to <http://compostfoundation.org/Education/COTC>, or join USCC's mailing list at [www.compostingcouncil.org/contact](http://www.compostingcouncil.org/contact).

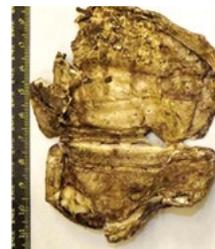
## Compostable Labeling Template

Building on the experience in Maryland of using USCC's Model Compostable Labeling Bill as a template for the state's own legislation (HB1349), as well as a near-decade of a California law to address greenwashing, a subcommittee of the Compostable Products Task Force (CPTF) has updated the model legislation. The USCC Board formally adopted the model bill in October. "Then the hard work really begins: getting other states to adopt similar legislation or regulation," notes Matt Cotton, of the CPTF Leadership Team and USCC

board member. The goal is prevent companies from making claims about compostability or degradability that can't be verified, and to give states ammunition to prosecute those companies that make those claims. To aid that cause, the CPTF will prepare talking points, links to existing legislation and other resources, and promote the bill to other states. "We hope our new chapters will see this as an opportunity to improve policies in their states," says Cotton. The new model can be found under the "Advocacy" tab at [compostingcouncil.org](http://compostingcouncil.org).

## Field Testing Compostable Products

Use of certified compostable Food Service Ware (FSW) is growing, but commercial facilities' real-world conditions do



**\*CHECK\*** The new protocols can help guide compost facilities

not exactly match the laboratory conditions used to certify these products' compostability. The Composting Council Research and Education Foundation (Foundation) has partnered with BSIbio, a company that specializes in sourcing and supplying biobased compostable food service

ware and product packaging, to implement the Disintegration Testing of Industrially Compostable Products (DTICP).

Building on protocols originally developed for the City of San Jose, CA, BSIbio continued to refine the protocols under the guidance of an advisory committee. The field testing program is designed to fill this data gap by giving composters the methods and guidance to test the disintegration of certified compostable FSW at their composting facility and feed the data into a central database. It is free for the composter to use the protocols. (See "Field Testing Protocol For Compostable Products," *BioCycle* (Sept. 2017) for more background on the protocol and program.)

The Foundation and BSIbio are developing an online platform to communicate about the program, collect data from participating compost operators, and ultimately house an open-source database of disintegration testing results. More details will be coming soon to the Foundation website, <http://compostfoundation.org/Research>

