



US Composting Council Newsletter • Spring 2017

From the Top of the Compost Pile

Lorrie Loder-Rossiter, CCOM™



Two years ago, if you were at the opening general session of the 2015 USCC Annual Conference in Austin, Texas, you heard big news and a bold promise from your USCC leaders. **The promise:**

The US Composting Council and the Composting Council Research and Education Foundation will develop the first professional credential by and for the compost manufacturing industry. We invited everyone from every state to participate (not just members) and we would feature the first group to complete the certification process at the 25th Anniversary Celebration Closing Session on January 25, 2017 in Los Angeles.

If you were at the Closing Plenary of COMPOST2017, you know that we fulfilled our promise!

Jerry Bartlett, CCOM, one of the founding Commissioners of the Certification Commission of the USCC, presented the first 27 people to earn the CCOM. This accomplishment came in the first 90 days since the official launch on October 28, 2016. In presenting each person, in the spotlight at the front of hundreds in the ballroom who were standing and applauding, Jerry said, "This certification has been a goal for more than 15 years. We wanted a credential that an individual could gain by showing they have the knowledge, skills and experience to manage a composting operation." (See accompanying story).

Our Compost Operations Manager Cer-

tification Program, years in the making, is here! It was named one of the most-desired programs by our members in our last Member Survey, and it's obvious that it's what you've all been asking for.

There is more in the wings — other job roles and certifications — for this program, which is a tangible measure of the maturity and professionalism of the compost manufacturing industry.

I'm proud to be a part of such an elite group of professionals and I encourage everyone to take the online CCOM Practice Test and to march on to get YOUR certification in 2017.

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

Healthy Soil, Healthy Food — Send the Message For ICAW



Beth Simone, development officer for the Composting Council Research and Education Foundation, with Italian Compost Council Director Massimo Centero at a recent BioCycle conference.

It's almost here May 7-13, 2017! International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW) is the largest and most comprehensive education initiative of the composting industry. We celebrate nationwide and with other countries like Canada, Australia, England, Germany, Lebanon, and Italy each year. Started in Canada in 1995, ICAW has continued to grow as more people, businesses, municipalities, schools and organizations are recognizing the importance of composting and the long-term

benefits from organics recycling.

The theme for this year is Compost! Healthy Soil, Healthy Food. Out of more than 200 entries from all over the world and all ages, the design by Ursula Gutowski, a graphic designer from Niles, Illinois was selected.

Continues below

Conference Celebration Spotlights First CCOM Professionals

The US Composting Council's Compost Operations Manager (CCOM™) Certification Program is a national, professional certification and required input from thousands of individual composters, regulators and state-specific interest voices to create, build and launch. One of the many industry leaders who stepped up to the plate, saw the potential and got involved in a big way is Jeff Ziegenbein, CCOM, Manager of Regional Compost Operations at Inland Empire Regional Composting Authority (IERCA). His story has inspired many others to get onboard and complete the CCOM process.

"Organics management in California is a huge deal," Jeff said. "Our agency invested \$90 million in a state-of-the-art facil-

BREAKING NEWS

The Certification Commission just added a CCOM™ Practice Test feature to the website at <http://certificationsuscc.org/Get-Certified/Practice-Test>. This option gives potential CCOMs a chance to see what the testing process is like.

Continues below

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, Cleveland, Ohio

Bronze Member



Screened ZooPoo

Compost Communicator talked with Nancy Hughes to find out what's up at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo.

CC: Tell us about your product and the mission of your organization.

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo: What to do with all the poo? Recycle it and sell it, of course! As part of a comprehensive on-grounds conservation and sustainability program, the Zoo processes approximately 4,000 cubic yards/year of manure from our elephants, giraffes, zebras, rhinos, kangaroos, and reindeers, to name a few, as well as hay, straw, wood shavings, wood chips, herbaceous material and leaves. At our windrow composting facility, we produce mounds of the most exotic soil amendment in Northeast Ohio. Zoo horticulturists use the compost to prepare spectacular gardens throughout the Zoo's 183 acres.

Every spring and fall, Zoo members and local residents can purchase some of the herbivore compost known as ZooPoo Com-

post. We presell to our limit a month before the product is scheduled for pickup. It is first-come, first-serve and we usually sell out in a day or so. The price is \$45/cubic yard (cy) or \$60 for 2 cy; smaller quantities can be purchased — \$20 for 30 gallons (any hard-sided container equal to 30 gallons, e.g., garbage can, Rubbermaid totes, etc.) or \$5 for a 5-gallon bucket.

CC: What are challenges to being successful in your composting operation?

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo: Our half-acre site is too small to compost all of our animal waste materials, so most are hauled at our expense to a local composter for processing. We also are not capturing food waste and related materials currently, one because of capacity, and two because the Zoo is registered as a Class III composting operation with the Ohio EPA and would need to become a Class II. Over the years — we have been in operation since 2001 — we have researched different technologies and options for expanding

the Zoo's composting operation, but the costs and where to locate a larger operation have been the prohibitive factors.

CC: Are there ways that being involved in USCC is helping you meet those challenges?

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo: When researching our expansion options, we reached out to USCC for people with expertise in this arena. I also have met contacts/businesses over the years at the annual conference that have provided information, products, and/or services.

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

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo: The conferences always offer quality speakers and content. The Seal of Testing Assurance (STA) Program is important for the production of quality, consistent product across the U.S. We have used the "Compost and Its Benefits" Fact Sheet for education purposes for our guests, and the well-written *BioCycle* magazine we get monthly.

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

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo: Education — mainly that the general public doesn't understand (or are not concerned about) the importance of healthy, productive soil and the significance that compost plays in creating that. Also, infrastructure. In northeast Ohio, we have been lacking the composting infrastructure needed to capture food wastes in particular.

USCC New Members, Q1

301 Organics, Amiterre Ag Solutions, Aveterra, Cinda Bennett, Biocontractors, John Bonitz, City of Philadelphia Green Program, Clairvest, Clearwater Composting, Clements Environmental, Cold Creek Compost, Stanley Dudek, Earth to Earth Compost, Great Western Supply, Growing Change, Hillsborough County, Florida, John Lloyd, Mac McKinnon, Wade Moore, Mothers Organics, The Organic Recycler, Chris Peters, Ri-Mor, Greg Roden, SA Recycling, Silvercrest, St. Louis Park, Minnesota, Allen Skinner, Sylva Corp, Vail Honeywagon, Sienna Valente-Blough, Juan Vélez Atehortua, Randall Williams, Wise Solutions Group, Wood Resources.

USCC Chapters

California

Dan Noble, Executive Director
danwyldernoble@gmail.com

Colorado

Dan Matsch
dan@ecocycle.org

Maryland-DC

Brenda Platt
bplatt@ilsr.org

Virginia

Gary Gittere
ggittere@mcgillcompost.com

Michigan

Kerrin O'Brien, Executive Director
kobrien@michiganrecycles.org

Minnesota

Ginny Black
ginny_black@yahoo.com

North Carolina

Jim Lanier, President
compostplus@icloud.com



USCC Advocacy



Virginia Streeter, ILSR, Linda Norris-Waltdt, USCC, Brenda Platt, ILSR, Rhodes Yepsen, BPI, Del. Shane Robinson, compostable labelling bill sponsor.

Maryland Passes Two Composting Bills

Labelling, Infrastructure Bills Pass On Last Days of Session

Double victories were in hand for the Maryland composting community thanks to the passage of HB171 and HB1349, bills that speak to proper labelling of compostable products, and a state study on infrastructure expansion for Maryland.

The introduction of both bills was facilitated by Marylander Brenda Platt of the Institute for Local Self Reliance and leader of the MD-DC Composting Council Committee.

HB 171 requires the Maryland Department of the Environment to study and report on existing compost manufacturing infrastructure in Maryland, as well as laws passed by other cities and states that divert food scraps and organics, and to then recommend how to improve infrastructure and funding opportunities to expand composting in Maryland.

HB 1349 required products being sold in the state labelled as compostable to meet BPI standards, and used USCC model legislation designed by the Compostable Products Task Force.

North Carolina Fights Overregulation Bill In Statehouse

Several USCC members and North Carolina Composting Council (NCCC) compost manufacturers, including Jim Lanier of Earth Farms and Noel Lyons of McGill Compost, have been working to oppose H244, a bill the USCC believes unnecessarily requires a state-level public hearing for composting facilities, since a public hearing is also held at the county level. This double hearing is unnecessary and onerous for the compost manufacturing industry.

Testifying against the bill at an April 6 meeting of the North Carolina House Environment Committee were Eric Wallace of Wallace Farms, and Amy Brooks of Brooks Compost. The next day, Rep. Julia Howard and Davie County Commissioners requested a meeting about the bill at Wallace Farms. Eric Wallace said the meeting was productive and positive.

“This response comes from the hard work of the North Carolina Composting Council members rallying their regulators and educating them on the benefits of compost and how it affects the agricultural recycling, and landscaping industries,” said Jim Lanier, president of the NCCC.

The bill still faces a hearing in the Agriculture Committee of the House.

Model Compostability Legislation Update

The Compostable Products Task Force has formed a workgroup to update the model compostability legislation developed in 2014. If you are interested in participating, email Cary Oshins, Advocacy Director, cary.oshins@compostingcouncil.org.

only provides an amazing soil that is full of nutrients for growing food, but it also completes the circle of sustainability. My poster design helps demonstrate this by showing the composting process in its entirety.”

The Composting Council Research and Education Foundation encourages everyone — municipalities, nonprofits, businesses, individuals — to hold an ICAW event during May 7-13, and enter your event on our website at www.compost-foundation.org/icaw.



Jeff Ziegenbein, IECA raises the toast

USCC Celebrates Silver Anniversary With A Bang! In LA

Participants at COMPOST2017 raised their glasses to the USCC’s 25th Year in a group toast and afternoon of festivities at the Closing Celebration last January in Los Angeles. Masters of ceremony for the unusual event, designed with storytelling,



Hosts Kathy Kellogg Johnson and Matt Cotton

music, awards, interviews and, yes, a bit of humor, were California’s dynamic duo of Matt Cotton (past Board president and board member) and Kathy Kellogg Johnson (Kellogg Garden Products) in elegant garb to set the tone.

Jeff Ziegenbein, president of the Council’s California chapter, led the toast to the USCC’s birthday. The audience also saw a “teaser” of The Compost Story film, after which enthusiastic participants pledged

sponsorship for the May launch during International Compost Awareness Week.



Audience viewing of retrospective film

Thank you to all who helped make the event a success, especially Matt and Kathy, who practiced for hours to be ready; Cary Oshins, Linda Norris-Waltdt and Frank Franciosi, USCC staff; and producer Camille Duran, The Organic Stream.

ICAW Message

(continued from top)

“I chose to enter the International Compost Awareness Week poster contest this year as the “Compost! Healthy Soil, Healthy Food” topic is extremely important to me,” Ursula says. “There are so many people today that are pushing for an increase in healthy food and nutrition, but miss the link in the soils that these foods are grown in. Food waste compost not



Joe Lamp'l Spreads The Word About Certified STA Compost

The USCC's Seal of Testing Assurance/Certified Compost Program looks forward to another year of program expansion and generating more publicity and recognition for program participants. Three new STA participants have already enrolled in 2017, so the year is off to a good start!

We'll continue our alliance with Joe Lamp'l and **Growing A Greener World TV (GGW)**. Look for it — the USCC logo will be included in the show's credits when the new season begins in April (<https://youtu.be/ATngt1vw1R4>)! You can find STA Certified Compost logos and content in many places on the GGW website now: <http://www.growingagreenerworld.com/>



USCC logo as seen in show credits

The USCC will be producing a new video featuring Joe Lamp'l soon. The title will be "Certified Compost for Amending Soil". It, like all of our videos, has been created as a tool for USCC members! You can place these on your laptop for client meetings and trade shows, or make a loop and run them in your office or retail outlet.

All the videos that the USCC has made so far can be found on its You Tube channel: <http://www.growingagreenerworld.com/>. You'll also find some STA participant short video leads here. These can be purchased from the USCC and used either as a standalone promotional tool or in conjunction with the longer videos. Please contact Al Rattie (al.rattie@compostingcouncil.org) for more information.



Many USCC members and allies are sponsoring or promoting the launch in May of *The Compost Story*, by Kiss the Ground, producers of the well-known *Soil Story*. Thanks to sponsors: Kellogg Garden Products, A1 Organics, Tanks Green Stuff, Zanker Recycling, Natur-tec, OCSD, CalRecycle, New Earth Inc., Stop Waste-Alameda, EcoSafe, St Louis Composting, Elk Packaging, Vision Recycling, EDWW W. Pauley Foundation, Associated Labels, Texas Pure Products, Inland Empire Utilities Agency, Green Mountain Technologies.

Member submissions for Compost Communicator can be emailed to Linda Norris-Waldt at the USCC: lnorriswaldt@compostingcouncil.org



Jerry Bartlett

CCOM Professionals

(continued from top)

ity to reduce greenhouse gases and emissions by 98 percent and committed 100 percent to CCOM certification to protect our investment. When we first learned about the CCOM and how we could get involved, we were very excited. We made CCOM an all-staff goal, and offered our facility for the beta test phase in July 2016 and registered all staff to take the test. We encouraged all

who passed the test to go online at the Certification Commission website and complete the process of application and work verification."

Requirements to earn the CCOM include: At least two years of industry work experience, including one in facility operations; having taken a three-day or longer training course; and passing the CCOM test.

So far, nine of the first 46 to earn the CCOM are from IERCA. Jeff, who is also president of the California Association of Compost Producers, Vice President of USCC and Treasurer of CCREP, pointed out, "Not everyone passed the test. We think the test is very professional and covers all key areas critical to composting operations, such as the science, safety and business skills. We will make sure those who did not pass the first time get more training — most likely at a USCC Compost Operators Training Course, and then take the test again to complete their CCOM."

Jerry Bartlett, CCOM, one of the founding Commissioners of the Certification Commission of the USCC, awarded certifications to the first 27 people to earn the CCOM on the final day of COMPOST2017 in January. Visit <http://certificationsuscc.org/ccom-directory> to see the first group of Certified Compost Operations Managers.

Information about the CCOM™ program and application form to start the process is available at <http://CertificationsUSCC.org>. The 108 people who passed the beta test have until October 28, 2017 — the one-year anniversary of the CCOM launch — to take advantage of the deeply discounted prices provided only to beta testers, in order to complete all steps and fees.

Certification is open to all, without any restrictions or requirements for membership, though USCC members receive price breaks and group discounts for related fees. Dig into the website for key areas to understand the process, including the Candidate Handbook, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), and Stay Connected.

The Certification Commission thanks our Certification Heroes: BASF, New Earth Compost, and Denali Water Solutions. You can join them! <http://certificationsuscc.org/Our-Heroes/Be-a-Hero>.

