

ADDRESSING THE CONFUSING LANDSCAPE OF COMPOSTABLE PRODUCTS

The Composter's Perspective

Dan Goossen, Green Mountain Compost

March 8, 2018



Green Mountain Compost

Local. Sustainable. Wicked Good.





- Started in Burlington, 1987
- Program of Chittenden Solid Waste District since 2008
- Largest food scrap compost operation in Vermont, 6,000 tpy
- Revenues ~\$1M;
 - 70% sales, 30% tip fees
 - Premium bulk and bagged products

TO ACCEPT OR NOT?



PROS VS. CONS OF ACCEPTING COMPOSTABLE PRODUCTS AT GREEN MOUNTAIN COMPOST

- Benefits
 - Increased diversion (liner bags)
 - Potentially less traditional plastics being generated
 - Guilt free disposal
- Drawbacks
 - Inconsistent degradation
 - Disrupts active compost process
 - Increased contamination
 - Visual distinguishability
 - Extra processing
 - Diminished product quality
 - Enables greenwashing, compostability claims
 - Loss of Organic certification
 - Guilt free disposal
 - Zero benefit to quality, volume of finished products

- 2007-2008 – processing residuals awash in a sea of “compostable cutlery” that failed to compost.
 - Staff handpicks hundreds of thousands of forks, knives, spoons from overs piles



The Dilemma

Poly Styrene Clamshells

Compostable Plastic (PLA)
Cups

Who Knows?!?!



HISTORY OF COMPOSTABLE PLASTICS AT GREEN MOUNTAIN COMPOST

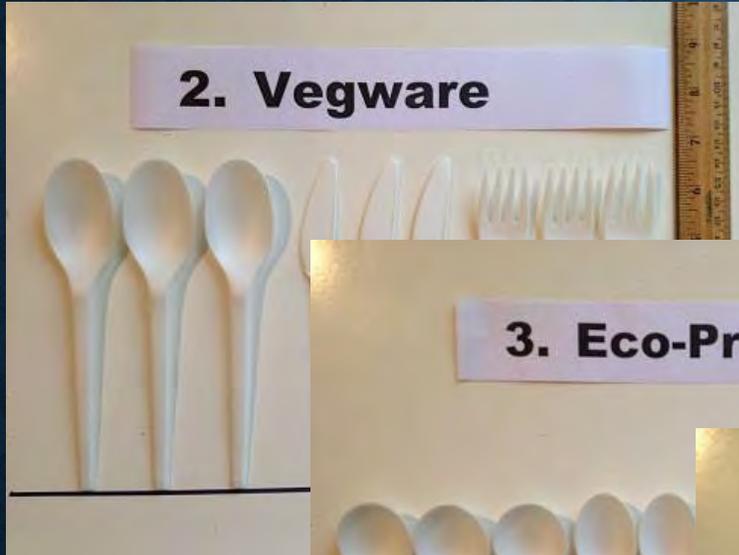
- 2009 – Implementation of ban on all cutlery
- 2010 – ICP/CSWD consider banning all compostable plastics following threat to organic certification of finished compost
- 2011 – Vermont Organic Farmers (statewide certifier of USDA National Organic Program guidelines) bans compostable plastics from all “organic” compost sold in the state

HISTORY OF COMPOSTABLE PLASTICS AT GREEN MOUNTAIN COMPOST

- 2011 – GMC decides to allow compostable plastics in feedstock mix, plans dual-stream composting at new facility in Williston
- 2014 – GMC lifts ban on compostable cutlery following a lengthy study showing adequate degradation in the system
- 2014-Present – GMC sees an influx of unlabeled, green film liner bags that don't break down in the ASP compost system

GMC'S CUTLERY COMPOSTABILITY TRIAL

2. Vegware



3. Eco-Products



**6. Nature Works
Ingeo
(Jaya)**



WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- Vast improvements in last 10-15 years
 - Improved formulations
 - Increased scrutiny from certifiers (BPI)
 - Penalties for bad actors
 - Legislative solutions
- Accelerated production, marketing, and use of bioplastics
- Continuance of abuse, greenwashing by poly manufacturers, resellers
 - “Biodegradable”
 - “Oxodegradable”
 - “Earth friendly,” etc.







EARTH FRIENDLY

We Are Your Earth Friendly "Green" Bag Source

Green Bag Source, Earth Friendly, Environmentally Friendly, Eco-Friendly, and Nature Friendly are all ways we think describe our concerted effort and dedication to the environment and our planet. At International Plastics we strive not only to be better stewards with what we have been entrusted, but to make available (to our customers) a wide variety of options that suit the growing demand on individuals and companies.

We now offer many choices to meet the challenges of Sustainable Packaging initiatives. While most of our stock poly products are made from recyclable polyethylene, we also offer earth friendly alternatives like the new Bio-Tuf compostable can liners. Keep in mind that any of our custom made poly products can be made with new biodegradable additives. These new bioplastic additives aid in compostability and reduces the actual amount of time it takes the plastic film to decompose.



Green Trash Bags



Earth Friendly Plastic Bags



Plastic Sheeting made w/
Post Consumer Waste



Biodegradable Zip Locking
Bags



Biodegradable Honeycomb
Sheets



Help us improve by sharing your feedback.

Addressing the Connu

mp

IO

4.7 ★★★★★
Google
Customer Reviews



19 x 18 + 9.5 Wave Top THINK GREEN Carry Out Superwave Bag

Source:
<http://www.interplas.com/packaging-earth-friendly>



COMPOSTABLE PLASTICS AT GMC – LOOKING AHEAD:

- Pros & Cons of ongoing acceptance will continue to be weighed
- Potential for legislative action in future sessions

QUESTIONS?

Dan Goossen

Director of Compost, Green Mountain Compost

dan@greenmountaincompost.com