Western Michigan
Food Recovery Council

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Midwest Food Recovery Summit
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Economic Impact Potential and Characterization of Municipal Solid Waste in Michigan
Top Materials in W. Michigan MSW Composition (mean % by weight - 5% or greater)

- Inorganics: 15.4%
- Food Waste: 12.6%
- Mixed Paper: 11.4%
- Other Organics: 8.5%
- Corrugated: 8.0%
- Plastic Packaging: 6.1%
- Wood: 5.1%
- Yard Waste: 4.4%
- Other Plastic: 4.3%
- Textiles: 3.8%

Source: West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum
2016 Michigan MSW Valuation Study. wmsbf.org/msw
West Michigan = 132,000 tons

Southwest Michigan = 106,000 tons
Michigan disposes of an estimated 1.1 million tons of food waste through its municipal waste stream each year, the single largest source of material disposed in the state’s landfills and waste-to-energy facilities.
Grocery operations and commercial and institutional food service account for an estimated 48% of food waste (FWRA, 2015).
Why A Council?

Need for:

• Peer-to-peer education
• Multidisciplinary networking
• Technical resources
• Opportunities for collaboration
Objectives

- Improve food recovery in Western Michigan (promoting hierarchy)
- Define barriers to food recovery
- Establish a community of practice
- Higher value recovery options.
- Facilitate collaboration
  - Municipal and corporate food waste management
  - Complementary food systems and community health initiatives.
Marginal Food Waste Abatement Cost Curve
COUNCIL ACTIVITIES
• Quarterly meetings
• Annual or semiannual forums
• Email newsletter monthly
• Shared capacity projects
• Research
• Training opportunities

STRUCTURE
• Leadership Committee
• Council Membership
  • Organizational stakeholders
  • One representative plus guests
• E-mail list
• Collaboration with local food councils
• As Needed: Subcommittees
State of the State Report

• 24 Generators of Food Waste
  • Mix of small/large, industries, regions
  • Few food processing/manufacturing. No farms

• 16 Resources and Other Stakeholders
  • Including 3 waste management firms

• 9 Users of Food Waste (6 Hunger, 3 Compost)
  • More data needed
General Takeaways

• Different scales = different barriers, solutions
• "Language barriers" and political spectrum
• Capacity available for organics recycling, though inconvenient
• Undesired impacts from donation (baked goods especially)
Most Important?

- Feeding the hungry: 28%
- Protecting the environment: 43%
- Cost savings: 15%
- Increased sales or revenue: 10%
- Feeding animals: 4%
Generators of Food Waste
Respondents

- Food service - cafeteria/institutional: 35%
- Manufacturer/processor: 12%
- Food service - restaurant: 23%
- Grocery/retail: 9%
- Distributor: 3%
- Food pantry/food bank: 3%
- Food service - banquet/catering: 15%
Source Reduction

Most Popular
• Strategic Purchasing (7)
• Menu Best Practice (7)
• Training (4)
• Documentation (4)
• Recovery First (4)

Less Popular
• Staff feedback
• Strategic delivery
• Inventory practice
• Forecasting software
• Sales
• Waste audits
• Waste tracking software
Diversion Practices: 21 of 24
- Donation Hunger (11)
  - Share tables (1)
- Animal feed (8)
- Composting (17)
- Energy (3)

18 of 21 incur costs for diversion or recovery
- No organization receives payment for product.

Barriers
- Cost (13) • Lack connections (10)
- Resources, knowledge, staff (10)
- Packaging (5) • Liability (4)
- Company Policy (2)
- Vendors (1) • Health Dept. (1)

Have Food Would Like to Divert But Can’t: 3
- Recalled food products
- Unused prepared food
Most Interested

- Publicize efforts
- Pilot innovative technologies
- Increase donation quantities
- Expand compost service
- Source reduction
- Any available means
Key Takeaways

• Employee satisfaction was most commonly cited benefit of practice.

• Less than half of organizations publicize efforts.

• Diversity of organizations creates quantification barrier

• “Not sure what end product is”
Whirlpool Zera In-Home Food Waste Composter
The Livery Brewery in Benton Harbor, MI
Users of Food Waste
Current State

Hunger-Relief
• Hundreds of organizations

• Limitations vary
  • Prepared food (0)

• Requires more research

Compost / Energy
• Compost: 7+
  • Range of limitations
    • Pre-packaged (3)
    • Other (1): Meat, dairy, foods cooked in oil, standing oil, bones

• Location & cost barriers
• Less than 1% of local waste stream

• Energy: 4+

Barriers: Storage and Access

Barriers: Funds and staff
Material Sources

Hunger-Relief (7)
• Grocery (4) • Food bank* (5)
• Community donors (4)
• Also: Manufacturing, Farms, Distributors

Pay for Material? (4)
Charge to Take Material? (0)
Generates surplus (3)

Compost (3)
• Grocery, Manufacturing, Farms, Distributor, Food service

Pay for Material? (0)
Charge to Take Material (3)
Summit

- Culminating summit May 2018
- 140 multidisciplinary stakeholders
- No barrier to entry
- Facilitated discussion
- Strong outcomes
Thank You!