

Characterizing Compost and Anaerobic Digestion Products



Presented by:

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1/26/10

What are you selling?



..a 'product' or just 'brown' stuff ?

The marketplace has become more sophisticated

Buyer's Requirements



What are they willing to buy?



Soil Incorporant

- Agricultural crop estab.
- Turf establishment
- Garden bed preparation
- Reclamation/remediation
- Nursery production
- Roadside Vegetation

Growing Media Component

- **Container/potting substrates**
- Landscape (e.g. rooftop, raised planters)
- Backfill mixes (tree/shrub)
- **Golf course (e.g. tee, green, divot mixes)**
- Manufactured topsoil

Buyers have different requirements

Monitor Product Quality & Process

INTERNAL PURPOSES

- Assists in optimizing the composting process
- Generate data for use in facility problem solving
- QA/QC



EXTERNAL PURPOSES

- Illustrate product characteristics & consistency
- Generate data crucial for product sales
- QA/QC - *Certification programs are helpful*

Uniform/Appropriate Level of Testing

Compost Parameters
pH
Electrical Conductivity
Nutrient Content (N-P-K / Ca, Mg, S)
Moisture Content
Organic Matter Content
Particle Size
Heavy Metals
Pathogens
Stability
Plant Response (Maturity)

*What should I test for? Depends on end use
Still struggling to get industry to test properly*



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STA Approved Labs

- A&L Canada Laboratories – London, Ontario, Canada
- A&L Great Lakes Labs, Inc. – Ft. Wayne, IN
- A&L Western Laboratories, Modesto, CA
- Ag Analytical Services Lab – State College, PA
- Colorado Analytical Laboratories, Brighton, CO
- Midwest Laboratories, Omaha, NE
- Soil Control Lab – Watsonville, CA
- Soil Test Farm Consultants, Moses Lake, WA
- Woods End Laboratories – Mt. Vernon, ME

Use an experienced 'organics' lab !



Test Method: Selection of Sampling Locations for Windrows and Piles						Units: N/A	
Test Method Applications							
Process Management					Product Attributes		
Step 1: Feedback Recovery	Step 2: Feedback Prevention	Step 3: Correcting Other Treatment	Step 4: Control Compost Cont.	Step 5: Control Compost Storage and Piling	Step 6: Control Compost Handling and Piling	Step 7: Control Compost Storage and Piling	Step 8: Control Compost Handling and Piling
02.01-B	02.01-B	02.01-B	02.01-B	02.01-B	02.01-B	02.01-B	02.01-B

02.01-B SELECTION OF SAMPLING LOCATIONS FOR WINDROWS AND PILES

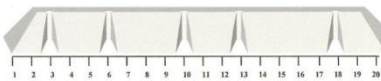


Fig 02.01-01 Hypothetical sample collection patterns from a compost windrow

NOTE 1B—In this example, a scale from 1-20 is superimposed on the long dimension of a compost windrow. Five distances (3, 6, 10, 13 and 18 m) are randomly selected to each side of the windrow, (e.g., numbers randomly pulled from a hat), to assign sample collection locations. Point-samples are collected from within three zones at each cutout.

NOTE 2B—The illustrated cut-outs are depicted on one side of the windrow, in a real operation, the cut-outs must be randomly assigned to each side of the windrow. Cone-shaped piles have a circular base. Measure around the base of a cone-shaped pile and randomly assign cutout positions along the pile's meridian, or circumference.

11.2 Plastic Gloves

11.3 Tarp—clean plastic, canvas, or other type of mixing surface if feedstock is liquid sludge.

11.4 Cold Packs—chemical ice packs, or 4-L plastic bags (e.g., heavy duty Ziploc® freezer bags) filled with approximately 0.5 L of water and frozen flat. One ice pack per 4-L sample container of compost to be shipped, (e.g., three ice packs are recommended for three compost 4-L samples).

11.5 Aluminum Foil—lining for plastic shipping pail, and

10. Apparatus for Method B

- 10.1 **Sampling Container**—five 16- to 20-L (4- to 5-gal), plastic (HDPP), glass.
- 10.1.1 **Organic Contaminant Tests**—For samples to be analyzed for the presence of organic contaminants, please refer to Table 02.01-6 Organic Contaminant Tests: Sampling containers and conditions for compost and source ingredient testing. Modify sample packaging steps presented in this section accordingly.
- 10.2 **Sampling Device**—silage auger, tilling spade, or other appropriate sampling device.
- 10.3 **Tractor Loader**—with loader, (e.g., Bobcat, etc.).
- 10.4 **Trowel**—high-density polypropylene (HDPP), for stirring and mixing composite sample.
- 10.5 **Pail**—16- to 20-L (4- to 5-gal), square pails. Use standard 5-gal plastic pails for shipping only when square pails are not available (e.g., square pails are available through Cleveland Hoist & Supply Co., 450 East 77th Street, Cleveland, OH 44103, telephone: 216 881 3330, Fax: 216 881 7323, URL: <http://www.clevelandhoist.com/squarepails.html>).
- 11. **Reagents and Materials for Method B**
- 11.1 **Plastic Bags**—three 4-L (1 gal) durable bags with seal, (e.g., Ziploc® Freezer bags).

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Test Methods for the Examination of Composting and Compost

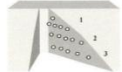


Fig 02.01-02 Five horizontally dispersed point-samples are collected from each of three depths or zones within each cutout.

NOTE 1B—(1) upper 1/3 of compost profile height, (2) middle 1/3 of compost profile height, and (3) lower 1/3 of compost profile height, where compost pile does not exceed the recommended overall height of 3 m. Create more than three sampling depths or zones within each cutout when the cutting pile exceeds a height of 3 m, relative variability is high or the property of interest is found at very low concentrations, near the laboratory detection limit.

12.2 Composite Point-Sampler—Place all 15 point samples from one cutout together into one sanitized plastic pail. Completely mix the point samples by stirring thoroughly with a sanitized wooden stick or trowel, and by covering and shaking the pail to further mix the samples.

12.3.1 Repeat the blending process at least four times until all point samples are thoroughly blended to form one composite sample that accurately represents the compost for the cutout.

12.3.2 Proceed to the next compost sample cutout and repeat this process to collect one thoroughly blended composite sample from each of the five cutouts.

12.3.3 Composite Sample—Transfer the five composite samples from the sample collection pails onto a mixing tarp or other appropriately sanitized surface or container, such as into a large pail where all samples can be mixed, blended and then covered to minimize moisture loss. Thoroughly blend the five composite samples to form one large sample that represents the average condition of the entire batch or windrow in question.

12.3.3.1 Quarter the composite sample and thoroughly mix and quarter again. Continue to subdivide and split the sample into quarters and mix as described until sample size reaches approximately 12 L (3 gal).

12.4 Stratified Sampling—This sample collection strategy is used to evaluate for the presence of spatial variations or gradients in compost characteristics across and through a windrow or pile.

12.4.1 Stratified Samples across Cutouts—Use this sampling strategy to test for differences in compost characteristics between sample cutouts and along the longer dimension of a windrow. Do not composite materials from the five separate cutouts when

Test Methods for the Examination of Composting and Compost

Sample Collection and Laboratory Preparation

02.01 Field Sampling of Compost Materials

monitoring for the presence of gradients along the longer dimension of a windrow. Pack and prepare five separate samples (i.e., five separate composite samples, one from each cutout) for shipment as described in step 12.5.

12.4.2 Stratified Samples within Cutouts—Use this sampling strategy to evaluate for the presence of spatial variations or gradients that occur with changes in pile depth or distance from the windrow core to its surface.

12.5 Prepare for Shipment and Storage

12.5.1 Transfer the blended compost to three 4-L (1-gal) sample bags, (e.g., plastic Ziploc® freezer bags).

12.5.2 Line the shipment pail with aluminum foil or other reflective material to minimize sample heat-gain. Place the sample bags containing the compost sample into the plastic pail and interleave with ice packs for shipping (refer to Fig 02.01-03).

12.5.3 Cover the pail with its lid. Seal and secure the lid with a packing tape. Send the sample pail by one-day express delivery service to your selected laboratory for analysis. Include a chain of custody information sheet with environmental regulatory samples (Refer to Method 02.01-E).

NOTE 1B—Maintain cool samples at 4°C (39.2°F) to diminish microbial and chemical activity prior to and during sample shipment.

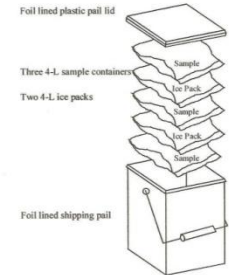


Fig 02.01-03 Preparation for shipment.

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02.01-15



OFFICIAL Seal of Testing Assurance
Compost Sample Chain of Custody Form

STA Laboratory Address: City, State, Zip code		Tel: FAX: Email:		Storage Locations: Freezer: _____ Cold Room: _____ Storage Shelf: _____	
Client/Shipping Company: Billing Address: City, State, Zip code		Tel: FAX: Email:		Sample Conditions: Temperature: _____ Moisture: _____ Sample Type: <input type="checkbox"/> POINT <input type="checkbox"/> COMPOSITE <input type="checkbox"/> STRATIFIED <input type="checkbox"/> INTERVAL P.O. Number: _____ USOC Member: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Name or Source of Sample(s) Name of Producer, Sample Collection(s)		Collection Date/Time		Shipping Temperature	
Client Sample ID and Special Instructions		1. List Feedstocks 2. Check off that apply 3. List % by volume (Optional)		Indicate Compost Analyte Requirements (Identify uses)	
Green waste _____ Cereals _____ Manure _____ Fish Waste _____ Food _____ Grasses, Fats _____ Sewage _____ MSW _____ Food _____		Date: _____ Time: _____ Initial: _____		Compost Matrix: Feedstock <input type="checkbox"/> Mulch <input type="checkbox"/> In-Vessel <input type="checkbox"/> Day Use <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
Lab Use ONLY Lab Number & Sample Status		Ambient <input type="checkbox"/> Wet Ice <input type="checkbox"/> Dry Ice <input type="checkbox"/>		A B C	
PLEASE PROVIDE SPECIFIC FEEDSTOCK AND OPERATIONAL DETAIL IN THE SPACE PROVIDED. YOUR VOLUNTEERED INFORMATION PROVIDES USOC STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMITTEE WITH CRITICAL DATA NEEDED TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE COMPOSTING PROCESS AND COMPOST END USES.					
Releasing Signature 1 Date _____ Time _____		Receiving Signature 1 Date _____ Time _____		Releasing Signature 2 Date _____ Time _____	
Releasing Signature 3 Date _____ Time _____		Receiving Signature 3 Date _____ Time _____		Releasing Signature 4 Date _____ Time _____	

Use proper lab test methods, sampling and sample handling procedures

Compost Certification and Registration



Helping to promote and justify proper/on-going testing



Organic Matter Based By-Products / Feedstocks

- **Municipal**
- **Industrial**
- **Agricultural**
- **Energy**
- **Other**



*Understand that incoming feedstock(s)
affects finished product characteristics*



Factors Affecting Product Characteristics

- Feedstocks
- Composting / AD processes
- Post processes



Compost Characterization



Poor job as an industry collecting and analyzing (studying) data, STA change



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National Compost Data

	Moisture	Organic Matter	Ash %	Bulk Density	pH	EC5	Carbonate	Germination	Vigor
	%	% Dry wt	% Dry wt	lb/cu ft wet		dS/m	as CaCO3 lb/ton dry	% relative to pos. control	% relative to pos. control
MIN	0.8	1.1	1.0	7.9	3.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
MAX	88.3	99.0	98.9	101.6	12.1	61.6	1401.3	100.0	100.0
AVE	39.1	46.7	53.3	41.9	7.7	6.0	24.5	80.0	84.2

Important to track industry trends, but needs to be evaluated by feedstock, geography, etc.

Compiled data (1 lab)

National Compost Data

	N	C	C/N Ratio	NH ₄ -N	NO ₃ -N	Organic N	P	K	Ca	Mg	SO ₄
	% Dry wt	% Dry wt		mg/kg dry wt	mg/kg dry wt	% Dry wt	mg/kg Dry wt	% Dry wt	% Dry wt	% Dry wt	mg/kg dry wt
MIN	0.0	0.1	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	67.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
MAX	13.3	94.6	517,200	1.9	1.1	13.3	84,768	4.8	51.8	11.6	560,000
AVE	1.7	25.0	271.8	0.1	0.0	1.7	6252.2	0.9	3.7	0.6	3,913

*Nutrient data very important to ag (& other) markets
Evaluate quality of data, remove outliers, etc.*

Single Composting Facility Compiled Data

Characteristics	Units of Measure	Average	Min	Max
<i>NUTRIENTS</i>				
Total Nitrogen	%, wet wt. basis	0.61	0.41	0.78
Ammonia (NH ₄)	ppm, wet wt. basis	395.05	9.70	980
Nitrate (NO ₃)	ppm, wet wt. basis	141.92	3.00	420
Org. Nitrogen	%, wet wt. basis	0.56	0.39	0.75
Phosphorus (P ₂ O ₅)	%, wet wt. basis	1.01	0.76	1.3
Potassium (K ₂ O)	%, wet wt. basis	0.52	0.43	0.63
Calcium	%, wet wt. basis	4.93	3.60	6.4
Magnesium	%, wet wt. basis	0.35	0.29	0.4
Sulfate (SO ₄ -S)	%, wet wt. basis	1,711.54	650.00	2400
Iron	%, dry wt. basis	19,077	14,000	24,000

Compiled for ease of evaluation, and to understand trends, consistency, etc.

OTHER PARAMETERS	Units of Measure	Average	Min	Max
PHYSICAL				
Moisture	%, wet wt. basis	37.84	29.80	47.3
Organic Matter	%, dry wt. basis	30.73	25.80	46.4
Bulk Density	Lbs/cubic yard wet wt.	53.38	41.00	85
pH Value	Units	7.27	6.94	7.73
Electrical Conductivity	dS/m ² (mmhos/cm), dry wt. basis	4.97	2.70	6.5
Particle size	% passing 9.5mm sieves, dry wt. basis	98.37	87.00	100
C:N Ratio	Ratio	16.77	13.00	25
BIOLOGICAL				
Stability	mg CO ₂ -C/g OM/day	1.18	0.20	2.8
Maturity – Emergence	average % of control	100.00	100.00	100
Maturity – Vigor	average % of control	95.25	80.00	100

**Understand what you are producing / selling, who to sell to
Get help interpreting (opinions, interests in data differ)**





Consumer Use Program

Lawn Class

Parameter				
		Preferred	General	
pH	pH units	6.0-7.5	5.5 – 8.5	Modify soil pH with lime, etc., if necessary, based on soil testing results.
Soluble Salts (Electrical Conductivity)	dS/m (mmhos/cm) dry weight basis	Maximum of 5	Maximum of 15	Keep in mind that soluble salts are also plant nutrients. Compost containing a higher soluble salt content should be applied at lower application rates, and 'watered in' well.
Moisture Content	% wet weight basis	40-50%	35-65%	Products with higher moisture contents may be used, they may simply be more difficult to spread
Organic Matter Content	% dry weight basis	35-50%	25-65%	Creating a soil containing 5 – 10% organic matter is desirable in typical, well drained soils.
Particle Size	Screen size to pass through	3/8"	1/2"	Compost topdressing should be screened through a 1/4 - 3/8" screen, depending on grass mowing height.
Stability	mg CO ₂ -C per g OM per day	<2	<4	The lower the number, the more completely composted
Maturity	% seed emergence & vigor	90-100	80-100	The higher the percentage the better
Physical Contaminants*	% dry weight basis	<0.5%	<1%	Small stones may be deemed more acceptable than man-made inerts (e.g., plastic)

*Can you meet product spec of buyers?
More spec coming, helps in expanding markets*



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Remember, not all composts are alike !

Primary Feedstock	Wood Compost	MSW Compost	Yard Trimmings Compost	Cotton Boll Compost	Cattle manure Compost
PHYSICAL					
Moisture Content (%)	28.3	36.1	30.7	38.4	29.8
Total Solids (%)	71.8	64.2	69.4	61.8	70.2
CHEMICAL					
pH	5.9	7.4	7.4	8.1	8.9
EC (dS/m)	0.3	6.4	4.0	4.2	12.1
PO ₄ -P (mg/L)	2.0	1.3	1.1	86.3	45.6
TKN (% w/w)	0.3	2.0	1.0	1.5	2.2
NO ₃ -N (mg/kg)	5.5	355.3	447.0	78.0	19.8
NH ₄ -N (mg/kg)	1.2	14.0	9.5	61.7	1835.5
NH ₄ -N / NO ₃ -N (Ratio)	2.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	36.0
Fe (mg/kg)	4,734	8,896	11,300	3,645	5,285
C:N (Ratio)	161.0	10.9	12.0	15.0	12.2
CCE (% w/w)	2.8	16.4	-	5.0	9.1
BIOLOGICAL					
Seedling Emergence (%)	99.0	95	100.0	100	5
Seedling Vigor (%)	5.5	71.0	97.6	90.0	1.0
CO ₂ Evolution (mg/gTS/d)	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.9	2.0
Salmonella (MPN/g dw basis)	0.0	0.0	5.8	3.1	1.5
T. Coliform Bacteria (MPN/g dw basis)	1,400	10.8	4.0	5.4	1.8

AD Product Data



AD Processes



- Technology/process will affect
 - What you produce, and
 - Necessary post digestion processes
- High vs. low solids digestion



Match feedstock to technology



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Product Data - Solids

Characteristics	Units of Measure	Compost	Fiber
Total Nitrogen	% dry wt	2.2	1.4
Total Phosphorus (P ₂ O ₅)	% dry wt	1.3	1.1
Total Potassium (K ₂ O)	% dry wt	3.0	1.6
Calcium (Ca)	% dry wt	2.1	2.3
pH Value	Units	8.74	8.58
Electrical Conductivity	mmhos/cm	11.01	9.72
Organic Matter	% dw	79	86.7
C/N Ratio	Ratio	20	37
Moisture	%	66.1	69.2
Stability	mg CO₂-C/g OM/day	1.5	5.6
Maturity - Emergence	%	100	N/A

*Understand product – manure feedstock,
low solids AD, little US data on biowaste*





Different methods of processing

↑ Composting digester solids - aerobically

Processed and dried →



AD Liquid

- **Liquids**

- Fertilizer – dilute or concentrate (?)



*Still a lot of work
to be done !*

*(nutrient value offset
transportation cost?)*



Product Data - Liquid

Nutrients	mg/kg	Other	
Total Nitrogen	6005	Percent Solids	5.8 %
Ammonia Nitrogen	5825	pH Value	8.09 units
Nitrate Nitrogen	125	Electrical Conductivity	78 mmhos/cm
Organic Nitrogen	55	Respiration Rate	9643 mg CO₂-C/L/day
Total Phosphorus (P ₂ O ₅)	1133	Organic Carbon	19069 mg/kg
Total Potassium (K ₂ O)	4425	Humic Acid	2876 mg/L
Calcium (Ca)	1907	Turbidity	7640 NTU
Magnesium (Mg)	769	Suspended Solids (SS)	17000 mg/L

Understand product – manure feedstock



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High Solids AD



Easy to compost post digestion

No water to deal with

High Solids AD Data*

Characteristic	Fresh Feedstock Blend (fresh mass)	After 28 days Digestion (fresh mass)
Total Solids (g/L)	42,428	36,344
K (mg/kg)	6,619	6,069
K₂O (mg/kg)	7,976	7,314
Mg (mg/kg)	2,414	2,551
P (mg/kg)	1,816	1,501
P₂O₅ (mg/kg)	4,158	3,437

**Biowaste – food/green*

*Small moisture content increase, nutrients concentrate,
Carbon content decreases*

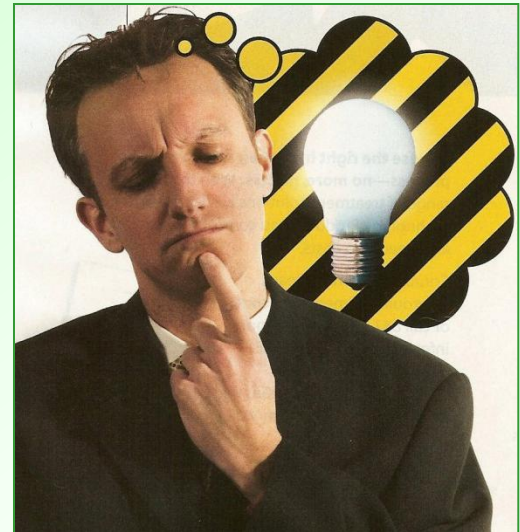
Product Development Through Blending / Characterization

- **What does the market want / need ?**

Do the research, trials, testing

- **What can be produced?**

Use testing to figure it out !



EXAMPLES



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Blending Trials



*Dangerous without proper
characterization and research*

Root Zone Guidelines vs. Blending Data

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>USGA Guidelines</u>	<u>STRI Golf Guidelines (UK only)</u>	<u>90 : 10 Sand: Compost</u>	<u>85 : 15 Sand: Compost</u>	<u>80 : 20 Sand: Compost</u>
Saturated Hydraulic Conductivity	≥ 150 mm / hr	≥ 150 mm / hr	780	577	429
Total Porosity (%)	35 - 55 %	≥ 35 %	38.2	39.3	39.1
At 30 cm Tension					
Air-Filled Porosity (%)	15 - 30 %	≥14 %	16.6	17.5	12.5
Capillary Porosity (%)	15 - 25 %	≥17%	21.6	21.8	26
Bulk Density (g/cc)			1.6	1.57	1.54
Particle Density (g/cc)			2.59	2.58	2.53
Organic Matter Content (%)	1% - 5% (2-4% ideal)	0.5 - 3.5 %	1	1.3	1.4
At 40 cm Tension					
Air-Filled Porosity (%)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	26.6	26.6	23.6
Capillary Porosity (%)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	11.6	12.7	15.6
pH			6.6	6.5	6.3

Blended Topsoil Compost

Characteristics	Units of Measure	Sandy soil	1:2 Compost : Sand	1:1 Compost : Sand
<i>Nutrients</i>				
Carbon	%	2.51	3.9	4.86
Nitrogen	%	0.05	0.16	0.25
Phosphorus (P)	ppm	56	95	113
Potassium (K)	ppm	26	417	608
Calcium	ppm	441	849	1023
Magnesium	ppm	107	192	243
Zinc	ppm	47.1	43.5	40.4
Copper	ppm	3.6	3.4	3.2
Sulfur	ppm	31	51.5	53.1
<i>Other Parameters</i>				
Organic Matter	%, dry wt. basis	0.3	1.5	1.8
pH Value	Units	7.5	7.5	7.7
Electrical Conductivity	dS/m ²	0.1	0.34	0.43
CEC	meq/100g	3.2	6.9	8.7
<i>Particle Size Analysis</i>				
Sand	%	95.2	93.3	92.5
Silt	%	1.1	1.7	2.4
Clay	%	3.7	5	5.1
Textural Classification		Sand	Sand	Sand

Test for parameters important to customers and application



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Conclusions / Comments

- Industry has appropriate testing methods developed
- Characterization data is being collected for composts (needs to be analyzed, nationally)
 - Some composters are testing, effectively using the data (many collect data and *store* it)
- Little investment has been made into studying AD products in the U.S.
 - National funding available?
- Industry must take product development seriously

QUESTIONS ?

Available through Biocycle....

