

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE MARKETS FOR RECYCLED ORGANICS

ORGANICS INDUSTRY SUPPORT PROGRAM – FACT SHEET



Sustainability Victoria is working with industry to strengthen and develop markets for recycled organic products.

Background

The Victorian Organics Resource Recovery Strategy (VORRS) was released by Sustainability Victoria in September 2015 to provide a strategic, long-term framework for government, industry and the community to better manage organic waste.

The VORRS provides a 30-year vision to develop a vibrant and functioning organics market where organics resources will be contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation by improving the quality of our soil and providing an energy source to local infrastructure.

Sustainable Markets was one of the seven strategic directions set out in the VORRS to guide delivery of the strategy.

Sustainable Markets Program

The VORRS recognises that the absence of strong and sustainable end markets is a significant barrier to organic waste and resource recovery in Victoria.

The Sustainable Markets Program, led by SV, aims to improve end markets for recycled organics by:

- › Working with industry to develop standard quality assurance processes and standards for recycled organic products
- › Providing industry with information that enables them to produce higher quality products for markets through the development of product profiles/specifications
- › Working with end markets to understand/demonstrate the benefits of using organic products
- › Identify the barriers to increasing the growth of markets for recycled organic products and work with others to develop the right conditions for markets to grow and mature

Developing a quality framework for recycled organics products

During 2016, SV worked with recycled organic processors and the dairy industry to develop a quality assurance framework for recycled organic products for use in the dairy industry.

This quality assurance framework built on the requirements of the Australian Standard for Compost, soil conditioners and mulches – AS4454-2012, to develop an industry specific fit-for-purpose product specification to meet food safety, animal health, environmental health and other specific requirements for the dairy industry.

The quality assurance framework was presented at the 2017 National Conference of the Australian Recycled Organics Association and is summarised in Figure 1.

Legislative Framework

The Environment Protection (Industrial Waste Resource) Regulations 2009 assists to implement the waste hierarchy by encouraging industry to utilise industrial waste as a resource.

Quality Assurance Framework

Defines a set of product and management system requirements for the manufacture of quality recycled organic products for agricultural industries.

The framework uses AS4454 as a starting point and then may include additional product quality and testing requirements (beyond AS4454) to meet food safety, animal health and environmental health requirements specific to the particular agricultural end-use.

Standards Framework

AS4454-2012 Composts, soil conditioners and mulches – specifies the minimum requirements for recycled organic products in order to facilitate the beneficial recycling and use of organic materials with minimal adverse impacts on the environment and public health.

Key Elements of the Quality Assurance Framework

- › Sets minimum quality requirements
 - Establishes limits for physical, chemical and biological characteristics of the recycled organic products
- › Provision of product information to customers
 - A producer must provide details of the physical, chemical and biological composition of the recycled organic product and confirm compliance with the minimum quality requirements (Vendor declaration)
 - The producer should also provide information about the feedstocks used in the product and recommendations and warnings for the use of the product

Figure 1
Quality Assurance Framework for Recycled Organics Products

Lessons learnt

Through its work with the dairy industry and recycled organic processors, SV identified current barriers to increasing the potential growth of markets for recycled organic products within the dairy industry. These barriers limit the immediate potential for uptake of the quality assurance framework by the dairy industry.

However, the framework that was developed is a valuable resource that can be used as a starting point for developing product and management system requirements for other industry sectors in the future.

Further Information

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Sustainable Markets next steps

SV will continue to work with industry to develop standard quality assurance processes and standards for recycled organic products.

Over the next two years, the focus will be on delivering an Organics Industry Support Program through:

- › Undertaking demonstration projects to show the benefits of using recycled organic products to improve agricultural production and land conditions
- › Developing and delivering education programs for stakeholders (e.g. farmers and agronomists) to highlight the benefits and uses of recycled organic products
- › Developing and publishing industry guides for use of recycled organics products to support development of end-markets in target agricultural sectors
- › Developing guidance for the recycled organics processing industry to support implementation of a quality management approach that produces higher quality products and that improves market confidence in recycled organics products