

“Fork it Over:” Getting Smart about Food Waste

While we often hear unsettling statistics such as “thirty million Americans go hungry every year,” we seldom think of it in the context of our own individual meal preparation waste, leftovers from the meeting in the conference room or, on a grander scale, the overall food we send to disposal facilities every year. When the connection between these is made, the realization is quite startling.

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency and other federal studies, as much as 27% of the food produced for human consumption annually in the US – an estimated 48 million edible tons – is literally thrown away as waste. Not only do we carelessly discard it, we spend tens of millions of dollars to truck it to landfills and bury it. Recovering a meager 5% of this food loss would represent one day’s worth of food for an estimated four million people. Furthermore, keeping good, edible food out of the landfills would save Americans millions of dollars a year.

Is the point of this discussion to make you feel guilty you may ask? Well... it’s actually more about telling you of some of the good things that the Commonwealth is already doing to address this problem and get you thinking about how we might do better. You may be happy to learn that in recent months OSD awarded several new contracts:

- **GRO20** (see box on the right) – offers agencies and other contract users the opportunity to replace (the “environmentally indestructible”) polystyrene plates, cups, bowls, trays, and plastic utensils with products made of bio-based materials. Many of these new products are made from renewable agricultural plants grown in the US and elsewhere and they are biodegradable in composting programs;
- **FAC24 and FAC33** – includes vendors offering compost products, and others that can assist departments in establishing a composting program, respectively;
- **GRO21** – currently in the solicitation phase, is seeking to award contracts to catering services, conference facilities and hotels that can provide environmentally preferable aspects to their services, such as biodegradable foodservice ware, reusable cups and plates, goods in bulk dispensers instead of individual packages, programs to donate leftover food to shelters, and more.

In addition, the MA Department of Environmental Protection is working with the vendors on Contract #GRO20 and the food service providers at the Boston Convention and Exposition Center and the Hynes Convention Center to “green” the food operations of both these facilities. As a result, the BCEC and Hynes are looking into piloting biodegradable foodservice items as well as implementing composting and recycling programs. In their Beyond 2000 Master Plan, DEP also proposes banning food residuals from landfills by 2010 beginning with a waste ban for the commercial sector and regulations governing composting of food and other organic materials.

As you can imagine, there is much more that can be done – or perhaps already in progress throughout the state. We welcome hearing from you on current initiatives in your city or town as well as on potential next steps. As you ponder the possibilities, we invite you to take a look at such programs as the *Fork it Over* and *Dig It* food donation and composting programs in the City of Portland, Oregon, www.portlandonline.com/osd/index.cfm?c=ebgic. We look forward to hearing your ideas on how to better “share the food wealth” in Massachusetts.



GRO20: A New Contract for Biodegradable and Recycled-Content Products for Foodservice

Biodegradable Foodserviceware

Cereplast, Inc. of Hawthorne, CA
Matthew Penrose, 310-676-5000
mpenrose@cereplast.com

Nature Friendly Products

of Beachwood, OH
Bill Bigger, 440-463-6676
bbigger@nfpco.com

Recycled Content Paper Products

AmSan of Chelsea, MA
Phillip Correia, 617-839-2970
Pcorreia@amsan.com

The Durkin Company

of Billerica, MA
Jack Reynolds, 978-262-1312
jackreynolds@thedurkincompany.com

Coming Up In April...

In honor of Earth Day and spring, the April Issue will focus on what we can do on our public lands as well as our own back yards to ensure that we are paying attention to and taking care of our environment. Topics may include water conservation, pesticide reduction, and using native plants in the landscape.

Savings Opportunity

Two Ways to Save: Rebuilt Refrigerated Vending Machines

As of August 2006, the U.S. EPA has established criteria that will allow existing non ENERGY STAR refrigerated beverage vending machines to qualify for ENERGY STAR. Machine owners can now use specified "kits" of components to rebuild old machines so that they can become just as efficient as new ones. Rebuilt machines must meet the same energy consumption criteria as new ENERGY STAR vending machines in order to earn the ENERGY STAR certification mark. ENERGY STAR qualified new and rebuilt refrigerated beverage vending machines can save building and business owners up to 1,700 kWh/year, or nearly \$150 annually on utility bills because they are approximately 50% more energy-efficient than standard machine models.

ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy helping us all save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices. For more information about new and rebuilt ENERGY STAR refrigerated beverage vending machines ask your vending provider or contact John Schott, a technical contractor to the US EPA ENERGY STAR program, at jschott@cadmusgroup.com or 617-673-7107. You can also get more information online at www.energystar.gov/vending.

Events and Trainings

Moving to Biodiesel on the MA Statewide Contract

- **Workshop Trainings to be Scheduled for Early May**

These sessions will provide information on the state's upcoming July 1, 2007 mandate to use biodiesel for all state fleets and equipment. The presentation will include guidelines on how to ensure a seamless transition to biodiesel, testimonials from states and agencies already using the fuel, assurances from vendors on product quality and performance and instructions how to purchase from the state contract. See <http://www.mass.gov/envir/Sustainable/> for dates and sites.

STAR Conference and Exposition

- **May 1 – Bayside Exposition Center, Boston**

Well over twelve dozen EPP vendors will be exhibiting at STAR this year. The EPP status will be indicated in the Program Book and at their booth. Visit them to learn more about EPPs on state contract. Visit www.mass.gov/osd to register.

Subscription Information. *EPP Buyer Updates* are published by the Environmentally Preferable Products Purchasing Program at the MA Operational Services Division. Visit us online, subscribe and unsubscribe at <http://www.mass.gov/epp>.

Savings Opportunity

Save up to 60% on Lighting and Energy Efficient Products

Public purchasers! If you are planning to order fluorescent tubes, compact fluorescent light bulbs or exit signs between April and the end of June, you should take advantage of the Smart\$ave Program offered by OSD.

How does this work?

1. Tell us your planned purchase volume by completing the "Show of Interest" form and sending it to OSD:
www.mass.gov/Aosd/docs/EPP/show_of_interest_2007.xls
Submission deadline: Friday, April 6
2. OSD will negotiate price breaks based on everyone's planned purchases and will announce Smart\$ave prices.
3. Place your orders between late April and late July.

Submitting the form does not lock you in, but we are confident you will like the prices! There are thousands of items in planned orders from dozens of organizations already tallied. Send in your form today! Questions? **Contact Dmitry Nikolayev at 617-720-3351.**

New Contract

New Multi-State Traffic Safety Products Contract



This new statewide contract contains not only traffic cones, but channelizer drums and flexible delineator posts with post-consumer recycled plastic content as well. This multi-state contract includes the states of Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Wisconsin, with New York State acting as the lead Bidder.

The contract offers five different size traffic cones with and without reflective sheeting bands. There are leveled discounts built into the pricing for larger quantity orders. To obtain such discounts, various sizes and types of cones may be combined into one order. In addition, stenciled lettering is available (up to seven letters per cone) at **no charge**. The contract also offers five sizes of flexible delineator posts and four style options for channelizer drums. See contract #VEH80 at www.comm-pass.com for details.

Product Descriptions: All products offered on this contract are made with the following percentages of recycled plastic:

- **Traffic cones** - total of 35-58% recycled content plastic (including a minimum of 8-50% post-consumer content)
- **Flexible delineator posts** - total of 50% recycled content (10% post-consumer recycled plastic)
- **Channelizer drums** – the total recycled content of the base ranges from 71% to 79% (all of which could be post-consumer).