

Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency Provides Support to Schools to Implement Compost Programs



Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency

Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA) is a public benefit corporation created by the New York State Legislature and has successfully managed an integrated solid waste management system on behalf of the residents, schools, and businesses of Onondaga County since 1990. OCRRA aims to make the community a healthier and more sustainable place to live through waste reduction, recycling, composting, and education.

Challenge

According to Natural Resources Defense Council, up to 40 percent of food produce in the U.S. is wasted. Food waste typically comprises about 14.5 percent of municipal solid waste in the United States according to the United State Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). When disposed of via landfill, it breaks down anaerobically producing methane, a potent greenhouse gas which has an impact 25 times greater than carbon dioxide.

Solution

Diverting organics to a composting facility reduces the volume of landfills, the amount of greenhouse gases generated by landfills, and produces compost, which adds nutrients to soil reducing the need for chemicals and pesticides. Compost is organic material that can be added to soil to help plants grow.

OCRRA developed a professionally produced educational video that provides guidance to schools on how to divert their cafeteria food waste and implement a compost program at their schools.

Results

OCRRA produced an educational video filmed at, and featuring students from, Fayetteville Elementary School in Fayetteville, New York. The school is one of 16 schools in Onondaga County that currently has a cafeteria compost program and could illustrate the "how-to" aspect of the food scrap separation.

Challenge

- When food waste breaks down in a landfill it produces methane, a greenhouse gas which has an impact 25 times greater than carbon dioxide.

Solution

- Composting organics decreases the amount of greenhouse gases generated by landfills and creates nutrient rich compost.

Results

- OCRRA produced an educational "how-to" composting video and is sharing the video with high schools and industry professionals throughout the state.

Testimonial

The "how-to" video was shown at Eagle Hill Middle School in Manlius, New York with 58 students surveyed before and after the video. Before seeing the video, the average score on the survey was 82%. After seeing the video, the average score increased to 97%, which demonstrates the favorable educational impact of watching the video.

OCRRA is sharing the video throughout the state, targeting other high schools and coupling the video with a trip to a compost site as well as with industry professionals through the Federation of New York State Solid Waste Association Conference.

Online Media

- [School Cafeteria Food Scrap Composting: How does it work?](#)
- [Website](#)
- [Facebook](#)

"What's so great about this project is that it not only trains students across New York State on the how to implement a school-wide cafeteria food scraps recovery compost program, but also on the whys, highlighting the environmental benefits of food scrap reduction and recovery."

Theresa Evans
OCRRA



Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency

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