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Abstract

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Ecological Design as applied to agricultural or natural resource policy can create windows of entrepreneurial opportunity. The State of Vermont's new policy of mandating diversion of organic waste from landfills is creating new opportunities for agricultural entrepreneurs.

This research examines informative ways of describing both these opportunities and remaining obstacles to an integrated waste management system for organic waste. The product preferences of prospective purchasers of bulk compost are considered using a conjoint analysis approach to survey data. From the preferences survey and key informant interviews, we will explain public/private activities as elements of a broad but unsystematic implementation process-- food waste collection strategies, recruitment of institutional partners for composting, technical support of new compost producers, compost market expansion. Implementation activities will be evaluated in terms of congruency with the policy goals articulated, as well as on general standards of ecological design and policy efficiency and efficacy.

The survey of prospective compost purchasers—including horticultural, farming, landscaping and public recreation professionals— will inform stakeholders in Vermont's Food Cycle Coalition of the opportunities for growth and the more general nature of market demand for compost.