

**Marketing Compost Manure to Public Entities
Texas Cooperative Extension
FY 01 319(h) Nonpoint Source Grant
TCEQ Contract No. 582-2-44407**

Quarter no. 2 From 09/16/02 Through 12/15/02 .

I. Introduction/Abstract

Project efforts during the second quarter focused upon administrative tasks to complete allocation of funds and tasks while establishing contacts within the project region and the compost industry for project success. The subcontract process for the Compost Marketing Firm (CMF) continued as the request for proposals was released and finalized during this quarter. However, due to administrative requirements, tasks have been further delayed. Website development has been positive. Several discussions concerning the field research studies and demonstration plots were initiated and establishment of the research is contingent upon approval of the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). The planning meeting for the Research/Demonstration Design Plan (RDDP) was successful and QAPP approval and installation of the RDDP will be the primary focus of the project during the next quarter.

II. Overall Progress and Results by Specific Work Task

Task 1.1 Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI) will serve as the prime contractor for the project and provide overall administration required fulfilling the "Technical Contractor" responsibilities under the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Composted Manure Incentive Project scope of work. Responsibilities include planning and facilitating meetings; negotiating subcontracts; submitting reimbursement documents and appropriate documentation of project progress; handling budget and fiscal reviews; adherence to Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) and TCEQ nonpoint source management program; and ensure all activities, deliverables and tasks follow TCEQ contract provisions.

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. TWRI conducted planning meetings between TCEQ, TSSWCB and TIBH to discuss project needs and task breakdown. TIBH stated willingness to participate in the project as a HUB equivalent. TWRI and TSSWCB discussed involving the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the project to allow the general public to take advantage of the Composted Manure Incentive Program.
- b. A request for proposals to lead to a subcontract for a CMF was released and proposal submission date was set for November 1. CMF selection team evaluated proposals and chose Ron Alexander and Associates (RAA) as the vendor. RAA is currently working with the Ag Purchasing department to resolve insurance requirements to complete the contract process.
- c. Budget allocations and task appointments were designated to each specialists/scientists involved in the project. The Scope of Work along with

- budget amounts was divided into two phases for EPA and submitted to TCEQ.
- d. Position announcements for project specialists in College Station and Stephenville were released in November. The position in College Station was filled by Cecilia Gerngross and Stephenville position remains open.

Task 2.1 Assess the potential market, the compost product quality, existing educational and promotional materials available for a composted manure marketing project, and research and demonstration needs.

- The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:
- a. The survey for compost users and compost producers was completed. Extension specialists conducted the formal survey of municipalities and other public entities (each county in the 17 county area), which were grouped by population.
 - b. Results are being tabulated for a final report, which will be used to estimate current compost use and production by public entities.

Task 2.2 Develop a strategic Compost Education and Marketing Plan (CEMP). The CEMP will include a Research/Demonstration Design Plan (RDDP) to address the research and demonstration needs and a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) to address environmental data collection.

- The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:
- a. The RDDP planning meeting was held on November 22. Specialists and scientists from Dallas, College Station and Stephenville participated in the discussion. The RDDP draft was discussed and revised as suggested. The RDDP was submitted to TCEQ on November 26 with a final revision sent to TCEQ on December 9. TCE is currently waiting for RDDP approval from TCEQ.
 - b. A request to forgo the QAPP requirement was made to TCEQ and EPA on December 11. The request was denied and progress is being made on the QAPP. TCE will contact Mr. Bernard Ray from TCEQ for QAPP assistance.

Task 2.3 Implement the strategic CEMP. The CEMP will provide educational outreach, technical assistance, and documented materials for compost producers and users. It will also provide for the direct marketing of composted manure. The CEMP will target both public entities and private citizens throughout the region.

- The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:
- a. No progress to report at this time.

Task 2.4 Develop a project web site comprised of technical information for project cooperators, demonstration locations and research data, sources of available compost, educational literature from TCE, and facts about TCEQ rebate program and the TCEQ and TSSWCB nonpoint source management program.

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. TCE received approval of the design and framework for the webpage from TCEQ on November 21.
- b. Research for compost users is currently being added to the website.
- c. The project's scope of work in two phases and other related materials such as information regarding the Composted Manure Incentive Program have also been added to the website.

Task 3.1 Provide TCEQ with assistance for quality assurance activities. Compost production sites will be evaluated to ensure sound production practices and at least 20 random site visits will be conducted to monitor uses of compost to ensure applications, BMPs and rates are made in an environmentally appropriate manner.

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. Project specialist attended meetings in Dublin on December 4 and in Mesquite on December 19 to learn about new regulations affecting composters. General permit requirements for compost facilities and new TXDot specifications for compost product were discussed at both meetings.

Task 3.2 Where existing guidance literature is lacking, reports of current and past field trials and result demonstration activities will be documented and published. All effective compost production and use aspects will be documented in draft case studies, cost analysis and effectiveness assessment reports.

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. No progress to report at this time.

Task 3.3 Develop and submit annual and final joint reports of 'success stories' including assessment and feasibility of program strategies so that similar programs could develop from the provided outline.

The following actions have been completed during this reporting period:

- a. No progress to report at this time.

III. Related Issues/Current Problems and Favorable or Unusual Developments

Due to issues related to the finalization of the CMF contract and QAPP development, some project tasks and related details have been delayed.

IV. Conclusion/Projected Work for Next Quarter

The following will be accomplished during the coming quarter:

- a. Final results from the public entity survey will be reviewed and a final report will be submitted to TCEQ.
- b. A QAPP draft will be reviewed within the quarter and will be submitted to TCEQ for approval. Following QAPP and RDDP approval, field studies and demonstration plots will be initiated within the project region.

- c. CMF contract will be finalized and signed. Project cooperators will meet with and discuss project activities with CMF representative. CMF will become intimately involved in project activities.
- d. CMF and project personnel will visit participating compost facilities to evaluate current production status.
- e. Materials and project documents will continue to be added to the Website during the next quarter.
- f. Process between HUBs or HUB equivalents, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and compost facilities will be established to allow for complete utilization of incentive program.