

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

Quarter no. 1 From 07/01/02 Through 09/15/02.

I. Introduction/Abstract

Project efforts during the first quarter focused upon preparation and organization of project tasks, budget and documentation. The primary struggle has been with the lengthy subcontract process for the Compost Marketing Firm (CMF) and thus some tasks have been delayed. Survey efforts and website development has been positive and some field research studies and demonstration plots have already been initiated to take advantage of the winter growing season. Planning meetings for the Research/Demonstration Design Plan (RDDP) and Compost Education and Marketing Plan (CEMP) are rapidly approaching and 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 Texas Cooperative Extension (TCE) specialists, TCE county extension agents, TCEQ, TSSWCB and Brazos River Authority (BRA) to discuss project needs and task breakdown.
- b. A request for proposals to lead to a subcontract for a CMF is under development and review by the purchasing department for TCE.
- c. Budget allocations and task appointments are currently being made to specialists/scientists involved in project success.

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. Two separate surveys have been developed for compost users and compost producers. Extension specialists have completed development and are conducting a formal survey of municipalities and other public entities (each

county in the 17 county area), which are grouped by population. Areas with larger populations are being further divided and specialists will survey these areas as well.

- b. Once the survey is complete, results will be used to estimate current compost use and production by public entities.
- c. An informal survey for private citizens has also been developed and will be conducted by the county extension agents within each county. A minimum of 5 urban residents and 5 rural (agriculture producers) residents will be surveyed in each county. The purpose of the survey will be to obtain information concerning barriers to compost use to provide focus to educational efforts in the private market.

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 and QAPP are being developed and a planning meeting for the two plans will be held prior to October 15, 2002.
- b. Currently existing educational materials are being collected to identify areas where further work is needed.
- c. Initial field trials were recently established in several counties throughout the region. The study location and focus of each study are as follows.
 - 1) Erath County: demonstrate/evaluate rates of application on established forage grass.
 - 2) Erath County: demonstrate/evaluate rates of application for forage grass establishment.
 - 3) Bell County: demonstrate/evaluate rates of application for athletic field management.
 - 4) Bell County: demonstrate use for green area management.
 - 5) Bosque County: demonstrate/evaluate rates of application for forage grass production.
 - 6) Navarro County: demonstrate/evaluate rates of application for forage grass production.
 - 7) Hill County: demonstrate/evaluate rates of application for row crop production.
 - 8) Hood County: demonstrate/evaluate rates of application for turf management.

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. Initial design and framework of the webpage was sent to TCEQ on September 3, 2002 and project webmaster is waiting for comments from TCEQ.

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. No progress to report at this time.

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 development of the CMF contract, 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. The public entity survey instrument has been reviewed and is currently conducted throughout the project region. Final results will be analyzed in the coming quarter.
- b. Budget and tasks will be allocated to specialists, which will aid in the development of the RDDP. A QAPP draft will be reviewed within the quarter and will also be included in the RDDP. Additional field studies and demonstration plots will be initiated following RDDP approval.

- c. Given current issues related to the CMF subcontract, the request for proposals should be posted by early October. Contract bids and CMF selection will occur by late October.
- d. Website progress has been positive and supplemental materials will be added to the site during the next quarter.
- e. County educational efforts will focus on compost use by public and private entities.