

## Composting at Glastonbury

### Website announcement 25th August 2004

At midday on Thursday August 12th 2004 the first load of compost made from organic food waste from Glastonbury Festival was spread at Worthy Farm by Michael Eavis. This significant new venture by the Festival is the first time a large outdoor event has diverted tonnes of waste which would otherwise have gone to landfill – and has addressed environmental concerns about the impact of the event.

The Festival has long been linked with the work of Greenpeace and other environmental bodies, and the stewardship of the land at Worthy has always been a top priority for Michael Eavis. This year, however, there was an even stronger environmental push by the Festival - in papers sent with tickets to festival goers, in advertisements and PR in the media, by posters on site, and supported by frequent stage announcements about global warming. In the licence application the Festival proposed a 16% recycling target to bring it in line with Mendip District Council's own targets. Early indications show there has been a significant increase on last year figures, more than meeting the target set in the licence.

This has been achieved through increased targeting of dry recyclables (cans, bottles, glass and plastic) and through the first ever attempt to source separate organic waste at a major UK music festival. Glastonbury Festival 2004 had 150,000 attendees making its population larger than cities like Oxford and almost twice the size of Bath. This year the number of bins in the public areas was increased from 7000 to 12,000 with 7200 for compostable waste, and 2400 each for dry recyclables and residual waste. There were also large numbers skips for food traders to separate their recyclable and compostable waste. Another important venture was the investment in equipment to chip waste wood. This year 150 tonnes of scrap wood was chipped, with these chippings being recycled into chipboard.

Network Recycling, the company employed by the Festival to co-ordinate recycling, were particularly pleased at how well the festival goers used the separate bins for different types of recyclables. Budweiser provided the tops to these bins, which were clearly marked to show which specific items should go in them. There was extremely low contamination of materials in these bins. It was impressive that the large crowds had taken the time to put their waste in the right bin - in adverse weather conditions - amidst all the revellry.

A major part of this year's success is attributed to the controls that were set on trader's food/drinks disposables that were given out to festival goers. Traders were only permitted to serve food/drinks on biodegradable paper plates and cups along with wooden cutlery, which could then be composted along with the food waste. The Festival consults with Greenpeace and puts great efforts into sourcing appropriate disposables.

For some years now, biodegradable plates and wooden hot drink stirrers have been provided - but the big difference this year was that - after many years of trying - wooden knives, forks and spoons were sourced at a viable cost to traders – which then allowed the Festival to make usage of these biodegradable disposables compulsory. The Festival contracts with a wholesaler to be on site to sell them to traders, thus ensuring that they had ready access to the approved disposables.

To enable the traders to separate their own organic waste, they were issued with certified cornstarch biodegradable sacks. The traders were then supported and monitored by an educational team run by **The Community Composting Network**. Although there was a little confusion on the Wednesday as the traders were setting up, by the Monday they were producing beautiful skips of 100% pure organic waste. It shows what is achievable when a little effort is put in to educating users about the service that is provided. 110 tonnes of high quality organic waste have gone to the Bioganix in-vessel composting facility in Herefordshire - and has already been converted into compost.

Rob Kearle, Waste Manager for Glastonbury Festival, said: "We are delighted with how much waste management has improved this year, thanks to the hard work of our partners and we are sure that in the years to come we will continue to learn more about what works and achieve higher and higher



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recycling and composting rates. It is great to take food waste from the Festival and return it to the land – which acts as fertiliser for the grass to feed the cows – which in turn produce milk which will be made into cheese - which may even be consumed at the next event! It is **exactly** what recycling is all about.”

**Recycling figures available from Network Recycling to date are encouraging:**

- Composted organic waste – 110 tonnes
- Recycled wood chip – 150 tonnes
- Recycled metal – 100 tonnes
- Glass – 10.3 tonnes
- Card – 13.3 tonnes
- Mixed Cans and bottles – 26.8 tonnes

Glastonbury Festival's composting partners in 2004 were:

Andy Willcott  
Network Recycling  
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Network Recycling provide sustainable waste management services. Apart from managing separation and recycling at large events, they are involved in research and development, waste analysis and consultancy to local and national government, including a national assessment of civic amenity sites.

Nick Helms  
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Bioganix, a wholly owned subsidiary of the 7Y farmers co-operative, has developed the largest dedicated “in vessel” composting plant in the UK. It has now been passed by DEFRA as being compliant with the Animal By-Product Regulations for all Category 3 Waste. This is the first and only composting plant in the UK to achieve this standard.

Nick Mcallister  
Community Composting Network (CCN)  
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CCN is a grant funded, not for profit service which helps and supports community composting schemes. It acts as consultant to Local Authorities on larger projects and works on legislation on composting. CCN provides telephone & email advice for 250 member organisations.

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Les Baldwin, a disposables wholesaler, liaised with Huhtamaki over the provision of Chinet biodegradable plates and bowls – and sourced the wooden cutlery for the Festival.