

# **The US Composting Council's Seal of Testing Assurance Program: (How to Tell What Compost "is")**

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US Composting Council**





**Many feedstocks,  
production methods,  
technologies,  
test methods,  
units of measure,  
lab result forms....**

**The ‘industry’ and end users need continuity !**





**US COMPOSTING  
COUNCIL**

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*Seal of Testing  
Assurance*

*If it isn't STA Compost..... What is it?*

## **WHAT IS IT?**

- **Compost testing and information disclosure program (logo program)**

## **PURPOSE...**

- **To improve customer confidence in compost selection**
- **To enhance compost's position as a mainstream horticultural, agricultural and retail product**
- **To distinguish “compost” from other organics products**

# Promoting.....



**...the appropriate product for a particular project, allowing for optimal 'field' results**

**Promoting  
the proper use  
of compost products,  
reduces failures  
in the ‘field’ –**

**Which hurts  
end users and  
composters !**



# **BASICS - *Participating Composters will:***

- **Complete on-going product testing**
  - operate on-going sampling/testing regime
  - using uniform sampling and analytical testing methods (from the TMECC)
  - using only STA Program certified labs (list on website)
- **Disclose test data results (lab analyses) and provide appropriate end use instructions to end users**

*\* Treat compost like any other retail, horticultural, agricultural product marketed in the U.S.*

# **KEY PROGRAM ELEMENTS:**

- **Specific compost information will be disclosed to customers (and the USCC) using a standardized form (*Compost Technical Data Sheet*)**
  - **Compost test analysis results**
  - **List of compost ingredients**
  - **End use instructions**



**US COMPOSTING COUNCIL**

*Seal of Testing Assurance*

Barnes – Regional Composting  
3511 West Cleveland Ave.  
Huron, OH 44839  
Telephone: 800-421-8722  
Fax: 419-433-3555

Sample Date: 8/14/02

## COMPOST TECHNICAL DATA SHEET

Compost Parameters	Reported as (units of measure)	Test Results	Test Results
<i>Plant Nutrients:</i>	%, weight basis	%, wet weight basis	%, dry weight basis
Nitrogen	Total N (TN or TKN+NO <sub>3</sub> -N)	.72	1.12
Phosphorus	P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	.13	.21
Potassium	K <sub>2</sub> O	.32	.50
Calcium	Ca	2.34	3.64
Magnesium	Mg	.57	.89
Moisture Content	%, wet weight basis	42	
Organic Matter Content	%, dry weight basis	31.31	
pH	unitless	7.4	
Soluble Salts <i>(electrical conductivity)</i>	dS/m (mmhos/cm)	3.49	
Particle Size	screen size passing through	1/2"	
Stability Indicator <i>(respirometry)</i> CO <sub>2</sub> Evolution	mg CO <sub>2</sub> -C/g TS/day, AND	.14	
	mg CO <sub>2</sub> -C/g OM/day	.5	
Maturity Indicator <i>(bioassay)</i> Percent Emergence, AND Relative Seedling Vigor	average % of control, AND	92	
	average % of control	86	
Select Pathogens	PASS/FAIL: per US EPA Class A standard, 40 CFR § 503.12(a)	Pass	
Trace Metals	PASS/FAIL: per US EPA Class A standard, 40 CFR § 503.13, Tables 1 and 3.	Pass	

*Participants in the US Composting Council's Seal of Testing Assurance Program have shown the commitment to test their compost products on a prescribed basis and provide this data, along with compost end use instructions, as a means to better serve the needs of their compost customers.*

### Directions for Product Use:

**New Lawns:** Apply a 1-2" layer to soil and incorporate to a depth of 5-7", apply seed, then rake and water.

**Flower Beds:** Apply a 1-2" layer to soil and incorporate to a 6-8" depth. Condition soil this way every year to 2 years. Plant flowers and water.

**Trees & Shrubs:** Dig a hole 2/3 the depth of the root ball and at least twice as wide. Mix 1 part compost with 2 parts soil obtained from the planting hole. Place the tree or shrub in the planting hole and apply amended soil around the root ball. Firm soil occasionally and water.

**Topsoil Manufacturing/Upgrading:** Mix 1 part compost with 2 parts existing or purchased soil and blend uniformly.

**Growing Mixes:** Planter box or raised bed mixes can be produced by mixing 1 part compost to 1 part pine bark and 1 part soil, sand or expanded shale. Potting mixes should contain 1 part compost, 1 part peat moss or pine bark, and 1 part perlite, vermiculite, styrofoam, or other aggregate.

**Mulching:** Spread a 2-3" layer around trees, shrubs, and flowers. Always avoid placing mulches against plant trunks and stems.

**Garden Beds (food crops):** Apply a 1-2" layer to soil and till to a 6-8" depth. Reapply each year, or as per soil test recommendations.

*NOTE: The USCC does not assess whether or not, or to what extent, these directions are sound, sufficient or otherwise appropriate. It is the participant's responsibility alone to ensure that they are.*

### Compost Ingredients:

Yard trimming, food by-products

This compost product has been sampled and tested as required by the Seal of Testing Assurance Program of the United States Composting Council (USCC), using certain methods from the "Test Methods for the Examination of Compost and Composting" manual. Test results are available upon request by calling Barnes Nursery at 800-421-8722. The USCC makes no warranties regarding this product or its contents, quality, or suitability for any particular use.

*For additional information pertaining to compost use, the specific compost parameters tested for within the Seal of Testing Assurance Program, or the program in general, log on to the US Composting Council's TMECC web-site at <http://www.tmecc.org>.*

# CA STA Participants

- **Agromin**
- **Baker Canyon Green Recycling**
- **BFI of Northern California**
- **CCL Organics, LLC**
- **Community Recycling and Resource Recovery**
- **Engel & Gray**
- **Grover Environmental**
- **Inland Empire Regional Composting Facility\***
- **Napa Recycling**
- **Norcal Waste Systems (3)**
- **San Joaquin Composting**
- **Sun-Land Garden Products**
- **Synagro Composting**
- **Z-Best Products**

\* Pending participant



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# You're Not Alone !

- **Compost use by DOTs in landscaping and erosion control applications has become widespread**
  - **Have been excellent field results**
- **STA requirement is becoming more popular with 'specifying' agencies**

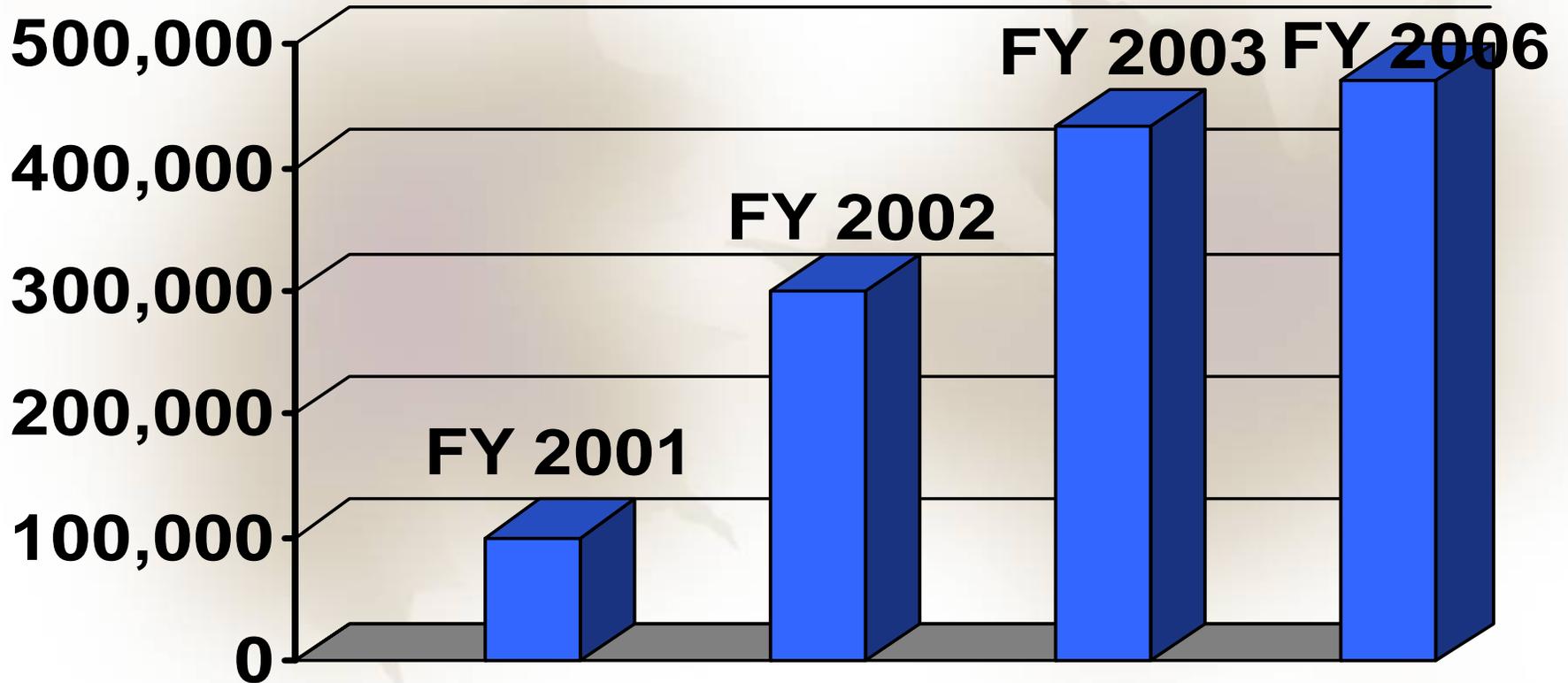
## *EXAMPLES*





## Many Applications





**Cubic Yards of Compost Specified (FY)**

# Seal of Testing Assurance Program

## TEXAS GROWTH

### 2000 – 2002

- 4 composters

### 2003

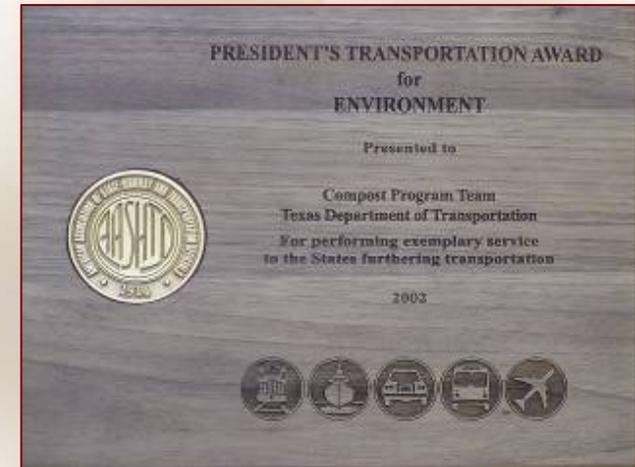
19 new  
23 total

### 2004

- 8 new
- 31 total

### 2006

8 new  
39 total



2002 AASHTO  
President's  
Transportation Award

*Build it and they come (join)*



# Taking similar steps in CA..

 <b>US COMPOSTING COUNCIL</b> <i>Seal of Testing Assurance</i>		#REF! #REF! #REF! #REF! #REF!	
		Product Identification: #REF! Date Sampled/Received: #REF!	
<b>COMPOST TECHNICAL DATA SHEET for Caltrans</b>			
LABORATORY:			
Compost Parameters	Test Results	Reported as (units of measure)	TMECC Test Method
pH	0.00	Unitless	04.11-A 1.5 Slurry pH
Soluble Salts (Electrical conductivity)	#DIV/0!	dS/m (mmhos/cm)	04.10-A 1.5 Slurry Method Mass Basis
Moisture content		%, dry weight basis	03.09-A - Total Solids and Moisture (at 70 ± 5C)
Organic Matter Content	0.0	%, dry weight basis	05.07-A Loss-on-ignition Organic Matter Method (L40)
Maturity Indicator (bioassay) Percent Emergence Relative Seedling Vigor		average % of control average % of control	05.05-A Germination and vigor
Stability Indicator	NA	mg CO <sub>2</sub> -C/g OM/day	05.08-B Carbon Dioxide Evolution Rate
Particle Size		%, dry weight passing through	02.02-B Sample Sieving for Aggregate Size Classification
Pathogens		PASS/FAIL: Per US EPA Class A standard, 40 CFR 503.22(a)	07.01-B Faecal coliforms
Pathogens		PASS/FAIL: Per US EPA Class A standard, 40 CFR 503.22(a)	07.02 Salmonella
Physical Contaminants		%, dry weight basis	02.02-C - Man-Made Inerts Total content
Physical Contaminants		%, dry weight basis	02.02-C - Man-Made Inerts - Sharp content
Heavy Metals Content	#DIV/0!	PASS/FAIL: Per US EPA Class A 40 CFR 503.13, tables 1 and 3.	04.06-Heavy Metals standard, and Hazardous Elements
<p>Participants in the US Composting Council's Seal of Testing Assurance Program have shown the commitment to test their compost products on a prescribed basis and provide this data, along with compost end use instructions, as a means to better serve the needs of their compost customers.</p> <p>For additional information pertaining to compost use, the specific compost parameters tested for within the Seal of Testing assurance Program, or the program in general, log on to the US Composting Council's TMECC web-site at <a href="http://www.tmecc.org">http://www.tmecc.org</a>.</p> <p>This compost product has been sampled and tested as required by the Seal of Testing Assurance Program on the United States Composting Council (USCC), using certain methods from the "Test Methods for the Examination of Compost and Composting" manual. Test results are available upon request by contacting the compost producer (address at top of page). The USCC makes no warranties regarding this product or its content, quality, or suitability for any particular use.</p>			
Laboratory Batch Number:	May-1Misc-06	Laboratory Number:	
Analyst:			

***US Composting Council  
Seal of Testing Assurance Program***

***If it isn't STA Compost...what is it?***

**Contact: Al Rattie, 215-258-5259**

**Ron Alexander, 919-367-8350**

**Program Managers**





US COMPOSTING  
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16th Annual Conference &  
Tradeshow | Oakland, CA  
February 9-12, 2008

For information, please  
call 631.737.4931 or go to  
[www.compostingcouncil.org](http://www.compostingcouncil.org)

MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THE US COMPOSTING COUNCIL'S  
**16TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW**  
THE OAKLAND CITY CENTER MARRIOTT | FEBRUARY '08



THE LARGEST CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION IN NORTH AMERICA FOR THE COMPOSTING, WOOD WASTE, AND ORGANICS RECYCLING INDUSTRY.