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International Composting & Biomass Conference in Dublin Castle Monday 19 & Tuesday 20th February Full details on www.cre.ie/dublin2007

Conference Theme "Sustainable Use of Biomass: in Soils or as Energy Source"

The utilisation of biomass becomes more and more the focus of attention in Europe. By composting biomass material, the compost product can improve soils poor in humus and substitutes peat, as renewable energy it replaces expensive fossil fuels. The international composting conference 19th to 20th of February 2007 "Sustainable Use of Biomass: in Soils or as Energy Source" will show the utilisation areas and compares - considering climate change and ecological aspects - which of the two main areas is more favourable.

Brown Bin Workshop

The event includes a workshop on 'Brown Bin Experiences in Europe' which will provide the best information on how to establish and manage a brown bin scheme (separate collection of organic materials). Many towns and cities such as Dublin City, Waterford, Galway, Killarney, Mullingar and Fingal County Council have either pilots in place or established brown bin collection of foodwaste from households.

Biomass and Renewable Energy Production Workshop

This workshop includes the latest developments in biomass and includes case studies such as the Vaxtkraft project in Sweden.

Key Speakers

- Minister Dick Roche, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (19th 2pm)
- Minister Mary Wallace, Minister for State in Department of Agricultural and Food (20th 2.30pm)
- Luca Marmo, European Commission, Directorate General Environment, Belgium (19th 11.30am)
- Josef Barth of the European Compost Network (19th 9.55am)

The conference will include 30 presentations over two days from experts from in Ireland, Canada, England, Belgium, Sweden, Germany, Austria and Italy.

Detailed Background to Conference Theme

"BIOMASS" - is the latest buzz word used recently in response to a lot present and future problems like the increased fossil fuel prices, climate change, renewable resources generation and energy efficiency management. The debate on this issue is mirrored with increasing political support on a national and European level for biomass use.

Does the attention about biomass affect the traditional biowaste treatment? It does and it will, but in general there is no need to be concerned about the traditional composting and anaerobic digestion future developments. The cake is big enough with a potential of 120 million tonnes of biowaste in the EU27. Properties of biomass feedstock's differ quite a bit and not every particular feedstock stream is suited from the an economical and ecological standpoint to use it beneficially as an energy source instead of the traditional application on soil.

There have been similar challenges in the past which seemed to endanger the composting business. First, we saw competitive treatments with anaerobic digestion, later with mechanical biological treatment. However clever designed borderlines based on the specific advantages of the different treatment options led to supplementing approaches and integrated solutions. A similar development can be expected with the biomass recovery in form of renewable energy. Only in specific situations, like very dry woody material for incineration or very wet, easily degradable organic waste for anaerobic digestion, then it makes sense to follow the energy route.

The main goal of this conference is to present the real benefits and to define borderlines of the options. The borderlines will give us guidance when we should do what and to decide where the organic wastes flow should go best considering the individual situation and what the consequences are.

The conference comes at a time when essential decisions have to be made by the government and the industry for a sustainable future for biomass recovery and organic waste recycling.

Social Evening

On the evening of the 19th, a social evening in the Guinness Store House will include a tour of the Guinness Centre, drinks reception, buffet meal and traditional Irish Music and Dancing.

Wednesday 21st – Tour of Compost Sites

Bord na Mona, Kilberry, Athy (Green Waste – garden material) Composting Site

Bord na Mona's composting facility is situated in County Kildare between Athy and Monasterevin. It is easily accessed via the N7 motorway. The facility is licensed to accept 100,000 tons per annum. A range of materials are composted on the 4.2 ha site, including by-products from the landscaping, wood processing and food & beverage sectors. After composting, the material is incorporated into a range of gardening products which are mixed and packaged on the adjoining facility. These are then sold to the garden and horticulture sector in Ireland and the UK

Waddock Composting Site (high technology 'In-vessel' of foodwaste)

Joe Waddock was a dairy and beef farmer until he diversified and converted his farmyard and cattle sheds into a permitted in-vessel composting facility in Carlow. The facility is being supplied with source separated commercial food collected from the Dublin area as well as belly grass and sludges from a nearby meat processing plant. The immediate plan for the compost is to use it on Waddock's farm. Nutrient management plans were drawn up by agricultural consultants. But long term plans include selling the high-quality compost to landscapers, the local authority, contractors and gardeners. This composting facility is licensed under the Animal by-products Regulations by the Department of Agriculture and Food.

Organisers

The organisers are Cré- Composting Association of Ireland and the European Compost Network.

Main Sponsors

- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- Department of Agriculture and Food
- WRAP (Waste Resource Action Programme)
- Dublin City Council
- Institute of Technology, Sligo
- Environmental Protection Agency

Notes for Editors:

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About Cré:

Cré is the Irish Composting Association. Cré has a membership of over 85+ organisations and individuals. This membership includes composters (treating household & other wastes), local authorities, equipment suppliers, engineering consultancies, waste management companies, and not-for-profit associations. Activities conducted by Cré include; annual conference & exhibition, themed seminars, newsletters, information dissemination, training, www.cre.ie, liaison with regulators, project development. Cré is also conducting a research project on the development of a compost standard for Ireland.

About the European Compost Network ECN

The Network is a collaboration of partners, promoting sustainable practices in composting, anaerobic digestion and mechanical biological treatment procedures for organic residues across Europe. It aims to address the needs of both practical operators and decision makers. ECNs' main objectives are the exchange of knowledge and practical experience, to circulate information, to identify common strategies and to discuss European standards. This is realised in the range of biological treatment, separate collection, product quality, compost use and marketing. At the moment the Network represents over 1,000 experts and plants with more than 20 million tons of treatment capacity and has members in 22 European countries.

Find more information on the ECN website www.compostnetwork.info,

Full details on the conference are on www.cre.ie/dublin2007