

- 1. Call to Order & Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Approval of April 21, 2025 Minutes**
- 4. Approval of May 19, 2025 Minutes**
- 5. Communications**
- 6. Old Business**

Grant Update

7. Hearings

Food Waste Program Best Practices

Kalli Marshall, VBCD, Chair

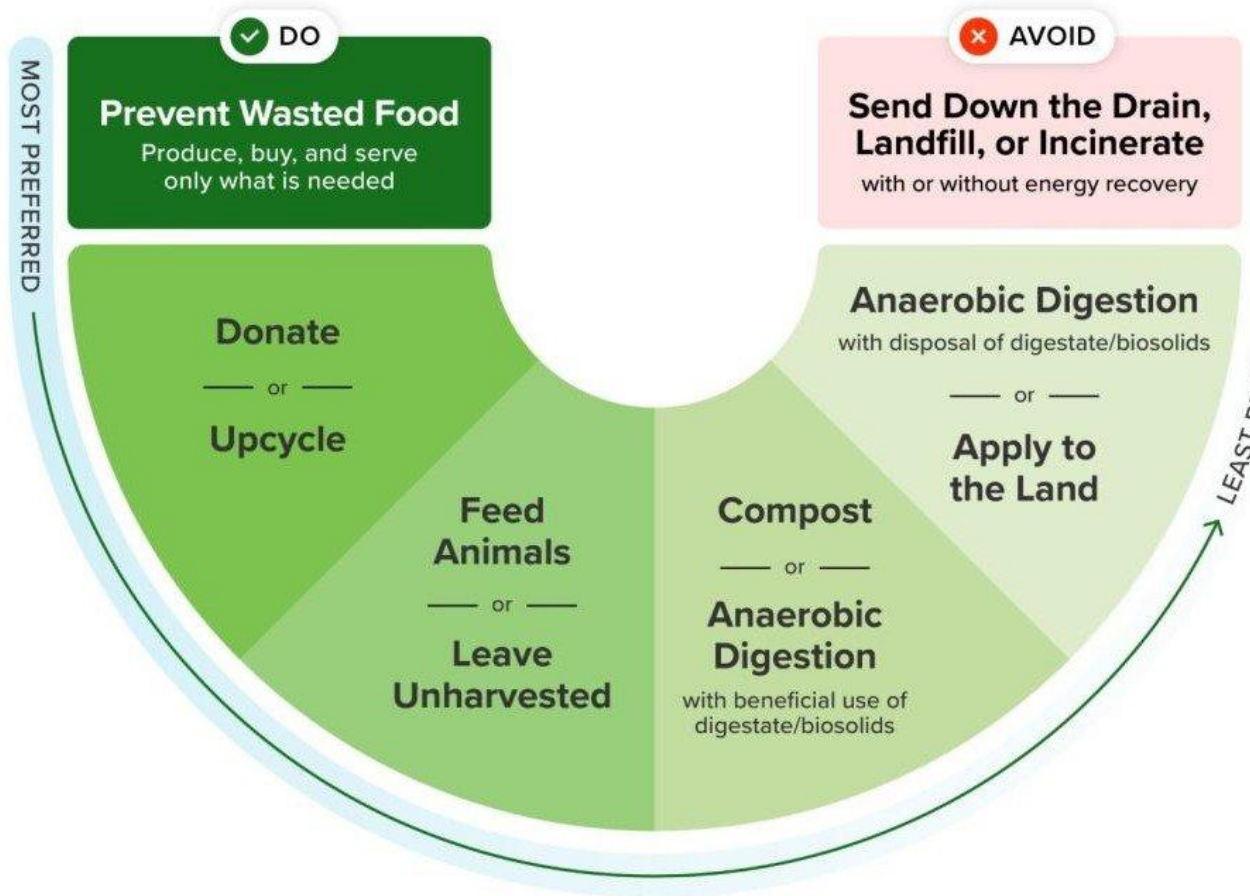
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Best Practices – Food Waste



Wasted Food Scale

How to reduce the environmental impacts of wasted food



October 2023



SUSTAINABLE FOOD MANAGEMENT



Food Donation or Upcycling

- Food Upcycling
 - Kalamazoo Valley Gleaners
 - Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes
 - Collects food from farms, businesses, gardeners, etc. to supply pantries
- Food Pantries
 - <https://www.feedwm.org/findfood/>

Feed Animals

- Farmers with Livestock



Compost

Food Waste and Yard Waste

- Food Waste –
 - Pantries
 - Berrien - 28
 - Cass – 13
 - Van Buren - 9
 - Composting Programs
 - <https://www.turtleridgecompostmi.com/>
- Yard Waste –
 - Landfill Ban 1995 for yard trimmings
 - Berrien County
 - 13 communities have access to pickup
 - County offers drop-off at SEBCL
 - Cass County
 - 4 Communities have access to pickup
 - No drop-off
 - Van Buren County
 - 4 communities have access to pick up
 - 3 communities have drop-off at transfer stations



DIVERSION OPPORTUNITY

Slide 7



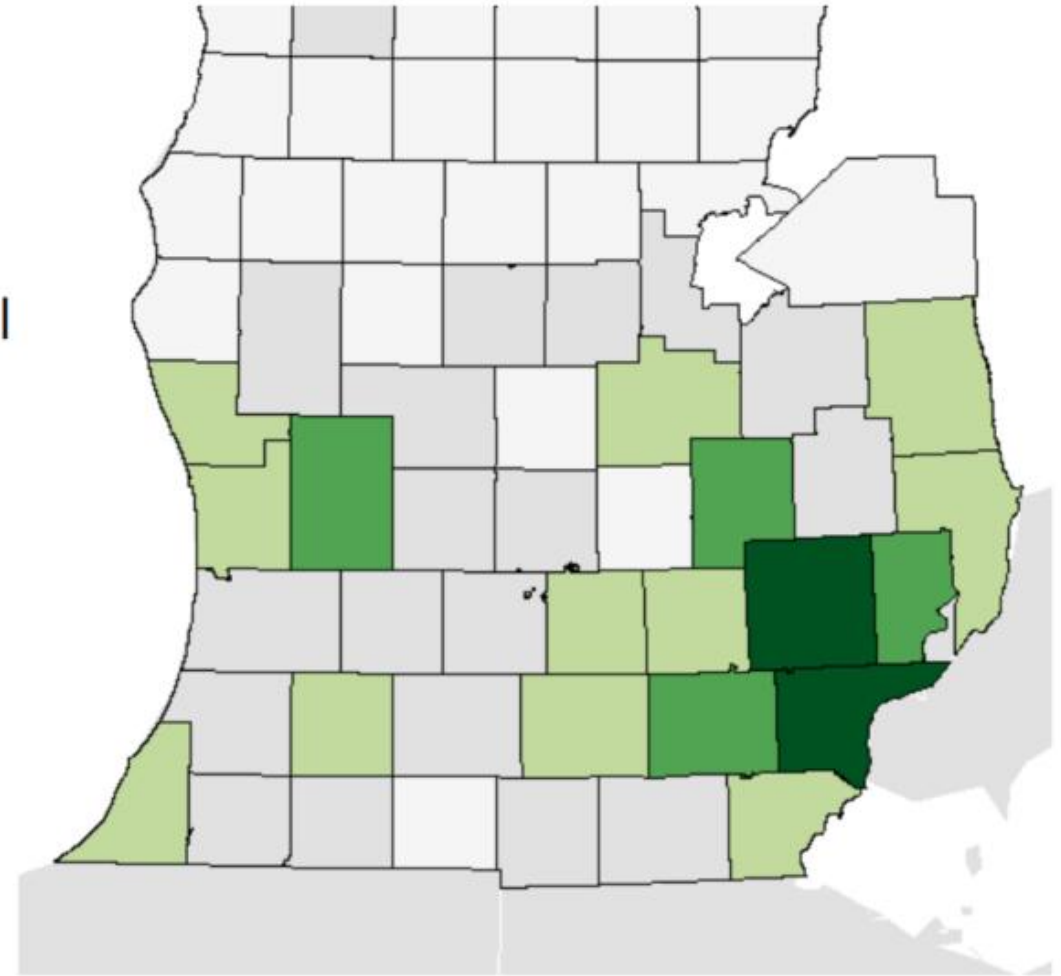
State goal of **50% reduction** in food waste by **2030**.



An estimated **24%** of Michigan's municipal solid waste (MSW) is **food waste**.



Only 1% of food scraps in Michigan are currently **recovered**.



Sources: (MI Healthy Climate Plan); (From Farm to Kitchen: The Environmental Impacts of U.S. Food Waste 2021); (Gap Analysis 2021 Update 2021); (RRS Organics Generation Map, 2019)



Why Drop-Off Programs?

- Low overhead, low cost, high impact

Accepted Items:

- ALL food waste
- Certified compostable products
- Plant material - flowers, houseplants

How it Works:

- Curbside carts at chosen locations
- Single-stream collection
- Scheduled pick-up service
- Disposal to industrial composting

If it **grows**, it **goes**!



Plant trimmings



Coffee grounds & filters, tea leaves



Bread & grains



Eggshells



Dairy



Meat & bones



Grease



Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI)
Certified Compostable Ware

(i.e., bags, containers, silverware, etc.)

When in **doubt, leave it **out**.**



HOW IT WORKS

Slide 11

Collection Bins:

- Bowl or countertop bin
- 5 gallon bucket
- Storage spot - kitchen, porch, garage

Start Collecting:

- Line the collection bin
- Collect all food scraps

Drop It Off:

- Locate a nearby drop-off site
- Drop-off weekly
- Rinse your collection bin





Terminology

- Use “food waste” & “food scraps” NOT “compost”

Capacity Planning

- No “golden ratio” to determine needed capacity.
- Plan for more than you think – capacity, participation, budget.
- Focus on food scraps first – you can add later but cannot take away!

Start-Up & Management Strategies

- Require registration, limit amount of participants, collect contact info.
- Provide signage and clear instructions for how to participate.
- Outreach and education – program website, contact form, surveys.
- Provide equipment – free/low cost bins, suggestions for DIY.
- Business participation – small orgs with low volume, discounted service rates.

BioCycle:
**Food Waste
Drop-Off
Program
Best Practices**





BEST PRACTICES (CONTINUED)

Slide 13

Site Location & Design

- Convenience is key – centralized, frequented locations.
- Ease of access – open 24/7.
- Ensure space to expand if needed.
- Contamination prevention – nearby trash bins.

Program Maintenance

- Track diversion & participation – especially for pilots!
- Regularly communicate with participants – collect feedback, send reminders and updates, additional resources.
- Communicate with your hauler – contamination, site conditions, other observations.

BioCycle:
**Food Waste
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Contamination:

- Plan ahead - it *will* happen!
- Clear education & signage
- Trash bin nearby

Overflow:

- How soon can your hauler get there?
- Where should participants go instead?
- Did you budget for extra services or an expansion?

Odor & Pests:

- Easily preventable, rare occurrence
- Compostable liner in each cart
- Encourage use of at-home bags/liners
- Check on site conditions



Food Waste Curbside Best Practices

- Collection Bin in the kitchen
- Have a latch on the curbside bin(s)
 - Reduces pests, odors, and excess water
- Line both bins
 - Keeps bin clean
 - Easier to empty
 - Could provide free liners to encourage this
- Place curbside bin(s) out for pickup
 - Same day as trash pickup
 - Tie off bag before pickup
 - Rinse after every pickup
- Maintenance
 - Keep bin out of direct sunlight
 - Do not overfill bin
 - Can keep items in fridge or freezer until collection day.
- Troubleshooting
 - Reduce liquids
 - Double line the bin
 - Use newspaper or brownpaper bags to wrap meats
 - Baking soda can help with smells

Food Scraps and Collection Methods

Positives and Negatives

- Positives

- Food scrap is collected in 32 gallon and 64-gallon carts
 - Very maneuverable (lightweight and on wheels)
 - Bright green colors are easy to identify
 - Containers are waterproof
 - Easy to sticker
 - Relatively cheap to replace or repair
 - Can be easy to clean and sanitize with right equipment
 - Rugged
 - Protection from rodents
- Truck can hold 4 tons of material
 - Easy to move around in tight areas
 - Seals in wet material
 - Truck can haul bin washer and pick up waste at same time
- Easy to dump and manage waste on site





Negatives of Our Food Scrap Collection System

- Bins can break if dropped to hard or smacked on ground by grabber
- Containers will become caked with food waste
 - Flies and stinging insects
 - Look bad, especially when over full
 - Smell can become an issue in summer months
- Containers can get filled with liquid and weight can become an issue.
 - Our lifter capacity is 300 lbs.
- Some of our big customers do not want multiple bins onsite.
 - They can take up too much space
 - Some customers consider too many bins an eyesore.
- Contamination



What We Do to Combat “Negatives”

- For cleanliness and odor control in summer months, we bin wash
 - High pressure/high temperature bin washing system
 - Sanitizes, disinfects, deodorizes
 - We spray with fresh fragrance after washing
 - Bin wash trailer attaches to back of our trucks and allows to dump then immediately wash

- We combat contamination and overweight bins with notice stickers
 - Stickers are bright pink and let the customer know what the problem is
 - Driver will let our staff know so they can contact the customer to deal with problem



8. New Business

Solutions Activity

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Organics Solutions Activity

Instructions for Groups of 4-5:

1. Choose one of the following categories:

1. Restaurant & Food Service Food Waste

2. Households & Residential Food Waste (including multi-family)

3. Institutional Food Waste (e.g. schools, hospitals)

4. Farms & Food Producers Food Waste (farms, food manufacturers, food distributors)

2. Choose a spokesperson to share highlights with the full group.

3. For your category, brainstorm solutions for both **urban** and **rural** contexts. Think about what's practical, scalable, or already being done locally.

4. Organize your ideas into the following sub-categories:

1. Prevention – How can waste be avoided before it starts?

2. Diversion/Donation – Where can food go instead of the landfill?

3. Education – How can behavior be changed?

4. Infrastructure/Policy – What systems or rules are needed?

Goal Review

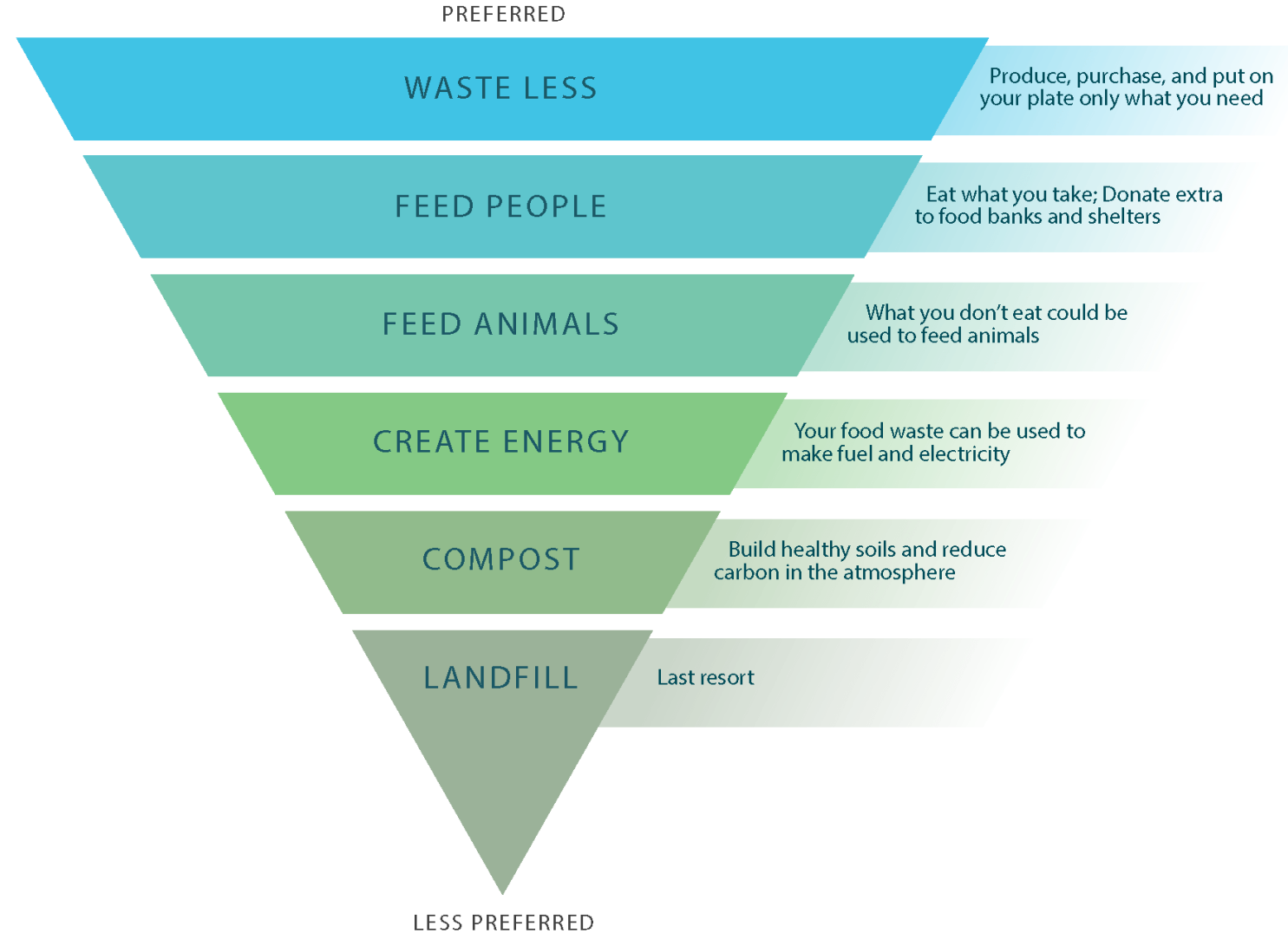
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Goal Review

After learning about food waste best practices, and hearing from Dan Tietema from Organicycle last month, what actions/objectives/goals are missing?

Waste Reduction Hierarchy

- Ensure food waste is managed according to EGLE's Organics Management Hierarchy, prioritizing feeding people first.
- Work with food pantries and food banks to divert edible food before it becomes waste.



Infrastructure & Access

1

Site a regional
compost facility.

2

Establish collection
sites throughout the
region.

3

Provide curbside
composting
programs where
feasible.

Education & Outreach

- Promote backyard and neighborhood composting through classes, educational materials, and giveaways.
- Educate the public on reducing food waste across the supply chain—from farm to consumer.
- Develop school-based education programs focused on food waste reduction and composting.

Collaboration & Partnerships

- Partner with restaurants to implement organics management practices.
- Collaborate with schools to integrate food waste diversion efforts.

Tracking & Reporting

- Implement systems to track and report food waste reduction and diversion efforts across the region.





After learning about food waste best practices, and hearing from Dan Tietema from Organicycle last month, what actions/objectives/goals are missing? What resources and education and outreach programs are needed?

8. Public Comment

9. Miscellaneous

MRC Conference Takeaways

Subcommittees

10. Adjournment

*Next meeting will be held July 21 at 1:00 p.m. at Pokagon Band Community Center,
27043 Potawatomi Trail Dowagiac, MI 49047*

For questions about accessibility or to request accommodations, please contact Bekah Schrag at (574) 312-9148 or by email at schragb@swmpc.org