

SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING INITIATIVES

ADDRESSING FOOD WASTE IN 2014

The waste of food in America is rightfully drawing significant local, state and national attention. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reported that in 2011, Americans landfilled more than 36 million tons of food waste nationally. But we're lowans, surely we do better. Well, in 2011, the Financial and Business Assistance (FABA) Section sponsored Statewide Waste Characterization Study determined that food waste is the most landfilled material in Iowa. More than 382,000 tons of food is landfilled annually. On a per capita basis, this is slightly higher than the rest of the country.

The FABA Section has been active and is assisting stakeholder efforts to expand existing programs and develop new programs that help combat the landfilling of this valuable resource. In 2014, several Solid Waste Alternatives Program (SWAP) projects were awarded funding assistance to implement new food waste recovery initiatives or expand existing programs. Additionally, the FABA Section commissioned a food waste study of industrial, commercial and institutional generators in the state. A short summary of this study and some other food waste related projects taking place over the past year are shown below.

Eat Greater Des Moines: This nonprofit organization is implementing the Food Rescue Project, a public/ private

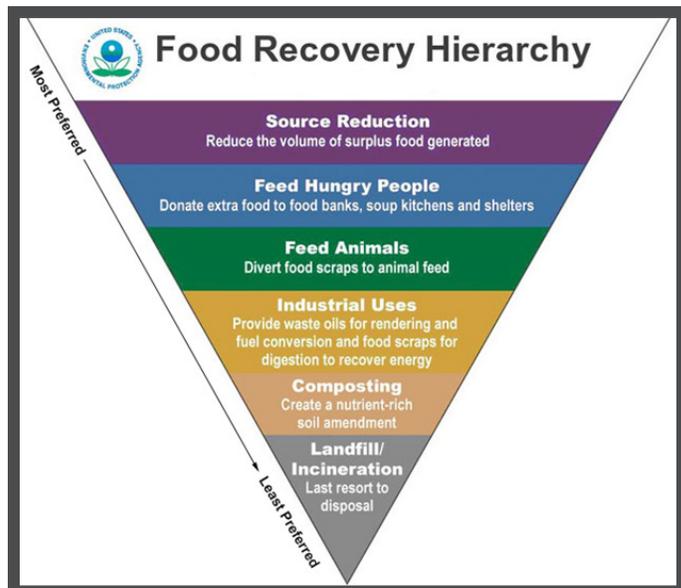
partnership coordinating food donations, collection and distribution to area food pantries and prepared food to organizations in the Des Moines metro area serving the homeless. The SWAP award will assist in developing and implementing a custom software application that allows donators to post the availability of food items directly to food pantries and others providing food resources to those in need.

Loffredo Gardens, Inc.: This company is a major Iowa produce supplier located in West Des Moines and Norwalk. The company was awarded a SWAP loan to expand the recovery of unsellable produce and the waste generated from cutting and preparing fruits and vegetables before packaging them for sale. The fresh produce waste is made available to area livestock producers to supplement feeding operations as part of the Scraps for Feed program.

Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) Food Waste Study: The Department contracted with the Iowa Waste Reduction Center to conduct a study investigating food waste generation focusing on industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) sector generators. The Contractor will survey identified Iowa food waste generators in each of ten (10) ICI generator categories (i.e. food manufacturers/processors, food distributors/wholesalers, colleges and universities, schools K-12, supermarkets, restaurants, hospitals, nursing homes, correctional facilities, and resorts/conference centers).

Through individual contacts with ICI food waste generators, the resulting data will be entered into a database capable of mapping generators, food waste quantities, food waste types, generation frequency, current management and other data necessary to fully understand the issues and opportunities of better managing food waste. Data from this study will provide the FABA Section with critical information necessary to strategically allocate efforts and funding in support of promotion, development and expansion of the food waste management infrastructure. Diverting these resources from the landfill for higher and better uses in the most efficient and economical manner is a priority for the FABA Section. The ICI Food Waste Study is scheduled for completion in July 2015.

Left: The Food Recovery Hierarchy prioritizes actions that can be taken to prevent food waste and to divert wasted food from the landfill for higher and better uses.



LANDFILL FINANCIAL ASSURANCE - 100'S OF \$MILLIONS AT STAKE



To close a landfill in an environmentally responsible way can cost a lot of money. More than \$100 million was estimated in 2014 for the total costs of closing all of Iowa's open landfills. There has to be between 10 and 30 years of

landfill postclosure care as well, and total Postclosure Cost Estimates are at almost \$124.3 million. Landfills are required to report yearly on their provisions for meeting these costs.

By April 1, Financial Assurance Annual Reports are to be submitted by 61 public and 25 private (primarily industrial) landfills. Reports are to include updated Closure and Postclosure Cost Estimates prepared by Professional Engineers, who must be Iowa-licensed. Third party accounting records that substantiate financial assurance measures must also be included.

Detailed evaluation of 86 multi-variable reports takes considerable time. Discrepancies have to be clarified. Mistakes that are identified need to be corrected. Occasional disputes are worked through to resolution. Some Reports are submitted after the April 1st deadline, but DNR approvals are

conducted timely so that required deposits into designated financial assurance funds are made within 30 days after the end of each facility's fiscal year.

For 2014, landfills reported about \$218.3 million as the sum value for the nine different financial assurance instruments they can use. And a total of nearly \$3.5 million was to be deposited into various landfills' closure and postclosure accounts as installments on the \$6 million yet needed to fully provide financial assurance for all of the landfills' combined Cost Estimates.

MOBILE EDUCATION EXHIBIT

The Cause & Effect: Your Eco Story mobile education exhibit received numerous visitors during 2014. Scheduled events allowed approximately 18,000 people to tour the mobile exhibit, not including the several thousands more that visited the exhibit during the Iowa State Fair.

2015 will bring a few modifications. The existing onboard generator will be replaced with a smaller, quieter and more energy efficient model. Efforts are also underway to update the educational content of the interactive displays within the exhibit. These updates will take place over the course of 2015.

The mobile education exhibit is an all-inclusive experience that provides an interactive way to learn about the natural resources used in our daily lives, the effects this has on our environment and simple steps that can be taken around the home to minimize the waste of these resources. Visit the [Mobile Education Exhibit webpage](#) for additional information and to reserve the exhibit for your next event.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about FABA's solid waste and recycling initiatives, go to www.iowadnr.gov/FABA

DNR Contact:

Tom Anderson • 515.725.8323
Tom.Anderson@dnr.iowa.gov

To learn more about Landfill Financial Assurance,

DNR Contact:

Bill Blum • 515.725.8376
Bill.Blum@dnr.iowa.gov

