



Compost News: Food Waste Composting in Walla Walla, WA



Walla Walla's CV Composter[®] included four stainless steel composting vessels with pre-planned expansion to include four more. During 16 days of primary composting, the ECS Aeration Control and Monitoring System constantly monitors temperatures using temperature probes located near the top and bottom of the composting material.

Recorded temperatures are automatically logged and provide feedback for controlling the volume and the direction of aeration. The process control keeps the compost aerobic, minimizing odor generation and guiding each batch through control regimes to achieve EPA 503 requirements for Processes to Further Reduce Pathogens (PFRP) and Vector Attraction Reduction (VAR).

After primary retention the compost is transferred to an ASP for final curing. Inmates are trained to operate the ECS system and provide all labor at the facility.

The City and County of Walla Walla are now partners with the Penitentiary and they have expanded the facility's original scope to include a public drop-off site for collecting residential yard waste and grape pumice from the region's wineries.

So far the community response is overwhelming and Steve Harvey's facility is already considering expansion to meet the growing demand.

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Steve Harvey, Compost Facility Manager, at the Walla Walla, WA penitentiary had a dream; He wanted to compost the prison's food waste and other organics using prison labor, on-site. And last month (April 2004) he realized that dream, and the Penitentiary compost facility produced their first batch of compost.

It seems to take our customers anywhere from 1-3 years, from initial point of contact, to purchasing an ECS compost system—by the time we receive a purchase order we know them pretty well—and that was true for Walla Walla.

ECS has been working with Steve Harvey for the past few years in an effort to provide the equipment he wanted within his budget. Innovation and flexibility are a big help. For example, when we found a used compost mixer and vessel-loading conveyor at one of our other sites we were able to offer it to Walla Walla at considerable cost savings. Steve was able to save costs by having the inmates under his supervision install the aeration system (following ECS' drawings and instructions).

Walla Walla chose the CV Composter[®] because of its proven track record for composting a variety of nitrogenous and wet feedstocks like those found at a large rural penitentiary. "We could get dairy manure, food waste, biosolids or anything else from one day to the next and we need to accommodate it", said Steve.

