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Teresa Jessup
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Product Feedback

Dear Teresa

As mentioned, we have been using VRM EM products to compost municipal food and garden waste on a trial basis, and more recently, on a full scale basis in Goulburn (9,200 households) and Condobolin (1300 households). We needed to develop a composting process that could handle our particular feedstock and the plant, power, water and labour limitations of our sites. The inclusion of food waste in our feedstock requires a covered process – particularly in the initial stages and we needed to find a composting process that could manage odour and vermin issues without the costs associated with in-vessel or enclosed systems. Additionally, we want to produce a premium composted product with superior nutrient and biological content to set us at the higher end of the agricultural compost market.

In order to divert as much waste from the urban waste stream as possible, our feedstock includes meat, fats and oil, all other food scraps and all garden waste. It contains high cellulose ingredients and small amounts of animal manures including dog and cat faeces. Some of our feedstock (eg lawn clippings) arrives in an anaerobic state. We chose to use VRM Starter Culture and VRM Microbial Seeding Agent applied at 1 litre of each for every 10 cubic meters of feedstock.

Our trials with VRM demonstrated the following benefits:

- Pasteurisation was easily achieved even during winter
- There were no odour issues
- The unique covered fermentative process significantly reduces water usage and labour requirements compared to conventional open windrow composting.
- Processing was extremely rapid - even in winter.
- There have been no odour issues associated with the composting process even with such challenging feedstock.
- The end product is particularly pleasing and is of great interest to farmers and our research agronomist.
- The requirements for pre shredding have been removed.
- There has been no germination of residual seeds in the completed compost indicating appropriate pasteurisation levels have been achieved.



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As a result of our trials, use of VRM EM products in our composting operations has been implemented on a wider scale in Goulburn and Condobolin. We plan to use the same process on our on-farm composting site in Palerang, which will take food and garden waste from Bungendore, Captains Flat, Braidwood and Queanbeyan.

We will be using our VRM EM produced compost in 4 on-farm agronomy trials to determine the market value of this product compared to conventional fertiliser products. We will also be able to compare the performance of VRM EM produced compost with the performance of conventional open windrow compost.

If you require any additional information, I can be contacted on the above email, or 02 6229 7136.

Warm regards

Simone Dilkara
Groundswell Project Manager.
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