

Food Waste Management Evaluation

Food waste is the top waste headed to Wisconsin landfills. The DNR has contracted with HDR Engineering, Inc. to research and perform a statewide evaluation to:

- » Document the amounts, types and sources of food waste in Wisconsin
- » Provide data and analysis on the capacity of existing food recovery and recycling infrastructure
- » Identify barriers between existing capacity and potential capacity to divert food waste from landfills
- » Assess and rank the impact of waste diversion initiatives, including consideration of economic factors
- » Inform future policy decisions on food waste reduction and recycling methods and goals
- » Analyze where additional investment, technical assistance and education may be needed

TIMELINE

- » Launch: June 2024
- » Completion: June 2025

FUNDING

- » Federal Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grant (SWIFR)

PROJECT PARTNER

- » HDR Engineering, Inc.

COLLABORATORS & STAKEHOLDERS

- » Local governments, food waste generators, food waste management businesses, food donation outlets and farms

HDR is soliciting stakeholder input for the evaluation. The first survey in October 2024 is focused on capacity for hauling to and processing food waste at compost facilities, anaerobic digesters and wastewater treatment plants. Food waste generators, such as manufacturers, grocers and restaurants, and food donation organizations will also be asked to provide input.



Photo Credit: Brew City Compost

KEY POINTS

- » “Food waste” is any food grown and produced for human consumption but goes unsold or unused by a business or uneaten at home. This includes food still safe to eat – surplus, damaged or expired – as well as unavoidable waste, such as bones, pits and rinds.

MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- » The goal is to provide information and guide actions to prevent and reduce food waste in Wisconsin.
- » Focused efforts to reduce food waste and divert it from landfills can make a significant difference in Wisconsin’s waste stream and the environment.
- » Benefits include keeping the land, water, energy and labor that went into producing the food from going to waste, and reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that are generated when organics anaerobically decompose in landfills.

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