

Abstract for Landfill Tax project at Stanton, Suffolk.

Commencing in February 2002 an 18 month study was conducted to research the use of Civic Amenity greenwaste and kerbside collected green biowaste (now classified as meat-excluded catering waste) for the production of compost for the cultivation of mushrooms. The site, at Stanton near Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, was formerly a large scale mushroom growing facility which included an area on site used for the manufacturing of mushroom compost. The research extended to determining whether the equipment formerly used for mushroom compost production was suitable for the composting of waste and whether the site would comply with the proposed ABPR regulations.

This work was undertaken jointly by County Mulch Ltd, a Suffolk based composting and recycling business, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Forest Heath District Council, Suffolk County Council and Viridor Waste Management Limited under the direction of Waste Management Research Limited and was funded through landfill tax credits provided by Viridor Waste Management Limited.

The project presented many challenges, which included the adaptation of traditional techniques of composting to encompass the seasonal changes in volume and quality of feedstock and the amended use of equipment from other materials handling operations to process the waste to an acceptable quality. The knowledge of Colin Sturgeon an experienced mushroom composter proved invaluable, along with the greenwaste handling experience of County Mulch, who, have been composting this type of material for nearly 20 years.

The result was positive especially in terms of the mushroom growing technique and the use of the equipment, although the cost of manufacture and composting through the somewhat outdated system proved to be cost prohibitive if compared to other in-vessel systems. The site could and does comply with the current ABPR guidance as drafted although it will require review once the final version has been concluded.

Since the conclusion of the trial the site has produced mushrooms from the compost along with another local mushroom farm and the site continues to accept waste for composting from several local authorities.

Copies of the final report of the project are available by contacting Mrs N Philpot, County Mulch Ltd, The Watering Farm, Creeting St Mary, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 8ND. Telephone 01449 721729 or email noreen@countymulch.co.uk