

Solana Center



for Environmental Innovation

California Agricultural Vision Listening Session
Escondido, CA
Tuesday, July 8, from 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

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Good morning. My name is Rachel Borgatti and I am the Compost Program Manager at the Solana Center for Environmental Innovation, a 25-year old nonprofit in Encinitas California. As Program Manager, I manage composting education for several municipalities, including the “rotline”, where anyone and everyone can call in and get composting advice. This service gives me a direct line to the public and their thoughts on composting and waste reduction. In addition to the usual questions on how to get started composting, I’m increasingly getting calls from hospitals, restaurants, food processing plants, universities and residents wanting to recycle their food scraps and yard trimmings. At the same time, composting facilities throughout California cannot keep up with the demand for compost from farms, businesses and residents wanting to use a less expensive, less polluting, water-retaining alternative to the petrochemical based fertilizers and pesticides. However, there are barriers to increasing composting in California, mostly surrounding permitting and education.

So what is my vision for California agriculture by 2030?

- That all agricultural and food production systems will recycle their waste, both organic and inorganic, and reduce the use of nitrogen, petroleum, and other non-renewable inputs.
- That cities and counties will collaborate with rural communities and get the organics out of the landfill and back into the land.
- That it will be simple and second nature to compost both on- and off-site, whether you own a farm, a house, a ranch or an apartment.

The biggest challenges in achieving this vision now are two issues:

- **The first is permitting.** Currently there are a whole slew of issues that make permitting a new compost facility a hundred times more difficult than permitting a landfill. It is in the both the CDFA and the agricultural community’s interest to work with local and state governments to remove these impediments to composting.
- **The second is education.** Similar to recycling, composting organics should be the norm for families, businesses, farms and ranches, whether it’s a pickup service or on-site. Not that composting will cure all of society’s woes, but it is a good step in reducing our impact on the earth, taking responsibility for the things we consume and understanding that organics are a resource, not a waste product.

In 2030, public perception of recycling all organics will become the norm. Whether in their backyard, on the farm, at the ranch, or at work, people will expect that their organics will be composted and put back into the land. Composting can connect all people with the land and let them see that soil is something you build, not just something you buy at the store.

Thank you for your time and for hosting these listening sessions.