
Fact Sheet: Organics



What is Organic Waste?

This is material such as unmarketable fruits and vegetables, cut flowers and yard wastes.

Organic Waste

Organic waste accounts for **34% of the total ICI waste composition**. This is the single largest waste stream within the ICI sector, equating to **nearly 177,820 tonnes** going into Calgary's landfills each year¹.

Why is Organic Waste a Problem?

Organic waste is broken down by methane-producing anaerobic (without oxygen) bacteria leading to the production of biogas consisting of 50% CO₂ (carbon dioxide) and 50% CH₄ (methane) by weight. Methane gas is of concern because it is 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas². Sanitary landfills (those that employ waste compaction, dirt covers, and final caps) cause more of the waste to decay in an anaerobic environment, leading to an even greater production of the potent greenhouse gas methane.

In 2004, Canada's landfills produced 29 Million Metric Tonnes of CO₂ Equivalent (MMTCO₂E)³. This is the equivalent of nearly 5 Million Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) driving for one year (based on 20,000km traveled).

What can be done with Organic Waste

- Food that is unmarketable but still edible can be sent to organizations such as the Calgary Interfaith Food Bank;
- Pre-consumer vegetative matter, cut flowers, yard wastes, etc. (see reverse for more details) can be sent to a facility for composting;
- Processed & oily foods, meat, dairy, cooked and post-consumer foods may be sent to a Class 1 compost facility, feedlots, etc., while certain processed foods can be sent to Product Management Corporation (please contact us for more details).

Benefits of Organic Waste Diversion:

- Reduced Disposal Fees
- Improve Your Business' Public Image
- Provide Food to Those in Need
- Recover the Nutrient Value of the Food as Compost or Animal Food
- Help Your Community Meet Local and Provincial Waste Reduction Goals
- Sustain Local Industries and Jobs
- Reduce your companies environmental and carbon footprint.

For more information about electronics reuse and recycling please call CMEX staff at (403) 230-1443.

1 EBA Engineering Consultants Ltd. 2006. Executive Summary: The City of Calgary ICI/C&D Waste Characterization Study Prepared for: The City of Calgary, Waste and Recycling Services.

2 Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1991 – 2001. Available at: [http://yosemite.epa.gov/oar/globalwarming.nsf/UniqueKeyLookup/LHOD5MJTMG/\\$File/2003-final-inventory_ch7-waste.pdf](http://yosemite.epa.gov/oar/globalwarming.nsf/UniqueKeyLookup/LHOD5MJTMG/$File/2003-final-inventory_ch7-waste.pdf). (Last accessed May 9, 2007).

3 Source: http://www.ec.gc.ca/pdb/ghg/inventory_report/2004_trends/trends_e.cfm (Last accessed May 9, 2007).