

August 25, 2009

Symposium Provides Options for Energy and New Uses of Organic Residuals

Davis, Calif.—UC Davis Extension is presenting the Pacific Southwest Organic Residuals Symposium, September 23 & 24. The event brings together organic residuals industry professionals, municipalities, regulators, researchers and other stakeholders to identify and help realize goals to maximize ecological and municipal benefits for food and green wastes, manures, biosolids and other organic residuals. Topics include energy recovery, interagency conflict resolution, and the technologies and financing options for organic residuals technology.

Recent projects, like EBMUD's innovative Food Waste Power Plant in Oakland, are proving the viability of turning organic residuals into energy, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and keeping these residuals out of landfills. EBMUD's ultimate goal is to create enough renewable energy to sell significant amounts to P. G. & E. and turn a profit.

Often, however, such endeavors butt up against conflicting objectives among state agencies. For example, local wastewater treatment plants can use "digesters" to turn waste into methane gas, which is burned in an engine/generator to create electricity. But standards set by Air Quality Management Districts can make it difficult, if not impossible, for wastewater plants to run the methane-burning generators.

This symposium works to find solutions to cross-agency coordination among air, water, energy and resources agencies as well as public options to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, provide local sources of fuels and fertilizers, help restore soils, ensure food safety, and protect public health and ecosystems.

Symposium speakers include Mary Nichols, J.D., chair of the California Air Resources Board. A strong advocate for the environment and public health, Nichols was one of the first environmental attorneys in California, and has since held positions with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Air and Radiation program under the Clinton Administration, and as director of UCLA's Institute of the Environment.

Sponsors include the U.S. EPA Region 9, California Integrated Waste Management Board, California Department of Food and Agriculture, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, Western United Dairymen, Sustainable Conservation, UC Davis, California Association of Sanitation Agencies, and Sacramento Municipal Utilities District. The symposium takes place on the UC Davis campus on Wednesday and Thursday, September 23 & 24, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. with an optional field trip to EBMUD's treatment plant in Oakland, Tues., Sept. 22, 1-5 p.m. For more information, visit the UC Davis Extension website.

www.extension.ucdavis.edu/engineering

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