

Compost Use

- The finished compost is used by Iowa State University.
- Compost is not available to the public.
- The compost is blended with sand and soil to create amended soil.
- The amended soil is used for landscaping new construction projects, existing buildings and planting beds.
- Compost is available to researchers for amending soil structure in horticultural and agronomic plots.
- Compost also is used as bedding for ISU dairy cows.



Mixing compost, sand and soil to make amended soil.



University Compost Facility

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IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

University Compost Facility

Established 2008





Composting operations occur in large hoop barns to reduce the risk of runoff and leaching.

Background

- In 2008 Iowa State University constructed a facility for composting organic waste materials from several campus sources.
- The facility was planned as part of the new ISU Dairy Farm to handle solid dairy manure in an environmentally responsible manner.
- The facility is designed to handle more than 10,000 tons of organic wastes annually and is located west of the Dairy Farm, which is south of the Iowa State campus.

Operations

- The compost facility is a self-supporting service unit.
- All material brought to the facility is weighed on an electronic scale.
- Supplying departments are charged a tipping fee.
- Compost leaving the site also is weighed and charged to the using department.

Composting Process

- Organic wastes processed by the composting facility include manure and bedding from the ISU Animal Science Dairy, Beef, Sheep, Swine and Equine farms, campus yard waste, campus greenhouse materials, ISU Dining food waste and biomass research wastes from the BioCentury Research Farm.
- Nitrogen-rich manure is mixed with carbon-rich campus yard waste, cornstalks or livestock bedding to make windrows.
- The proper mix balances carbon and nitrogen at the correct moisture and density to promote aerobic microbial decomposition.
- The windrows are turned and aerated periodically to promote composting and minimize odor.
- Finished compost is cured and stored until ready to be used. All operations occur under cover of large hoop barns to reduce the risk of runoff and leaching.



This machine turns and aerates a windrow.