



### Project Summary

The Nebraska Recycling Council (NRC), in cooperation with the Nebraska Chapter of the US Composting Council is conducting research to help determine the feasibility of forming public-private partnerships between municipalities and nearby animal feeding operations (AFO's) to produce quality compost. The AFOs would provide manure while the municipalities would provide yard and wood waste, which would be mixed and composted to produce a soil amendment superior to unprocessed manure for cropland.

While the AFOs would generate revenue from the sale of compost, the participating municipality could realize cost-savings and provide environmental benefit. Municipalities may want to avoid the expense of managing a composting operation and marketing the compost. In addition, they can benefit from chipping wood for use in parks and municipal properties and making the excess available for composting. Other yard wastes generated by the community can be composted by the AFO.

There are two main objectives of this research project:

1. Analyze and document the feasibility of operating a composting operation at or near feedlot(s), mixing manure with local municipal yard and wood waste, and the marketability of the finished product for use on local cropland and/or pastureland from the perspectives of feedlot owners, municipalities, and farmers.
2. Analyze the barriers and benefits of creating a compost operation from each stakeholder's point of view: the municipality, the feedlot, the compost operation, and the end-user/farmer and to identify possible strategies that might bring these four stakeholders together to produce a value-added product and improve soil health.

This research is funded through a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust. A major deliverable will be a web-based, user-friendly financial feasibility calculator tool that will help all parties understand the costs of creating the compost. The tool can be used to input data on key variables to determine the economic viability of developing a successful business model from a given set of circumstances. The NRC website will provide information that summarizes Nebraska regulatory requirements for compost operations, the benefits of applying compost to croplands, case studies on successful public-private partnerships utilizing yard, wood and animal waste and results of the benefit and barrier research.

NRC will also host a webinar of June, 2022 in which stakeholders can obtain information gained through this research and the web-based financial feasibility calculator tool will be demonstrated. Completion of this research phase of the project will be completed by June 30, 2022. In the event that additional funding can be found, it is hoped that partners can be identified to undertake pilot projects to test strategies to overcome barriers and to enhance the benefits that were identified in the research phase. For more information on this project, contact the Nebraska Recycling Council at 402-436-2384 or [director@nrcne.org](mailto:director@nrcne.org).

*Nebraska Recycling Council is a statewide, member-based, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our mission is to maximize the economic and environmental benefits of resource recovery in Nebraska. Our vision is a future in which all materials are reserved for their highest and best use and landfill disposal is the last resort. The Nebraska Chapter of the US Composting Council is a subsidiary of the Nebraska Recycling Council.*