



News Release

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Charleston County and City of Charleston Partner to Reduce Food Waste

[Charleston County Environmental Management](#) and the [City of Charleston](#) have partnered to promote the County's "Table to Farm" campaign and the state's "Don't Waste Food S.C." campaign. Both initiatives address the state's number one thrown away item, wasted food.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, one in seven citizens struggle with hunger and food waste is the single largest component being sent to landfills and accounted for 21 percent (35.2 million tons) of the nation's waste in 2013. South Carolina alone produced an estimated 607,000 tons of food waste in fiscal year 2015.

[Don't Waste Food S.C.](#) is aimed at educating and empowering individuals, businesses and communities to take action by preventing, composting or donating surplus food. The campaign is working toward a goal of reducing food waste in the state by 50 percent by the year 2030.

"We greatly appreciate Charleston County and the City of Charleston joining the Don't Waste Food S.C. campaign and raising awareness about food waste in the community," said Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) Director Catherine Heigel. "Building partnerships like these will help our state truly make an impact on this 607,000-ton issue. Collaboration is the key to reducing the amount of food being added to our landfills and connecting food resources with communities in need."

[Charleston County's Table to Farm](#) campaign is intended to raise awareness about the availability for restaurant operators to compost their pre- and post-consumer food scraps. Food scraps generated from local restaurants are collected and hauled to Charleston County's Bees Ferry Compost Facility. Upon arrival, the food scraps and compostable serve ware are processed to create compost, a nutrient-rich soil amendment, which area farmers can apply to their crops. Local restaurants can complete the composting loop by purveying from local farmers.

A waste composition study conducted by Charleston County showed that more than 37% of the County's commercial waste is organic, compostable material - such a food, non-recyclable paper, and yard waste - which food waste generators can divert from the landfill by starting a composting program in their commercial kitchen. The process entails contracting with a partnered food waste hauler to collect food waste for a fee and deliver the material to Charleston County's Bees Ferry Compost Facility, where it will be processed into compost available for sale within the community.

"Charleston County's food waste composting program is a vital part of our solid waste management system. Recycling food scraps, a sustainable best practice, diverts organic material from being disposed in our landfill and extends its life," said Charleston County's Chairman of the Environmental Management Committee and County Councilmember Colleen Condon. "In addition to the environmental benefits of composting, businesses have an opportunity to off-set their waste disposal costs and simultaneously contribute to our local green community."

The City of Charleston was recently awarded a grant from the South Carolina DHEC for a pilot project intended to divert food waste from being landfilled and direct it toward donation and composting instead. The project will provide resources to help [Upper Peninsula Initiative](#) restaurants initiate food waste composting programs and is intended to encourage food recovery programs in other areas of Charleston through educational information.

"This year over 7,500 pounds of produce collected by Fields to Families at the Charleston Farmers Market has been donated locally to families who may not always know where their next meal will come from. The City of Charleston is excited to continue connecting food surpluses to those in need and promoting composting food scraps to turn a waste into a resource," said Mayor John J. Tecklenburg.

South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley proclaimed July 13, 2016 as "[Don't Waste Food S.C. Day](#)" as the state agencies launched the initiative and invited all South Carolinians to join the effort. The campaign has already gained momentum with early involvement from several private stakeholder partners, including Harvest Hope Food Bank, Re-Soil and Loaves & Fishes. The partners are working together to connect food surpluses to those in need and to educate consumers, communities, and businesses about composting and what they can do reduce food waste.

For more information, educational resources, and to get involved in the Don't Waste Food S.C. campaign, visit www.scdhec.gov/dontwastefoodsc. Charleston County's composting program information is available at <http://charlestoncounty.org/compostingprogram/>.

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- Visit our website: www.charlestoncounty.org



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