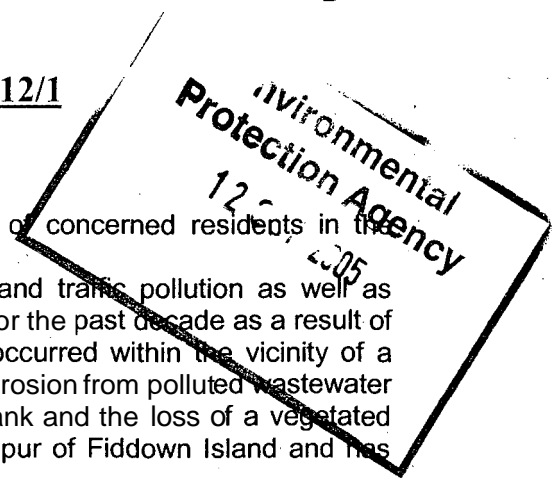


RE: Application for Waste Licence Ref: 212/1



The Suir Valley Environmental Group represents hundreds of concerned residents in the regions of Portlaw, Piltown, Turkstown, and their surrounds. People in these townlands have suffered air, noise, light and traffic pollution as well as having to observe the extreme pollution of the Suir waterway for the past decade as a result of the activities of Michell Leather Ltd. Much of this pollution occurred within the vicinity of a proposed special area of conservation (pSAC) where severe erosion from polluted wastewater has led to the loss of land and vegetation along the riverbank and the loss of a vegetated Island which was over of 1/3 acre in size (this island was a spur of Fiddown Island and has been in existence for hundreds of years)

Despite numerous phone calls and letters to the company, County Council and the EPA, little was done to address their dire situation. Eventually the company closed in 2003.

In November 2004 proposals were received by the County council for a waste management facility. This company is a relatively new company, one that is an amalgamation of about 15 small companies. Despite its fledgling status, it has already developed a poor environmental record.

One example of this occurred in Ballymorris, Co. Laois where AES bought a waste management company, Eirwinn Cobb Ltd. (the previous owner became a director of AES). This company had operated without a licence and dumped material illegally onsite since the 1970s. AES continued to operate a waste management facility under the name Eirwan Cobb Ltd – and even operated a small incinerator illegally for a further two years. The groundwater supplying the town’s water supply has now been found to be contaminated.

On 23rd September 2004 Ireland was found guilty of “Failure by a Member State to fulfil its obligations - Infringement of Council Directive 75/442/EEC of 15 July 1975 on waste, as amended by Council Directive 91/156/EEC of 18 March 1991)” by the European Court of Justice for failing in its duty to take action in regard to the operations of both Eirwinn Cobb and AES. A High court injunction was sought by residents of Ballymorris against AES to halt illegal activities was taken some residents in a court appointed out-of-court settlement when AES offered to pay €100,000 for a half acre site adjacent to the facility (this sum was massively above the market value of the land) conditions of payment required the persons in receipt of the money to sign a confidentiality agreement, although this information is available on court records, another condition required that the recipients would not make further complaint about AES to the authorities for a period of two years after which AES agreed to cease operations. Having been refused a waste licence by Laois authorities they had little choice.

Last November Lorries of foul smelling material were transported and illegally stored in the old Michell Ltd factory. This material was found to be dewatered sewage sludge. This sludge was dumped on the factory floor and lime was mixed through the sludge. This mixing activity was heard by local residents at night on at least two occasions during the week it was stored. After the sludge had been removed from the premises, a local resident visited the facility where he saw residual sludge on the factory floor and in the front loader of a tractor that had not been fully hosed down.

When asked, AES representatives John McNamara and Peter Carey said the odour was as a result of the cleaning of the equipment in the tank farm and denied any material had been stored in the factory. When contacted by the resident who witnessed the sludge, Dr. John McNamara admitted that an “errant manager” had authorised the storing of the sludge on the premises.

In an E-mail to Munster Express Journalist, Dermot Keyes, AES admit to storing waste sludges in the facility last November 19th to 27th as they claim the weather did not permit them to spread the waste on land. It is not permissible to store sludges without an EPA permit. Spreading of sewage sludge on land during the restricted months of November to February is also contrary to European and Irish legislative guidelines.

Representatives of the Suir Valley Environmental Group received numerous odour complaints from motorists who were behind the trucks transporting the material to the factory and the householders along the roadside in which they travelled. This constitutes serious odour nuisance. Once the Suir Valley Environmental Group was established, a complaint was lodged with both the EPA and Waterford County Council (WCC).

This incident and the lack of an apology has led locals to believe that should this company be allowed to commence operations, it will continue to flaunt the law with little regard for the surrounding communities.

We feel that AES has set a precedent in relation to its regard for the local residents and the environment – they care little about either. Not only have this but AES clearly felt that they are a law unto themselves: at a conference in 2003 Mr. Patrick Alley, former CEO of AES (he was CEO during the incidents mentioned above) accused the current Government of “meddling” in the waste management sector. He also claimed that local authorities had an “unfair competitive advantage” as the private sector must pay 13.5pc VAT.

This ethos is not in the public interest and is not the attitude of a and or the lives of residents before its profit margins.

As a result the AES's involvement in Illegal activities which led to the ruling against Irish Authorities in the European Court of Justice and other documented flagrant disregards for the environment and the law, we feel that AES are **NOT “fit and proper”** persons to hold an EPA waste licence as they cannot be trusted to act appropriately and within the confines of current waste management directives.

On careful analysis of the information submitted to the EPA and Waterford County Council for licensing and planning approval, We feel, on behalf of the residents of the locality, that we must in the strongest terms **object** to this proposal.

Listed are some of our Key Concerns:

1. The developers, AES, have failed to supply an adequate Environmental Impact statement (EIS) despite being asked for further information by the EPA and a revision of their EIS by Waterford County Council.
Under the most recent guidelines, the EPA may void the application in an incidence where further information has not been received within a required timeframe.
2. There was no public participation sought at any stage when attempting to prepare or revise the EIS by not doing so, this planning application is out of compliance with the Environmental Impact Assessment directive 85/337/EEC as amended by Directive 97/11/EC
3. AES's intention to use human and industrial sludges is in direct contravention of **the Waterford County Council's Sludge mananement plan**. Human/animal Sewage will cause odour problems during its transport and processing. During a recent radio interview Dr. John McNamara conceded that there will be odours from this material.
4. AES intends to operate a three bin collection system and sort the waste onsite in Killowen facility. This does not comply with the **South-East Waste Manaement plan**. There has been no tender made by the developers to undertake any waste from the county council. Thus, the proposed facility serves no benefit to the residents of the SE region or to the county council. We can only assume that the proposed waste processing will be waste from private industry.
5. AES has failed to prove its compatibility with the **prohibition of swill order (SI 597 of 2000)**. This order states that swill (kitchen/ catering waste which may contain meat, eggs etc) cannot be stored on or adjacent to agricultural land where livestock are kept for the eventual purpose of entering the food chain. The Department of Agriculture must access the suitability

of the development in this respect. No consultation document with the Dept. of Agriculture was submitted.

- 7 AES is reluctant to disclose the exact type of waste coming into this plant for composting plant and the WWTP. The information submitted details "*industrial non-hazardous solids*" and "*unspecified waste*" We cannot ascertain if indeed the waste is non-hazardous if its type and origin is **unknown**.

We feel that AES is deliberately avoiding divulging information that is critical to this application in order for the planning authorities to make an informed decision.

8. The risk from swill to both humans and animals has not been examined. Beef from countries that have vaccination policies for foot and mouth and anthrax etc. will be accepted. This is not compatible with the **Irish Acari-slaughter policy**. Contaminated raw trimmings from unspecified sources (e.g. supermarkets and hotels) that use imported beef will be collected for composting at Killowen. Bedminster technology may not destroy all the risks from this material. Some of these diseases include BSE and Anthrax and clostridium. Incorrectly managed swill was found to be the cause of the UK outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease.
9. Despite AES insisting that the Bedminster technology has been "*tried and tested*" the fact remains that this technology has serious failings. The Bedminster facility in Cairns, Australia had to close within 3 months of opening to rectify problems encountered mainly due to odours, rusting component and lack of quality final compost. The closure lasted 10 months. This is not the only Bedminster facility to experience set-up problems: Numerous facilities in America have experienced similar problems; Cobb County in Georgia is the most worrying: during start-up phase odour complaints were lodged with authorities on a daily basis and in that same year the facility burned down – twice! The Cobb County authorities took over the running of the facility but have recently announced their intent to close the plant, as it is not economically viable. Fire also devastated facilities in Pennington County and Truman, Minnesota and many other facilities using Bedminster technology have been subject to ongoing odour complaints and difficulties finding markets for the finished compost.

The Suir valley is a serene and picturesque CSAC¹ region which, until the early 1990's was literally alive with river vegetation, Salmon, otter and other flora and fauna protected under Annex II of the EU habitats directive². Today, however, this stretch of the river Suir has, according to The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government "a biological quality rating (Q rating) of 3. This is not considered satisfactory for a salmonoid river."

We believe that this proposal will be detrimental to the quality of the immediate environment and consequently to the lives the residents of the Suir Valley and should not be allowed to proceed.

We are not alone in this belief; the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is concerned that *'The sources of at least some of the effluent could be from outside the catchment of the river Suir. There is risk therefore that the operation of a treatment plant could therefore add to the pollution loading on the river Suir'* and the Southern Regional Fisheries Board

"..Object to the granting of planning permission for that element of the proposal entailing the importation of wastewater"

The Suir Valley Environmental Group, on behalf of the residents of the locality calls on the Environmental Protection Agency to **Reject** this proposal.



¹ Candidate Special area of conservation, (Site code **002137**)

² Council directive 92/43/EEC

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Monday, November 18, 2002 :

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Next year before EPA decides on waste licence

Locals from **Ballymorris**, **Portarlinton** and **Advanced Environmental Solutions (Ireland) Limited** will have to wait until later next year before a decision by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is made on their proposed decision of whether or not to grant a waste licence to **AES**.

There has been ongoing **resistance** over the years from the residents in the area to the activities being carried out on the site at **Deerpark**.

At one stage the matter came before the High Court with a settlement being agreed between some of the residents from the area and the company.

However, the EPA, in a letter to the parties, **last week**, notified them, that their decision would not now be made before next March 28, "...because of the complexity and nature of the information to be considered to carry out the procedures for the consideration of the objections within the period specified in the regulations."

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[TCM Archives](#) > [Laois Nationalist](#) > [2003/04/03](#) > [Objectors delighted at EPA's decision](#)

Thursday, April 03, 2003 :

[FRONT](#) | [NEWS](#) | [SPORT](#) | [LOCAL NEWS](#) | [OTHER NEWS](#)

Objectors delighted at EPA's decision

REACTION to the decision by the EPA to refuse a waste licence to AES has been greeted with satisfaction by those who had objected.

A number of locals were reluctant to publicly comment as they are confined from doing so by a High Court agreement they entered into with AES.

That did not, however deter them from passing comment without being identified, as they requested.

"I'm over the moon about it." said one local.

"I hope AES abide by the decision and they close down their operations there. I'm concerned now that they don't just walk away and leave the site, that they used as a landfill for the past 23 years, without properly ensuring it won't cause problems in the future."

She said she was, 'terri-fied that AES might put in another application for a waste permit to carry on what we've being objecting to for years.

"I don't know what they will do. They should just get out of there."

Another local said: "The decision was made last week, but they're still trading. If I was to drive around without a licence, or the lads were to drive their tractors without a licence, we'd be stopped from doing so quick enough. Sure we wouldn't get up to the cross without a licence. It's not fair.

"They're still going in and out of there. Someone will have to monitor that place and make sure that it's cleaned up properly after they go."

"We are absolutely delighted with the outcome," said another local woman. "The EPA have seen the injustice we have had to put up and suffered with for the past 23 years.

"I hope Laois County Council close that place down immediately."

Senior Engineer from the Environmental Section of Laois County Council said they are serving notice on AES instructing them to cease operations and close within the next two months at their Ballymorris facility.

He said the first priority was AES to stop operating at Ballymorris and then draw up a closure plan. This will include "a risk assessment and the restoring of the area to its original state." He thought the risks involved were more long-term than short term.

Mr Heslin said he hoped AES would comply with the decision of the EPA.

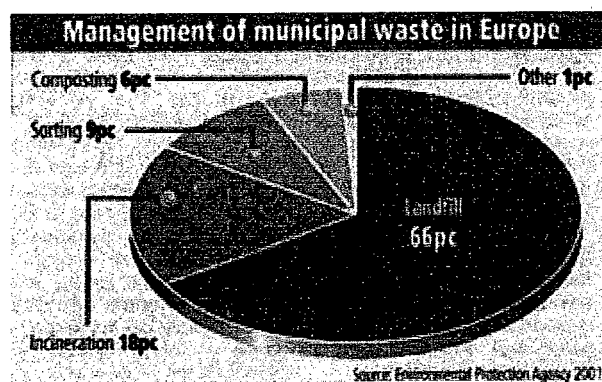
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Waste not and recycle is the State's aim to avoid needing more private landfill sites



Where there is muck there is brass and where both are rolling around together there will always be plenty of action. The Irish waste management sector is no exception. In the last week alone there has also been quite a bit of heated verbal mud slinging.

On Monday, NTR boss Jim Barry, who operates waste disposal group Greenstar, described Irish waste management as a "complete shambles" in need of an overarching body to clarify issues surrounding the waste question.

On Tuesday, advanced environmental solutions chief Patrick Alley accused the government of "meddling" in the sector. He said he had commissioned Pricewaterhouse-Coopers to present the waste sector's case for a level playing field between local authorities and the private sector.

The fact that the private sector has to pay VAT at 13.5pc and the local authorities do not give them an unfair competitive advantage, he claims.

"There is a contradiction when the government not only monitors, controls and acts as custodians of the waste industry, but actively competes in it," he says. Also on Tuesday, PJ Rudden, a director of MC O Sullivan Consultants and author of most of the regional waste plans, reiterated his claims that some private operators are concentrating too much on providing lucrative landfills while neglecting the needs for greater recycling.

Weighing in at a value of over €1bn, the sector is certainly experiencing rapid change as it seeks to cope with the exploding volumes of waste being produced and, at the same time, comply with a raft of national and EU legislation. In addition, the

Government is pouring another €825m for capital waste management infrastructure into the National Development Plan.

This is a honey pot that is experiencing an ongoing process of new international players entering the market and older domestic players consolidating into larger companies. The main players are carving up the waste management market both in terms of geography and range of services.

The economic logic of such consolidation is compelling. Waste management is a specialised field where achieving economies of scale is paramount and high capital expenses are par for the course.

Combined, these will increasingly act as significant barriers to entry for any would-be competitor. The Irish market's immaturity is very attractive to investors. By pumping money in now and capturing key strategic positions, such as landfill rights, private waste operators can expect investor nirvana, substantial returns over a long period.

Hence, the current intense activity by players in the market to carve out their slice of the market now in the knowledge that as time passes it will become tougher and tougher for their positions to be assailed. This is evident in the reams of planning permissions on the boil, the tracts of smaller firms being bought out and the regular spates of investment announcements by the main players.

Advance Environmental Solutions (AES) is a case in point. Since it commenced trading in July 2001 it has absorbed 16 family businesses. Managing director Patrick Allen says a key objective of the company is to obtain "critical mass" within the industry. "These are great opportunities for consolidation. We expect to double again in size within the next 24 to 36 months, and this will require a big programme of integration, consolidation and rationalisation to bring different business cultures together".

"We (the waste sector) are not different from other industries, such as the dairy, bread or drinks industry, all of which have seen substantial consolidation. And the price of entry is increasing substantially". A key issue arises from Ireland's historic dependence on landfill usage. It still lags behind its European counterparts by at least a decade as shown by the graphs. But the landfill route still offers big margins without the public controversy that surrounds incinerators. Landfill prices are €140 a tonne, up about 750pc in five years.

The environmental protection agency (EPA) estimates municipal landfill capacity will run out in 4.5 years, so filling this role is naturally attractive to investors. The shortage is so critical that one estimate argues that 37pc of Greater Dublin's waste is being exported, 600,000 tonnes per annum.

But Ireland's waste management programme is not only driven by economic imperatives but also environmental imperatives as outlined in the Government's 1998 'Changing our Ways'. This sets ambitious goals, including a diversion of 50pc of waste away from landfill to alternative means of disposal, namely:

Recycling 35pc of municipal waste;

Recycling upwards of 50pc of construction and demolition waste;

Reducing the numbers of landfills, and making those that exist state-of-the-art with 80pc less methane emissions and also an element of energy recovery.

PJ Rudden recognises some of the private waste operators' concerns. He says he understands to an extent the private sector frustrations, but says it is a two-way process where they need to take a more integrated approach that takes in recycling and public awareness.

Conor Walsh, environmental director with Thornton's recycling, which had a turnover last year of €30m, says there are plenty of other issues to be ironed out. He says there are contradictions between neighbouring regional plans which may cause difficulties in the future.

(Irish Independent 8th May 2003)

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Vol. 40 No. 11, November 1999

BIOCYCLE

Journal Of Composting & Recycling

CANADA
WASTE & RECYCLING

1999 BioCycle Survey MSW Composting in the United States

Massachusetts became home to two new composting facilities that process MSW and biosolids. Nationally, the total number of operating plants is 19.

Since the mid-1980s, BioCycle has been conducting an annual, nationwide survey of municipal solid waste (MSW) composting facilities. From the late 1980s into the early 1990s, when it was projected that landfill capacity would drop and tipping fees would skyrocket, interest in MSW composting was high. About two dozen companies were marketing systems and equipment, and cities and counties around the country were expressing interest in starting a project.

As it turned out, the landfill crisis passed, tipping fees dropped and remained fairly low, and with the Supreme Court ruling striking down flow control in 1994, proposed projects had difficulty guaranteeing MSW throughput. Despite these odds, composting has been able to establish a niche, albeit a small one, in the solid waste management arena. Operating facilities have established a track record, meeting the needs of the communities they serve.

BioCycle's 1999 Survey of MSW Composting covers facilities that are designed to handle mixed and/or source separated solid waste, along with other residuals such as biosolids. To be part of this survey, projects must include the residential MSW stream. This year, there are 19 operating plants, and six projects in various stages of development (see Table 1). Two plants are closed and may resume operations. In 1998, BioCycle identified 18 operating MSW composting projects, 15 in development or consideration (two in construction,

Further, the sorting and processing system prior to composting also had not been doing well. Sears notes that workers on the picking lines were letting many recyclables slip through, particularly glass. When the first compost was analyzed, it was found to contain upwards of 12 percent glass. An evaluation of the system from December, 1998 to April, 1999 led to better trained sorters and improved equipment performance. There has been a drop in the amount of residue going to the landfill and fewer noncompostables going into the windrows. Glass content is now 1.5 percent. The amount of film plastic in the compost also has dropped substantially, according to Sears.

The facility is currently accepting about 650 tpd of MSW, of which about 35 percent is landfilled. Since the process has been retooled, the amount of material composted has increased from an average in April of 110 tpd to just short of 150 tpd in September. Compost has been distributed primarily to farmers and homeowners; some has been used in land reclamation projects as well.

O'NEILL, NEBRASKA

Last October, Great Plains Recycling, Inc. in O'Neill began operating a city owned processing facility that sorted out recyclables and composted the remaining organic fraction. Less than a year later, the facility was turned over to the city, which had financed its development.

"They just couldn't keep up with the payments," says Kevin Seger, who now manages the facility for O'Neill. "The tipping fee (\$37.50/ton) is too low to support the mortgage payments each month. Most of the landfills in the area are in the \$45 to \$48/ton range." On September 22, the city continued the operation, rehiring 25 of the people who had been working there.

both of which began operating in 1999) and one closed. This year, projects in Clinton County, Iowa and Vilas County, Wisconsin were not included in the survey because their MSW processing method use of a rotating digester, screening, and use of the fines as landfill cover does not build in an actual composting step. The following is a project round-up.

COBB COUNTY, GEORGIA

Last year at this time, the MSW composting project in Cobb County was just starting to slowly get back on-line after two separate fires caused a multiyear shutdown. Designed to handle 300 tons/day (tpd) of MSW and 20 wet tpd of biosolids, the facility is now fully operational, but the original operator Bedminster Bioconversion Corp. isn't running the plant any longer.

"It was a mutual parting," says Joe Accortt, head of the county's solid waste program. "But there's no question that the county wanted to run the facility." After two months of performance testing was completed satisfactorily in April, the county assumed control.

Prior to the fire, the biggest problem with the facility involved odors. The plant, which is located close to a fairly large population base, experienced problems during its initial start up. Much of the work completed after the fire involved improving the odor control system.

That work has paid off. "It's not totally odor free," says Accortt. "But it's day and night from what things were like during startup. Now we have odor 'puffs' occasionally. But thanks to the redesign, we can now operate day in and day out."

The time spent rebuilding the plant also aided in finding markets for finished compost. "We have approval from the Georgia Department of Agriculture to sell the compost as a soil conditioner and from the Department of Environmental Protection to use it as landfill cover," says Accortt.

One operational plus about utilizing the compost as landfill cover is that it needs less curing time. "We can take the compost straight from the plant," says Accortt. "When it's used for landscaping, it requires four or five months of additional curing." The county is using the bulk of the compost for the closure of three of its own landfills, as well as several others in the state. It also has a giveaway program that allows residents to pick up compost at the facility two days each week.

MARLBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS

If taking a cautious approach to startup can keep

The \$2.7 million facility is taking in between 65 and 100 tpd, predominantly from Waste Connections, which collects garbage from nearly 50 communities in the O'Neill area. "This is largely a manual operation," Seger says of the processing system. After the garbage is dumped, corrugated cardboard, large metal items and noncompostables are pulled at the tipping area. The feedstock then goes through a linear picking system designed and installed by Wildcat Manufacturing. The MSW is put through a drum bag breaker, then goes onto the picking line where plastics (#1 & 2) are pulled manually, along with aluminum cans. Ferrous metal is taken off via a crossbelt magnet.

At the end of the line, the remaining material is processed through an Ariens grinder and deposited on the floor. From there it is loaded into a silage wagon and taken transport to the compost area. O'Neill uses an Ag-Bag composting system, which employs elongated plastic sleeves to contain feedstock during the process. The compostable material is loaded into 200-by-10-foot plastic tubes, which each contain an aeration hose fed by a blower and have a capacity of approximately 100 tons.

OTHER OPERATING PLANTS

The following is a summary of the other operating MSW composting projects:

Lake of the Woods County, Minnesota: The amount of MSW processed at the county's facility has increased a bit over the past year, creeping up from three to almost four tpd. A maintenance building has been added, opening up space for household hazardous waste storage. "That means we don't have to service equipment in the same area where we shred material," says Gary Lockner, the county's solid waste officer.

Expansion of the curing pad's length from 300 feet to as long as 600 feet is in the works for next year. Although a marketing study revealed that a farmer would use all of the compost generated at the operation, the county has just about nothing left over after using it internally for landfill cover. "We defer the costs of buying black dirt, which is worth more than what we could get by marketing the compost," Lockner explains.

Pennington County, Minnesota: Tough times are continuing for the county's pioneering MSW composting site, which started in 1987. Three years ago, the facility suffered a devastating fire. The contracted site operator recently was hit with significant fines. And in the past year, throughput has dropped from 25 to 11 tpd. "The company that's been operating the plant for us lost most of its garbage contracts," says Howard Person, who

little problems from turning into bigger ones, then the latest MSW composting project to go from drawing board to operation doesn't have much to worry about. The 120 tpd facility in Marlborough isn't in any hurry to get to full capacity.

The plant began accepting MSW from the city at the end of August, but is only taking in about 25 tpd. "We are being prudent," says Bob Spencer, who manages the project for Bedminster Marlborough LLC. The idea is to run the operation at a reduced level while the bugs are being worked out. And so far, there have been minimal problems. "There have been a few mechanical and electrical glitches," says Spencer. "But it's better to correct them now while we have the time." The city is pleased by what it has seen so far. "It's doing what it's supposed to do," says Doran Crouse, who oversees the project for Marlborough.

The next bump in throughput was expected in late October, when the plant will be taking all of the city's MSW. That would put the facility at approximately half capacity. Plans are to be fully operational, processing 120 tpd of MSW and selected organics, and another 60 wet tpd of municipal biosolids, in early 2000.

Bedminster is employing a waste broker to search for the other half of the feedstock needed to bring the plant to 100 percent capacity. The principal target is organic-rich residuals from places like grocery stores, cafeterias, restaurants and office parks. Enticements are offered: While the tipping fee at the gate is \$75/ton, loads with ten percent or less inorganic content will pay \$60/ton. Loads with 20 percent or less inorganic content will pay \$66/ton.

"We can justify the lower fees," says Spencer, "because it means we have less contaminant residue to deal with." Those residues are handled by the same firm, Penn Atlantic Group, Inc., that is obtaining feedstock for the plant. "Actually, that's how we got together in the first place," says Spencer. "We were looking to have someone handle our residue. Now they're really into finding those organics for us."

The Marlborough project has benefited from the experience Bedminster has garnered over the years from its other projects, which include Cobb County, Sevier County (Tennessee) and others. The plant, located at the city's wastewater treatment facility, is using two digesters to mix and initially process the MSW and biosolids. The garbage is fed to the digester via a hopper, but to aid in minimizing odors, biosolids are pumped directly from the dewatering room into the drums. "Originally, we were going to use overhead conveyors to move the biosolids," adds Spencer. "But we decided to go with an underground

supervises the plant for the county. "We had about 25,000 tons per year of MSW coming in, and now we're at about 10,000 tons per year."

Markets for fuel pellets and compost produced by the operation have been poor, resulting in a large stockpile of finished product, a little of which has been taken by businesses trying it out. Some compost that has not been run through the destoner to remove glass and metal fragments will likely be used in gravel pit reclamation. The remainder might be mixed with yard trimmings compost and given away to county residents, adds Person.

Truman, Minnesota: A fire last year that destroyed several pieces of equipment led to a dramatic marketing turnaround for the Prairieland Solid Waste Board's MSW composting operation. To replace its gutted trommel, the board purchased a Bivitec dual-stage vibratory screen. It previously had to pay \$3/ton to have the compost trucked and spread on agricultural land. Now the board sells the compost for \$6/ton (and pays for freight). "After we put in a different screen, the product became more aesthetically pleasing," explains board official Mark Bauman. "It takes out more inert material. I think we'll be able to sell pretty much all of our compost." The facility produces about 4,000 tons/year of compost.

Mackinac Island, Michigan: "We're all about volume," says Bruce Zimmerman, director of the island's Public Works Department. Over the past year, throughput has increased at the site from four tpd to about five tpd. A small amount of the MSW and biosolids is being diverted to a pilot vermicomposting operation. Selling for \$10/cubic yard (cy), about half of the finished compost is bought by businesses such as hotels and golf courses, with most of the rest going to residents and community groups. A little is sold to landscaping businesses. "We marketed all that we wanted to last year," notes Zimmerman. "We sold 800 cy and reserved 200 cy for landfill cover."

Hot Springs, South Dakota: A few changes over the past year have enabled a decrease in operating hours on the materials sorting line at the MSW composting facility from 40 to 32 hours/week. Some plastics are allowed through the Ariens grinder, with the vast majority taken out later by a Wildcat trommel screen, says Steve Moir, facility manager. "We also used to spend a lot of time pulling dirty cardboard off the line," he adds. "Even though the market was good for cardboard, we ended up with a lot that was not recyclable. If it's clean, we save it; if not, we grind it." Significant amounts of compost have been used on athletic fields, but most is given away to residents. This summer, the facility started turning a profit for the first time since starting in 1993.

delivery system to reduce odors.”

After three days of retention in the drums, the composting mixture is run through a 1.25-inch trommel and then sent for curing on an aeration floor similar to the one used in Sevier County. The windrows are turned with a front-end loader. After this curing phase, the composted material is put through a final screening and destoning operation, with the final product finished to three-eighths inch. Because Bedminster isn't allowed to store any material outside, it has contracted with third parties located off-site to provide staging and curing areas.

Odor control was a major concern for the city because it had operated a biosolids composting facility with all sorts of odor problems. “We really have a multifaceted odor control program here,” says Spencer. “The biofilter is the most visible component, but it's just the final stage.” That biofilter consists of five separate bays, each with an 18-inch base of stone under a mixture of softwood chips and mature yard trimmings compost. “Each bay can be operated independently and we can run (at full capacity) with three of the five,” he notes. That allows the media in a bay to be changed without disrupting operation of the plant. The biofilter is housed in a building that contains emissions, which are introduced to the atmosphere through five dispersion fans on the roof.

While the biofilter offers “end of pipe” control, point sources of odors also have been targeted. Collection ducts are located over points such as the feed hoppers and digesters. Those ducts feed two 55,000-cfm water absorption-type scrubbers that pretreat the air prior to it going to the biofilter.

NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS

In Nantucket, Waste Options, Inc. is putting the finishing touches on a facility capable of composting 125 tpd of MSW and biosolids. According to Jeff Willett, director of public works, the facility was scheduled for a three-week shakedown period after going on line at the end of October. Under the agreement with Waste Options, that company is responsible for the financing, construction and operation of the facility. The Town and County of Nantucket will pay a fee of \$90/ton for the material that is processed. While that fee may sound high to people in many parts of the country, Nantucket located on an island represents a unique situation. “Off-island options were in the \$140 to \$180/ton range,” says Willett.

The initial phase of the project was construction of a MRF that handles recyclables from the island's mandatory recycling program. That facility was actually built as part of a previous agreement with Daneco that Waste Options assumed when it took

Sevier County, Tennessee: The only change at the county facility has been an upgrade to larger wheel loaders. Although the volumes of MSW and biosolids are similar to last year's amounts (240 tpd of MSW and 100 wet tpd of biosolids), the bigger machines were acquired to keep up with the total increase over the past several years, explains Tom Leonard, who began managing the project a few months ago. Another possible change is an expansion of the aeration floor to handle more compost. Professional Services Group, the facility operator, is responsible for marketing the finished product, which is delivered to nurseries and farms for the cost of hauling it.

Lexington, Nebraska: The Lexington Area Solid Waste Authority has taken over marketing of recyclables from the former contractor after he retired. The board of directors has discussed slowing down the sorting line to recover more plastic on the front end and improve compost quality. Compost is given away to residents and will be used by the City of Lexington for application in parks and other areas that can use it.

Buena Vista County, Iowa: Things are running smoothly at the county's facility. Some compost has been applied at public ballfields and flower beds of new parks. The rest is mixed with equal portions of dirt for daily landfill cover. Testing of the product is being conducted on farmland to evaluate increases in organic matter content, but a lack of volume is inhibiting more widespread use of the compost. A Rotochopper was purchased to grind wood for mulch given away to the public and used in conjunction with road work.

Swift County, Minnesota: Not much has changed at the MSW composting facility, says Scott Collins of Swift County. About 85 percent of the roughly 1,400 tons of MSW compost produced last year is being used as a soil amendment on county grounds, with the rest snapped up for free by residents. “We've talked about selling the compost,” says Collins. “But for a program where residents are asked to source separate, at this volume, we think it's better to give it to them.”

Columbia County, Wisconsin: MSW volume has increased a bit to roughly 63 tpd at the county facility, which will have its first shutdown in the spring to conduct preventative maintenance, says Bill Casey, the county's solid waste director. Finished compost is currently land applied on agricultural land, but plans are afoot to meet interest in the product expressed by landscapers, nurseries and a few homeowners. “We're going to clean up the compost a little more before trying to sell it,” says Casey. “We're looking at doing some things on the front end, like buying a machine to open and separate bags of MSW and get some of the glass out.”

over the project.

For the composting component, Waste Options chose the Bedminster drum technology. After processing in the drum, material will be screened and further composted in aerated windrows, then screened and destoned. To cut down on the amount of plastic film in the finished material, the town is discussing the possibility of replacing clear plastic garbage bags with biodegradable bags.

Because the island has a tremendous fluctuation in population (from 60,000 in the summer months to roughly 7,000 in the winter), for much of the year the facility will have a significant amount of excess capacity. To utilize some of that excess, the public works department is looking at the possibility of processing waste that can be mined from an old landfill.

Waste Options is ultimately responsible for compost marketing, although the town will share in the sale of material. According to Willett, the marketing program is largely targeted to on-island uses, since there is a great need for organic material to improve the soils. However, he does anticipate some material being sold off the island as well.

SUMTER COUNTY, FLORIDA

Sumter has been composting MSW since 1988, which makes it one of the oldest such facilities in the country. Although in its early years the Florida facility had its problems producing a viable product, the county has battled through them and continues the operation today.

In 1996, the county embarked on a \$5 million upgrade of the facility, which included installation of a new sorting system, a digester and a composting building. The facility now can handle approximately 100 tpd of MSW. Up-front sorting is done manually to recover glass, corrugated cardboard, newspaper, plastic bottles and film plastic. Steel cans are extracted with magnets, while aluminum is removed by an eddy current separator. Other noncompostables are removed in the upfront system as well.

The resulting feedstock is then conveyed to the 185-foot-long rotary digester, where it remains for approximately three days. The feedstock is then put through a two-inch screen and transported to a covered windrow composting area. It stays there for approximately 20 days, then is screened again and windrowed on an open pad for another three to four months.

Last year, the county completed an analysis of the sorting and composting systems. The study,

Pinetop-Lakeside, Arizona: Due to population growth in the area, the operation has outgrown its cocomposting digester. "We are in the process of adding a dehydrator to handle sludge that we can't process in the digester," says Phil Hayes, who supervises the facility. "That material will be blended into the compost." All compost is sold to a contracted company for \$7.01/cy, which is more than what was paid by the prior business. The facility produces about 1,100 cy/year of compost, most of which is used by residents.

Fillmore County, Minnesota: After a prior dip in feedstock, MSW volume has stabilized at six tpd for the county's operation, one of the country's longest running MSW composting projects. Finished product is sold to residents and nurseries for \$1/cy.

East Hampton, New York: MSW composting was temporarily suspended at the municipal site in July due to an order by the state to deal with the stockpile of yard trimmings. "When we get caught up on our yard waste, the state will allow us to do MSW composting again," says David Paoelli, manager of the facility.

Medina, Ohio: Operated by Norton Environmental, MSW composting continues at the Medina County Class 1 Compost Facility. The operation generates 92 cy/day of fines (two inches or less) from its MSW processing line, which are composted with yard trimmings and bulking agents in a 4:1 ratio, processing a total of 460 cy/day.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Financing is being sought for a \$7 million MSW composting facility using Bedminster technology in Iberia Parish, Louisiana. "It's in the preliminary phases right now," explains David Suire, project manager for Wayne M. Labiche Engineering, the parish's consulting engineering firm. "We're hoping at the beginning of next year to select a contractor and have plans and specifications completed." The facility, designed to handle 50 to 75 tpd of MSW, would consolidate the parish's garbage and recycling programs. Once it begins, construction is estimated to take up to 18 months.

In Mora, Minnesota, the East Central Solid Waste Commission is looking into the possibility of restarting its composting plant. According to Al Christensen, interim director, the commission may operate a scaled-down version of the project that was most recently overhauled, but never operated, by Microlife, Inc. One possibility would be to process ten to 30 percent of incoming material through a picking line and then compost the fines from a screening operation. But ultimately, the commission may be looking for another vendor to do a full retrofit of the plant. "There's nothing

performed by TIA Solid Waste Management Consultants of Tampa, showed that the amount of recyclables removed in the sorting system ranged from 13 to 23 percent of the total amount of material processed. Residuals removed up front ranged from eight to 14 percent. In both cases, variation in the amount recovered was largely attributable to the number of sorters working on the line. Analysis of the composting system showed that 30 to 35 percent of the material entering the digesters is residuals removed through the primary and secondary screening systems.

CRISP COUNTY, GEORGIA

May, 1998 marked what was to be the startup of the biggest MSW compost facility this country had seen since the Dano facility in Portland, Oregon, which shut down in the early 1990s. The Solid Waste Management Authority of Crisp County project was designed to process about 1,700 tpd of MSW, and compost about 420 tpd of the organic fraction. To date, the composting system hasn't come close to handling that amount. What's more, after several months of operation and an evaluation of the processing facility, the authority now believes that its capacity is closer to 800 tpd. These shortcomings led it to dismiss the original management team and replace it with a new firm, ERR, last February.

According to Robert Sears, who oversees the compost operation, the initial management of the process was lax. "There was no record of windrow temperatures, when windrows were turned, or when water was added," he says. "There were no quality control measures in place until September, 1998."

Not surprisingly, these management shortfalls contributed to odor problems. And even though the plant is in a rural setting, that translated into complaints. After improvements in recordkeeping and management, the number of odor complaints fell from an average of three times a month to zero since January, 1999.

concrete now," says Christensen. "But processing is definitely in the future."

Several years ago, Rapid City, South Dakota developed a solid waste management plan that called for a yard trimmings composting system and a MRF, as well as an MSW organics composting plant. To date, the city has put in place the yard trimmings composting and MRF. Additionally, it has constructed the front end of the MSW composting plant, installing a digester salvaged from the defunct Dano project in Portland, Oregon, which is currently used to reduce the volume of material going to its landfill. Because of problems that its wastewater treatment plant is facing in regard to land applying biosolids (which would require upwards of 900 additional acres of farmland), the city is investigating the possibility of processing biosolids in the digester with MSW, and then composting the mixture. In order to cocompost, the city would have to spend at least \$6 million for improvements to the \$13 million facility, which began operating in 1997.

During the past year, Mariposa County, California selected Herhof composting technology for the development of a 100 tpd facility. If grant funding can be secured, the \$5 million project can get off the ground as early as mid-2000.

Harvey County, Kansas has awarded a contract to Agranom, Inc. to build an MSW composting facility that would process 60 to 70 tpd of source separated organics collected primarily from residents. Currently in the design phase, the county expects the facility to be completed by 2001.

[USCC] FW: Cobb County, GA composting facility to close

Britt Faucette britt_faucette at hotmail.com

Tue Jun 28 12:22:23 CDT 2005

- Previous message: [USCC] Ammonia from home composters
- Next message: [USCC] Operating and Failed Mixed Waste Composting Locations
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>From *the Atlanta Journal and Constitution*

ajc.com > Metro > Cobb

Compost plant may be trashed
Cobb looks to close costly recycling facility Money
recycling plant will close

By **RICHARD WHITT**

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Published on: 06/25/05

With its dreams of turning garbage into gold shatte
is
planning to close its compost plant as costs tied to opera
climb past \$80 million.

"I think there's a very good shot we'll have it clo
the year," Cobb County Commission Chairman Sam Olens said
50 employees there will be offered other jobs, he said.

The county will have to pay off \$19 million owed on
finance the facility, which cost \$23 million to build in 1
the county could use savings generated from shutting down
off the bonds in four or five years.

Cobb taxpayers have paid about \$62 million in opera
interest on the original bonds.

"It's not going to make money, ever," County Finance Commissioner Bowers said: "Every ton you take in you lose money."

Keeping the plant open would cost even more, Olens said. The recycling process is causing the building to deteriorate more rapidly. "It's great to have this facility from an environmental perspective, but the cost is excessive," Olens said. "The numbers just don't make sense."

Olens said Friday that he has discussed closing the plant with several other county commissioners, who would have to vote on the closing.

Initially operated as a private-public venture with Bedminster Bioconversion Corp., the facility was hailed as an environmentally friendly alternative to landfills and as a recycling center.

Workers at the plant combine sewage sludge with bio household garbage in large mixers. The product breaks down and is dried for a month. The compost is then taken to a landfill for eight months to reduce its odor before it is sold as a soil amendment.

The stench inside the plant is overwhelming, but it is masked through fresh compost and wood chips before being released.

Cobb County has the only municipal waste composter in Georgia. Several similar plants were built in the 1980s, but shut down by the 1990s, said Bill Sheehan, director of the Atlantic Policy Institute.

"I was never a fan of trying to make compost of mixed waste," Sheehan said. "People just never trusted the product."

Bedminster promised Cobb officials that the compost would be sold in bulk to nurseries and agricultural operations, with 40 percent of the revenue going into the county treasury. But the operation never made a profit.

"I think Bedminster was overly optimistic," Bowers said.

In 1999, with the plant losing money, then-Commissioner John Byrne severed ties with Bedminster, and the county took over the plant.

Byrne, who nursed the plant into operation, said he never supposed to make a profit. "This is a bunch of crap, but the concept works."

Byrne said the plant does what it was meant to do a good, usable product. "The problem is no one has put together a program," he said. "It is a failure of the political establishment work."

The facility, on County Services Parkway about three Marietta Square, is capable of recycling more than 300 ton garbage a day into 150 tons of compost. It currently operates two-thirds of capacity and makes a fine compost, said Jose county's solid waste division manager. "But the market has we'd have liked to see it," he said. "We give away a fair some to **commercial** developers."

Only 25 percent of Cobb's household waste goes to it goes into a landfill in Cherokee County.

State and county officials said the political and economic climates were different when Cobb began promoting the compost 1990s. "It was perceived that we were running out of land," Randy Hartmann, director of environmental assistance at the of Community Affairs.

In 1994, Cobb's landfill was believed to have less left before it would run out of space. The Georgia Legislature law requiring local governments to reduce the amount of solid waste into their landfills by 25 percent per person. And the U.S. Protection Agency had come out with new regulations requiring be lined to prevent groundwater contamination and to be maintained years after **closing**, Hartmann said.

'Other metro Atlanta counties, including Fulton and DeKalb, are watching Cobb and considering similar composting operation

With its landfill about to shut down, Cobb was anti costs to haul waste to landfills outside the county would

"When the commission made its decision, the state would reduce trash going into the landfill," said Olens, who serves community affairs board. "But the state has been a paper tiger

The state never enforced its landfill reduction ordinance. General Assembly repealed the requirement.

In the late 1990s, large corporations began opening landfills.

Landfill space has continued to increase, Hartmann said, with facilities opening in Cherokee and Forsyth counties and elsewhere.

In 1996, when the Cobb compost plant opened, county officials were predicting that "tipping fees" – money charged to garbage trucks at the plant – would increase to about \$40 a ton. It stayed at \$32.50 until 2003, when the commission raised it to \$35. "If we had a \$55 or \$60 tipping fee, we could make money," Accortt said. "But not at \$35."

In the Northeast, garbage haulers pay up to \$100 a ton for their trucks. "If you could magically transfer this plant to New Jersey, it would be a gold mine," Accortt said.

Cobb's compost plant has suffered operational problems since it opened, two fires – one triggered by a welder's torch and another by lightning – closed the facility for several months. Complaints from nearby residents about the odor also slowed production as engineers made changes to clean the air.

Officials have taken several measures to reduce the plant's footprint over the years, Olens said, including cutting back staff and streamlining operation.

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July 11, 1999 12:00 PM
 Melanie A. Lasoff

After more than two years of operating below capacity, Marietta, Ga.-based Bedminster Biocoverison Corp.'s composting plant in Cobb County, Ga., has been turned over to the county.

As part of the agreement, Cobb County has assumed the company's \$175,000 debt and gained complete control and ownership of the plant. The county also hired the plant's 26 employees, including maintenance workers, office staff and plant managers, at their same salary.

Dain Kistner, marketing director at Bedminster Cobb - as the facility is known - says the plant was losing money and the new agreement is "a win-win scenario."

"The facility was costing more to run than we received on the contract we signed with the county in 1995," he says, citing the \$2.5 million the plant received this year. "It took longer than [the contract stated] to start up, and we were taking a bath on this thing financially."

The Cobb County plant originally opened in 1996, but it was plagued with two fires that year causing \$12.5 million in damages. There also were several neighbor complaints about odor. The company closed the facility in late 1996, rebuilt and reopened the plant in June 1998 using insurance money from the fire, Kistner says.

Yet even without fires or odor complaints, the new plant still only was processing about half of the 300 tons per day (tpd) of compost it was built to process.

"We certainly did run 300 tpd on a number of days, just not 30 days in a row," Kistner says. "We didn't want to try to jam 300 tpd from the word go - we knew there were little things you have to do to go from brand new equipment to equipment operating the way it needs to, and we knew we wanted to start slowly."

The plant also was working with smaller, independent haulers, whose loads were smaller and less consistent, Kistner says.

"The county is working to get larger haulers to contract that we didn't have before," he notes.

According to the Marietta Daily Journal, Marietta, Ga., Cobb County Commission Chairman Bill Byrne has praised the facility but noted that it has sold almost no compost. Instead, it was being stored at the plant while Bedminster searched for an alternative storage location, Kistner says.

"It's not impossible to market [the compost], but it was hard," he says. "We only had about 15 days worth of sewage on site. We couldn't move that much material every day."

According to the Marietta Daily Journal, he says the county will oversee compost sales. He also told the newspaper he expects a profit of about \$200,000 per year.

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Bedminster will serve as an advisor to the plant and Cobb County will be able to use the resources of the five other Bedminster facilities across the country, Kistner says.

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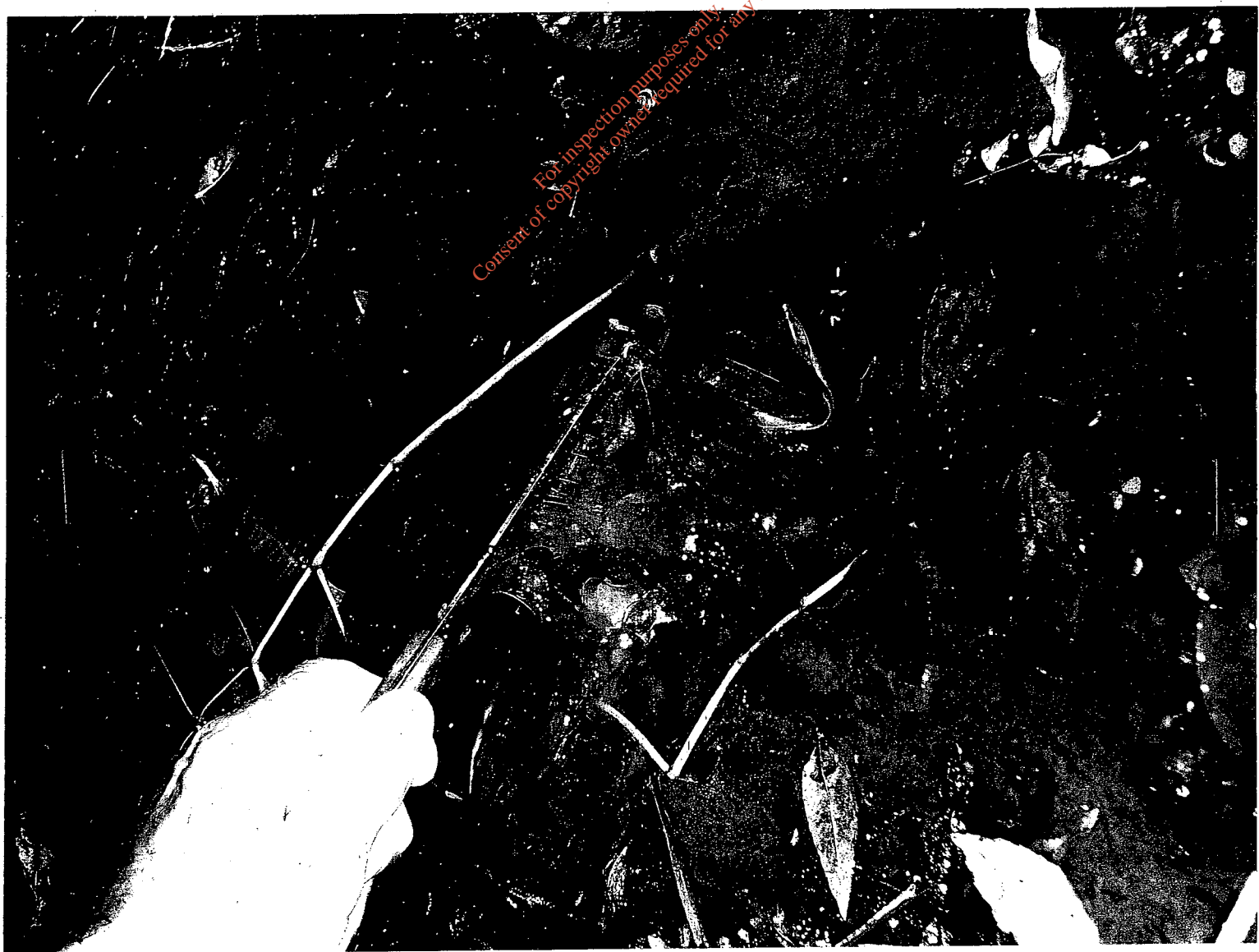
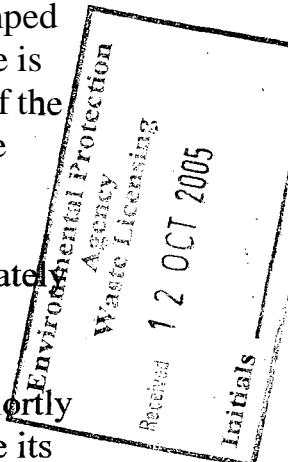
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Sub
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Attachments:

It has come to the attention of the committee that there is an illegal dump on the site of the old **Michell** leather plant. Material was dumped towards the rear of the facility and the **EPA** were later notified of the existence of a dump – we have reason to believe that the amount of material dumped is significantly larger than the amount reported to the **EPA**. Leachate is now seeping up from at least two separate locations in the vicinity of the dump. Find enclosed a map detailing the approximate location of the leachate. Find enclosed also photographic evidence of the gel-like lechate. There appears to be a blood-coloured substance present suspended in the lechate. The material in this dump must be immediately removed and the land remediated, as we are concerned that the groundwater may also be contaminated. There is also a significant amount of a chemical compound (mercury) unaccounted for since shortly before the closure of **Michell Leather**. We feel it is important to trace its destination as it causes us serious concern.



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