



MEDIA RELEASE

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Demand for compost grows

The use of compost by Australian farmers has nearly doubled in the last two years. That's according to Western Australian company, C-Wise, which mainly recycles organic carbon and sells compost.

It's good news for **INTERNATIONAL COMPOSTING AWARENESS WEEK**, which kicks off today and runs to May 11. The Awareness Week is organised by The Centre for Organic Research and Education, which says if everyone composted the total waste going to landfill could decrease by up to a third.

As organic waste decomposes in landfill it produces greenhouse gases, methane and carbon dioxide. By applying compost to gardens and farms, millions of tonnes of carbon are stored in the soil.

C-Wise horticulturalist Neville Passmore, says the uptake of compost amongst the farming community has grown because of its benefits in a variety of environments.

"Composted product sales have increased by 21 per cent in the last two years, up from the five-year average of 13 per cent. The company has two main production streams one of which produces certified organic material and this makes up 38 per cent of the total output," Neville says. Its products can also be used on certified organic farms because they are registered with Australian Organic.

"The market for C-Wise compost is wide and includes broad acre agriculture and pasture growers, many different forms of horticulture including viticulture, vegetable, fruit and olive producers, then there are amenity landscapes from recreational and sports grounds to ornamental landscaping. Some compost products are used in environmental revegetation and rehabilitation. Home gardeners also use the compost products to build soils and mulch."

The benefits of compost include saving moisture loss through evaporation, keeping plant roots cool from hot weather and making nutrient and water applications last longer to achieve improved quality and a higher yield.

Mara Seeds Pty Ltd is a family owned business in northern New South Wales, which also sells compost registered by Australian Organic. The company's General Manager Stuart Larsson says, "In the last 12 months our compost sales have increased by 6.5 per cent. It's the smaller vegetable and macadamia growers that are mainly buying it."

Organic grain and cattle farmer, Roy Flett, makes compost on his property at Chinchilla, Queensland.

He says, "We're converting hay and manure among other things into humus. We make about one tonne a year, although we still need more. We've been using compost for the last four years and are really starting to see the benefits that it is providing our crops."

Media: Kathy Cogo, Australian Organic, kathy.cogo@austorganic.com, 07 4771 3714 | 0466 015 183.

Australian Organic owns the largest organic certifying body in the country, Australian Certified Organic.