IOWA CITY: SuCCees, LESSONS AND NEXT steps IN FOOD WASTE REDUCTION

Jen Jordan, Recycling Coordinator
Yard waste composting program in place since late 1980s via state yard waste ban at landfills
Began to include commercial food waste in composting program in 2007
Began talking about residential food waste reduction and food waste collection
Pilot ran June to mid-July 2014
GOALS & OBJECTIVES OF FTGTW

- Teach Iowa City residents what the larger social and environmental impacts are of food waste.
- Begin to change social norms regarding food/waste and share the new social norm.
- Gain experience implementing FTGTW.
- Utilize the opportunity to pilot a curbside organics collection program.
Invited 300 homes in five neighborhoods selected for mix of age and income
  + Letters with SASE to return survey
  + Yard signs in neighborhood
  + Door hangers

Open house in each neighborhood
  + Counter top collection bins and bags
  + Kitchen scale
  + Information packets
  + Face-to-face contact

Received pre-surveys from 52 households
6 WEEKS

- Measured preventable & inedible waste combined **
- 1 week baseline **
- Weeks 2-6
  - FTGTW strategies via weekly email
  - Facebook page prompts
  - Yard signs: encouragement
  - Data collection: weekly weight
DATA

- Post-survey
  - Emailed, sent in mail with SASE, option to drop at envelope in their neighborhood
  - Received 27/52

- Weight data
  - 32/52 returned weekly weight data

- Entered to win gift card from New Pioneer Food Co-op
AVERAGE WEEKLY FOOD WASTE MEASUREMENT (1 WEEK BASELINE)

WEEK 1: 4.71 pounds/household/week
WEEK 2: 5.22 pounds/household/week
AVERAGE WEEKLY FOOD WASTE MEASUREMENT
(AVERAGED WEEKS 1 & 2 FOR BASELINE)

Food waste (average pounds/household/week)

- **Ave 1&2**: 5.32 pounds/week
- **WEEK 3**: 5.6 pounds/week
- **WEEK 4**: 5.8 pounds/week
- **WEEK 5**: 5.6 pounds/week
- **WEEK 6**: 5.22 pounds/week
Annual Income vs. Food Waste Produced

Total food waste per household (total pounds) vs. Annual Income

- $30,000-$50,000
- $50,000-$70,000
- Above $70,000

Total food waste per household (total pounds)

- 0
- 10
- 20
- 30
- 40
- 50
- 60
- 70
- 80

Annual Income

- $30,000-$50,000
- $50,000-$70,000
- Above $70,000
**DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food waste per household (total pounds collected during 6-week pilot)</th>
<th>Gardeners</th>
<th>Non-gardeners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: We did not have participants separate out edible vs. preventable food waste
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Tried several collection containers

- Received positive helpful feedback on potential program and container types

Key message: REDUCE *then* compost
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>item</th>
<th>est. costs</th>
<th>actual cost</th>
<th>cost per household (based on 52 initial participants)</th>
<th>source</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>staff time</td>
<td>$ 10,000</td>
<td>$ 9,178.50</td>
<td>$ 176.51</td>
<td>ICLF</td>
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<td>education</td>
<td>$ 750</td>
<td>$ 1,018.27</td>
<td>$ 19.58</td>
<td>ICLF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>containers &amp; bags</td>
<td>$ 750</td>
<td>$ 517.27</td>
<td>$ 9.95</td>
<td>Refuse Division, ICLF</td>
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<td>scales</td>
<td>$ 2,500</td>
<td>$ 390.00</td>
<td>$ 7.50</td>
<td>ICLF</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 14,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 11,104.04</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 213.54</strong></td>
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</table>
FEEDBACK & LESSONS

Feedback
+ strategies: “easy” or “somewhat easy” to use
+ “I am now more aware of food going to waste in my household.”

Lessons
+ **Do longer baseline and measurement periods
+ ** Separate edible from preventable food waste
ONGOING STEPS

- Ongoing outreach for food waste reduction
  - Rap: Love your Mother! (complete)
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65AMXyzEhd8
  - Program at Senior Center (completed)
  - Food films with Iowa City Public Library (planned for fall)
  - Farmers Market tabling (planned for fall)
- Presented plan to City Council in June 2016
- Curbside collection roll-out: September goal