



Castleton Polling Institute, DSM Environmental, and VT DEC Home-Composting Poll

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Method

Goal: Estimate volume of food scraps currently composted or fed to animals at VT homes

- Mailed questionnaire to 4,000 households
 - 1,006 complete/partially complete responses
 - Robust sample size
 - +/- 3% margin of error
- Research & pre-testing to develop questions
- Random, address-based, representative sample

Context



- Does not include leaf & yard debris
- Representative sample based on the demographics included in survey
 - Castleton weighted the data slightly to adjust for minor discrepancies in representativeness

Caveats

- May favor those who compost (Non-response bias)
 - Survey sample seemed to reach beyond those interested in composting, so probably minor impact
- Impact of socially-desirable behavior on responses
- Cannot measure amount of bias → so these results are probably **overestimates**
- Respondents could choose multiple management options for food waste, e.g. they could select both “dispose of it in trash” and “compost it at home”.

Findings from Respondents

- 38% of respondents selected multiple methods of managing food scraps at home
- 58% say they separate food scraps for composting (at home, drop off, or curbside) or feed animals at least sometimes
- 52% put food scraps in trash
- 41% compost at home

Findings from Respondents

- 18% garbage disposal
- 17% feed food scraps to animals or livestock
- 7% set aside for drop-off at transfer station or elsewhere
- 6% something else
- 4% set aside to be picked up by hauler

- 23% say compost less in winter months
- 5% say composting behavior varies seasonally, just not winter

What's Next?



DSM will be working to estimate tons of food scraps diverted state wide by households once results of the Waste Comps hand sorts are complete later this year.

DEC will post and circulate a link to the 2018 Waste Composition Study once it is complete.

Learn more www.vtrecycles.com



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