



January 9, 2018

Patrick Carter, Executive Director
Sonoma County Waste Management Agency
2300 County Center Drive, Suite B-100
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

LOCAL COMPOST SOLUTION FOR EQUINE MANURE

Dear Mr. Carter,

The Sonoma County Horse Council is a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency representing the interests of the equine community. Specifically, our mission is to preserve and protect the health and well-being of horses and horse-related activities in Sonoma County. Based on an economic analysis we commissioned from SSU, *The Economic Impact of Equestrians Activities in Sonoma County 2014*, we know there are over 25,000 equines, mostly horses, in this County. The study found that the equine industry generates \$613 million annually, supports 7,700 jobs and provides almost \$12 million in annual local tax revenues for Sonoma County governments. It is a large sector by any measurement.

Currently, one of the most frequent complaints we hear from equine owners and ranch operators is the lack of options for disposal of manure. It would be hard to overstate the frequency of this complaint, it is ubiquitous in our community. For “mom and pop” operators, the lack of options for disposing of manure is an especially troublesome problem as they often lack the resources for expensive out-hauling. This can, at times, lead to less than optimal manure management practices. For all owners and operators, out-hauling is not only financially burdensome, it is environmentally unsound.

It is the Council’s understanding that your Agency will soon be reviewing one or more proposals for establishing organic composting facilities in Sonoma County. We implore you to consider the vast needs of the equine community and decide in favor of a proposal that can accept manure from equine owners and operators, large and small.

The Horse Council feels so strongly about the need to establish manure composting options locally, we stand by to assist your Agency in anyway we can to bring this to fruition. Please don’t hesitate to contact me for assistance.

Gratefully,

Elizabeth Palmer
President