

**QUESTION TO BE ASKED OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY 29th APRIL 2003, BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN**

Question

Would the President –

- (a) explain what is to happen to the contaminated woodchip/mulch from the composting site at Crabbé, St. Mary, and give details of how the contaminated woodchip/mulch is to be disposed of, given that large quantities of woodchip/mulch have been delivered to Woodside Farm, Haute Croix in the last few months?
- (b) confirm that this mulch is not part of the contaminated batch that had been produced in 2002? and,
- (c) confirm that any contaminated woodchip/mulch which has been deposited at Woodside Farm and land to the east of Handois Reservoir, St. Lawrence, has been done so with the use of a membrane and catchment tank to prevent any leachate from entering into the Island's water courses, and if this is not the case, what action will be taken to prevent any possible pollution of the water courses?

Answer

- (a) To put the answer to the questions from Deputy Rondel into context I will first give some information on the current situation at Crabbé.

At present there are approximately 20,000 cubic metres of material stored at the site (10,000 tonnes). This comprises 8,000 cubic metres (4,000 tonnes) of screened timber used in the composting process and 12,000 cubic metres (6,000 tonnes) of screened compost. There is also some 2,000 cubic metres (1,000 tonnes) of green waste that contains no treated timber and a small quantity of shredded timber not used in the composting process at the site.

The screened timber will be disposed of by incineration at the Bellozanne incinerator, but this will take some time to achieve because of the capacity available. The shredded timber is being disposed of by exporting it to England for recycling into fibre board.

It has not been possible to dispose of any of the compost to land, its intended purpose, as the results of leaching tests being carried out on the compost by WRC, a well reputed consultancy firm in England, are awaited. This has been necessary because of the concern over the arsenic content of the compost produced using treated timber as a carbon source for the composting process. A draft report from WRC was received on the 16th April 2003. The draft report states that the concentrations of arsenic that leach from soils and compost are not statistically different to the levels that leach from the soils alone, and that if the compost is applied evenly, at the correct rate and ploughed in, the effects are likely to be no greater than of the background soils. Whilst these indications in the draft report are encouraging on the potential disposal of the compost to land under the appropriate conditions, further work is necessary before firm recommendations on this can be made. This further work and the necessary discussions with all key parties is likely to take several weeks. Hopefully, the outcome will be that the compost will be disposed of to land. If this is not the case, it may be that it will have to be incinerated at Bellozanne. This would take a significant time due to the capacity of the Incinerator. The costs of the WRC Report has been some £6,750 to date, but it is probable some further costs will be incurred in finalising the work.

Although the majority of material at Crabbé is stored on the lined part of the site, some material is not. Steps are being taken to ensure that all material is stored on areas which are properly lined with appropriate leachate drainage and disposal systems as soon as practicable.

As for Woodside Farm, in July and August 2002, some 3,000 cubic metres (1,500 tonnes) of compost

material was delivered to Woodside Farm to be spread on Agricultural Land. Due to several factors, including land availability and the weather, the material was not spread immediately. During this period, the arsenic problem with compost produced using treated timber came to light. As with the compost at Crabbé, the Department was not able to recommend the disposal of the stored compost at Woodside Farm to land. In recent weeks the timber content of the material stored at Woodside farm was screened out and was taken back to Crabbé for disposal by the means described earlier in this answer. This left some 1000 cubic metres (500 tonnes) of compost at the Farm. In view of the uncertainty of being able to dispose of the compost to land, a decision was taken on the 24th April 2003, to transfer this material back to Crabbé. Monitoring of the ground water in the well at a neighbouring property to Woodside Farm has not indicated that any pollution of the ground water has taken place.

- (b) From the answer to question (a), it will be realised that the compost at Woodside Farm was part of the '*contaminated batch produced in 2002*', as described in the question.
- (c) The compost stored at Woodside Farm was not on a lined site. As stated in my answer to question (a), all the material stored at that site has been taken back to Crabbé where it will be stored until its future disposal route is known. Again as stated earlier in this answer, monitoring of the ground water in the nearest borehole to Woodside Farm has shown that no pollution of the ground water has taken place.

The site referred to in the question as '*east of Handois Reservoir*' contains an amount of on-site composted green waste produced from shredded green waste produced at La Collette. It contains no treated timber and will be disposed of to land in due course.