

**QUESTION TO BE ASKED OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY, 4th FEBRUARY 2003 BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN**

Question

- (a) In late December 2003 the Crabbé compost site closed for organic waste. Will the President explain whether a permanent solution has been found to the problem of organic waste disposal in the Island?
- (b) How does the Committee propose cleaning up the soil in many areas around the Island where large stock piles of mulch containing woodchip, some of them on land adjacent to Island reservoirs, are found and where leaching could have occurred over the last several months?
- (c) Has the Committee identified land where mulch with woodchip has been placed and ploughed in over recent years, and, if so, what method is to be used to clean up the land, to prevent crops from this land getting into the food chain and what compensation, if any, is to be paid to the landowners concerned?
- (d) In recent years many banks around the rifle range and gun ranges at Crabbé have been formed with mulch containing woodchip. Is it the intention of the Committee to remove these banks and, if the answer is in the affirmative, what material is to be used to replace the banks?
- (e) Will the President give members details of how many tons of mulch with woodchip has been produced since the operation at Crabbé began?

Answer

- (a) The Environment and Public Services and the Economic Development Committees and Departments are currently developing a short-term solution for agricultural waste, other than potatoes, for 2003. In discussion with industry representatives on 30th December 2002 it was agreed that, for the 2003 season, potato waste materials would be applied directly back to land. This is not a long-term solution, however, because of the negative effect on plant health in subsequent years. The long-term solution will form part of the overall waste strategy being developed by the Environment and Public Services Committee. The two Committees and Departments are currently working together reviewing alternative composting processes, aiming to identify a sustainable solution both for the organic waste from the agricultural industry, including potato waste, and for the Island's green waste.

This long term solution forms part of the integrated Waste Management Strategy which is the responsibility of the new Environment and Public Services Committee. The President of that Committee will be making a statement to the Assembly before Easter advising Members and the general public on how the three key elements of recycling, composting and the replacement of the Bellozanne Incinerator are being integrated into the overall strategy.

- (b) `Whilst the inclusion of Chromated Copper Arsenate (CCA) treated woodchip into compost and mulches at Crabbé is, in hindsight, seen to have been undesirable, the studies of the CCA Assessment Group have shown that the health of the Island has not been compromised in any measurable way. Save at the site of the original borehole pollution incident, analyses have shown that crops and milk have not been contaminated and that the levels of contaminants in water and soil elsewhere in the Island are well below the levels that are considered acceptable. Only the mulches themselves, and the soil immediately beneath these mulches and soils where compost has been incorporated, appear to contain slightly raised levels of the contaminants, but still well below levels that would be of any concern.

As a precaution, mulches containing woodchip from Crabbé have already been removed from playing areas in primary schools to eliminate any risk from those sources of small children transferring arsenic from contaminated woodchip to their mouths. Other mulches do not need to be removed.

- (c) The Committee is aware of lands that have received such materials, and have no intention to remove these from fields that produce food for human consumption - because it was concluded by the CCA Assessment Group that there is no need to do so. Furthermore, subject to further research on the leachability of arsenic from Crabbé soil conditioner, it is the intention for the remaining soil conditioner at Crabbé to be spread on farmland. This action is also supported by the CCA Assessment Group.

WRc, an independent specialist consultancy, has been contracted to undertake research with regard to the leachability, and when results are known, the material will be spread at a rate recommended by WRc.

- (d) It is not the intention of the Committee to remove these banks, because there is no need to do so. Many of them were constructed with materials prior to the introduction of treated woodchip. The one bank that does contain woodchip poses no threat.
- (e) The total tonnage of material produced from Crabbé since 1998 is estimated to be around 138,000 tonnes. This total includes composted garden waste that did not have woodchip added. The amount which has contained woodchip is not currently available but could be estimated if required.