

**2.4 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the addition through the compost operation of sewage or effluent of any kind to compost:**

Can I ask the Minister, Sir, if the Transport and Technical Services compost operation has been adding sewage or effluence of any kind to compost and, if so, can the Minister supply details to Members of any consultation with the Department for Health and Social Services, the Parish and the growers, the dates on which such sewage effluent was or will be used, in what quantities, for what purpose and to what land is it being applied?

**Deputy G.W.J. de Faye of St. Helier (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):**

Sir, with your permission, and if it pleases the House, I would like to call upon my Assistant Minister Deputy Huet to respond to this question.

**Deputy J.J. Huet of St. Helier (Assistant Minister for Transport and Technical Services):**

TTS (Transport and Technical Services) undertook small scale trials of mixing quality assured standard compost with enhanced treated sludge cake early in 2006. This trial was to see if an alternative soil conditioner, which would be more akin to the fertiliser, could be produced with the by-products from 2 of our waste processes. The trial materials were blended at Howard Davis Farm and approximately 40 tons of compost and 25 tons of the sludge cake were used. The resulting material was spread on agricultural land with full consent from the growers concerned, and in line with agricultural consultants, protocols and good agricultural practices. The trials are so far looking very promising, however the department will have to undertake a cost benefit analysis before continuing further production of this material. The department also undertook trials of mixing conventionally treated sludge cake with low grade soil to produce an enriched soil which could sustain growth. The trial was undertaken because of a breakdown in the sludge drying plant and the consequent requirement to dispose of 650 tons of digested sludge which could not be put directly on to crop growing land due to this protocol of agricultural consultants. In March, 37 tons of mixed soil and sludge was delivered to land for amenity in the country that was mixed to create field banks and hedge rows. The remaining 200 tons will be used to cap the La Collette ash pits which will assist with landscaping and allow vegetation to grow in this area. This process has been undertaken following, again, the agricultural consultant protocols with regard to sludge to land. These trials have not been discussed with the Department for Health and Social Services or the Parish representatives as there is no requirement or need to do so. The growers concerned have been fully consulted and made completely aware of what we are putting on their land. The TTS Department have not been mixing any sewage or effluent of any kind to its compost. I have here, Sir, a list of exactly where each bit of sludge and soil has gone if you wish me to read it out.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

No, I think you have exceeded your limit...

**Deputy J.J. Huet:**

I was a trifle worried, Sir, because I knew that I could not get all that quite in 90 seconds and thank you very much for bearing with us to get it all out. Thank you.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

I am sure you can certainly do that [Laughter].

**2.4.1 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

My only supplementary was to ask if the Assistant Minister would be kind enough to circulate that to Members after the morning session is finished?

**Deputy J.J. Huet:**

More than happy to, Sir. Thank you.

**2.4.2 Deputy F.J. Hill of St. Martin:**

I wonder if the Assistant Minister would inform the House the cost of these trials and how many officers are engaged in monitoring the trials?

**Deputy J.J. Huet:**

I will attempt to find out the answers for the Deputy. I obviously cannot give them to him here and now because we have not got the full costs of it ourselves, Sir. But at a later stage, not today, I will. Thank you.

**2.4.3 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:**

Could the Assistant Minister confirm that the Minister previously apologised to the Parish of St. Helier that they had not been consulted when the composting site was moved to La Collette and that, given that, her statement that there was no requirement or need to discuss with the Parish perhaps it would have been helpful to have had that

conversation with us when the transport of sewage sludge to La Collette was envisaged? Could she also confirm that any mixing of sewage sludge is not taking place at La Collette but is taking place, as I understood from her answer, at Howard Davis Farm, but that she has confirmed that a certain tonnage of sewage sludge mixed with soil is being used for land treatment down at La Collette?

**Deputy J.J. Huet:**

I said it would be. I have not said it has been used as of yet. I am afraid I cannot remember all the rest of the questions the Constable asked. As he knows, we obviously work with him if we need to work with him and if there is anything extra he wants to know if he wants to give me advance. I will make sure he gets the answers, Sir.

**The Connétable of St. Helier:**

If I could just remind the Assistant Minister my first question was that in view of the Minister's previous apology to the Parish for lack of consultation does she not think that some consultation about these plans would have been appropriate in this case?

**Deputy J.J. Huet:**

Well, Sir, as none of it was done in St. Helier I cannot quite understand where the Constable is coming from but if he really wants to know if we are going to do trials in the future I am more than willing to let him know. Thank you, Sir.

**2.4.4 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement:**

I wonder if the Assistant Minister could clarify whether this was, in fact, a planned trial or whether it was merely an expedient means of overcoming a technical breakdown, which the answer is, it seems to me, that it was. Also could the Assistant Minister confirm that, in fact, this sludge cake which has been incorporated is, in fact, compressed sewage and in that case what research has been done to make sure that where it is being placed that there is no danger of run-off affecting our water supplies or anything like that?

**Deputy J.J. Huet:**

Well, Sir, I will give the Deputy the answers to where we have put the sludge and so forth and it also gives what it is and what it consists of and I think that was the only question that you asked but if there is any more I am more than willing to ...

**Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:**

I did start off by asking, Sir, whether this was a planned trial or whether it was merely a reaction to a technical breakdown?

**Deputy J.J. Huet:**

Sorry. Part of it was technical. The first part of my answer was our sludge machine broke and the second part was to see if we could enrich poor soil, which, if we could, would be a good thing.

**2.4.5 Deputy J.B. Fox:**

In the interests of openness and transparency for the future, whether we could encourage departments to share this information in advance, especially maybe I would suggest the Comité des Connétables, the local Parish representatives groups, et cetera, et cetera. I think that these groups might also benefit from the knowledge and be able to put some positive input that might improve a way forward. Could the Assistant Minister give some reassurance that this could be introduced?

**Deputy J.J. Huet:**

We are always willing to work with anybody and we have a fantastic group of workers up at TTS and if anybody has ever got any problems or ever wants any answers all they ever have to do is pick up the phone, but we are more than happy to work with anybody, whatever, for the good of the Island.

**Deputy J.B. Fox:**

A point of clarification, Sir. The point is we need to know about it in the first place to be able to pick up the phone.

**Deputy J.J. Huet:**

Well, if we are aware and if there is time. I would never commit the department to doing something. Emergencies happen and if emergencies happen you have to act on them immediately. You cannot go running around every Deputy and every Constable to say: "Is this okay by you?" But if possible, yes, we will, Sir.

**2.4.6 Deputy C.J. Scott Warren of St. Saviour:**

Would the Assistant Minister agree that the Health Protection Department should have been consulted, or certainly informed, prior to this action? Thank you.

**Deputy J.J. Huet:**

No, Sir, I do not agree with that. As I have already mentioned, and the Deputy, when she gets this, will see that it is not a necessity to inform the Health Department.