

## Organics Management Guide Submission

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**Select the Primary Entity Type Please identify the category that best represents your project:** Brands and Manufacturers

### Questions:

- 1. Background: Provide context for the program, project, or policy — why it was developed, when it began, and the problem or opportunity it addresses.**

Sardilli Produce & Dairy developed its food scrap diversion program as part of its broader commitment to sustainability and responsible resource management. As a leading produce and dairy distributor serving customers throughout Connecticut and the surrounding region, Sardilli generates organic byproducts through its produce preparation and processing operations. While the company already prioritized responsible sourcing, surplus donation, and full-product utilization, leadership recognized an opportunity to further reduce its environmental footprint by addressing unavoidable food scraps.

The program was launched to divert organic material from the traditional solid waste stream and instead recycle it through a more sustainable process. By partnering with All Waste and Circular Services (formerly Quantum Organics), Sardilli established a structured system for separating, collecting, and transporting food scraps to an anaerobic digestion facility in Southington, Connecticut.

This initiative addresses both an environmental and operational opportunity: reducing landfill dependence, avoiding incineration, and contributing to renewable energy production. It reinforces Sardilli's long-standing commitment to sustainability while positioning the company as a regional leader in responsible food distribution practices.

- 2. Summary: Briefly describe the initiative, including its goals, location, and primary outcomes.**

Sardilli Produce & Dairy, located at 212 Locust Street in Hartford, Connecticut, launched a food waste recycling initiative with the goal of diverting organic material from the solid waste stream and recycling food scraps through a more sustainable solution. As a leading produce and dairy distributor serving restaurants, schools, senior living communities, country clubs, and institutional kitchens across Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Westchester County, NY, Sardilli recognizes that sustainability is foundational to its operations.

Sardilli approaches sustainability holistically — sourcing only what is needed, donating surplus product whenever possible, and maximizing utilization within its production facility to ensure minimal waste. Within its produce preparation and processing activities, the team identified an additional opportunity to further strengthen its environmental impact by managing unavoidable food scraps more responsibly.

Rather than sending organic material to landfill or incineration, Sardilli partnered with its waste hauler, All Waste — one of Connecticut’s most prominent recycling and solid waste companies — to implement a dedicated food scrap recycling program. Through this partnership, food scraps are collected separately and transported to Circular Services’ (formerly Quantum Organics) anaerobic digestion facility in Southington, Connecticut.

The program began with employee training and the introduction of dedicated food scrap containers to ensure proper source separation. All Waste provides specialized collection and hauling services to deliver the material for processing.

As a result of this initiative, Sardilli successfully diverts a substantial volume of organic material from the solid waste stream. The collected food scraps are processed through anaerobic digestion, contributing to the production of renewable energy and supporting a more circular, sustainable supply chain.

**3. Percent of Overall Diverted Material: If available, include data or estimates on the portion of the community or organization’s total diverted material no longer associated with the waste stream that this program or policy addresses.**

Sardilli embeds waste reduction strategies across its operations by carefully aligning purchasing with demand, donating surplus product whenever possible, and designing production workflows that maximize full-product utilization. To further strengthen these efforts, Sardilli operates a dedicated food scrap diversion program in partnership with its waste hauler, All Waste, and Circular Services (formerly Quantum Organics), a food waste recycling facility.

Through this program, Sardilli diverts approximately:

- 12,500 pounds of food waste per week
- 50,000 pounds per month
- 600,000 pounds per year

This initiative ensures that unavoidable food scraps are recycled into renewable energy rather than sent to landfill or incineration, reinforcing Sardilli's commitment to sustainable operations.

- 4. Key Program Elements or Policy Provisions: Describe the structure and main components of your program or policy. Explain the investments origins (who, how much). Please include as many of the following elements as applicable: What types of materials are being managed? (e.g., surplus recoverable foods, food scraps, wasted food. How are these materials managed? Who is responsible for managing them? (Organizations, agencies, businesses, or other entities) What products are generated, and how are they utilized or managed? (e.g., compost, animal feed, energy products) Who funds the management of these materials? (Funding sources, grants, partnerships) Who generates these materials? (Identify the origin: households, institutions, businesses, etc.)**

#### Key Program Elements or Policy Provisions

Sardilli Produce & Dairy's food scrap diversion program is structured around source separation, dedicated hauling, and anaerobic digestion processing through established regional partners. The program ensures that organic materials generated through operations are responsibly managed and redirected into productive reuse streams.

#### Materials Managed

The program manages several types of organic materials generated at Sardilli's Hartford, Connecticut processing facility, including:

Unavoidable food scraps from produce preparation (e.g., tomato tops and bottoms, Brussels sprout stalks, pineapple crowns, and other trimmings).

Temperature-altered food products that become unsalable and unsafe for consumption due to circumstances such as trucking delays that result in improper temperature control.

While Sardilli prioritizes sourcing only what is needed and donating surplus recoverable food, these materials represent unavoidable organic byproducts that require responsible management.

#### How Materials Are Managed

Organic materials are separated at the source using designated food scrap containers throughout the facility. Staff are trained to properly distinguish food scraps from the solid waste stream to ensure contamination-free recycling. All Waste provides dedicated collection and hauling services, transporting the material to Circular Services' (formerly Quantum Organics) food waste recycling facility in Southington, Connecticut.

#### Responsible Entities

**Sardilli Produce & Dairy:** Generates the material and oversees on-site separation, employee training, and program management.

**All Waste:** Manages transportation and logistics of source-separated food scraps.

**Circular Services (formerly Quantum Organics):** Processes the organic material through anaerobic digestion.

#### Products Generated and Utilization

At the Circular Services facility, the organic material is processed through anaerobic digestion, a controlled biological process that breaks down food waste in an oxygen-free environment.

As a result:

Biogas (renewable energy) is generated and utilized to support clean energy production.

Compost and digestate byproducts are produced and returned to beneficial use, supporting soil health and nutrient recycling. Circular Services sells bags of compost, raised bed mix, and potting mix—extending the life of the food scraps and promoting circularity.

Through this process, food scraps and unsalable organic materials generated at Sardilli are diverted from landfill and incineration and instead transformed into renewable energy and soil-enriching products — giving these materials a productive second life.

#### Funding and Investment

The program is funded as part of Sardilli's ongoing sustainability and operational investments. Sardilli supports costs associated with internal separation processes, staff

training, and hauling services through its partnership with All Waste. Processing infrastructure is owned and operated by Circular Services, reflecting a collaborative, partnership-based model rather than reliance on grant funding.

#### Material Generation

All materials managed under the program are generated through normal operations at Sardilli's Hartford facility as part of produce preparation, processing, and distribution activities.

**5. Regulatory Impact: Describe how laws, policies, regulations, and/or code have affected your program or project. This may include positive, negative, or neutral impacts. Consider noting which regulations apply, how they influenced implementation or operations, any challenges or barriers encountered, and how compliance requirements shaped program decisions.**

Connecticut's Commercial Organics Recycling Law (CGS §22a-226e) has played a meaningful role in shaping Sardilli Produce & Dairy's food scrap diversion program. The law is designed to reduce commercial food waste and promote the development of source-separated organic material (SSOM) recycling infrastructure by requiring large generators to improve efficiency, donate surplus food, and divert food scraps to composting or anaerobic digestion facilities. (source: CT.gov)

While Sardilli's sustainability commitment aligns with these goals, the law helped formalize the company's diversion strategy. Compliance requirements influenced the implementation of structured source separation practices, employee training, and partnerships with a licensed hauler (All Waste) and a permitted anaerobic digestion facility (Circular Services).

Food safety regulations also guide the management of temperature-altered, unsalable products, ensuring they are properly diverted to approved recycling outlets.

Overall, the regulatory framework has had a positive impact by reinforcing best practices and supporting long-term program stability.

**6. Measurable Increase in Supply: Include data or qualitative outcomes showing growth in collection, diversion, or reuse volumes if available.**

Coming soon. Waiting on customer for exact figures.

**7. Behavior Change: Describe whether the initiative resulted in measurable behavior change and explain how you determined this. If behavior change occurred, outline the strategies that proved most effective. Please include any available data or evidence that supports your findings.**

Yes, the initiative resulted in measurable and sustained behavior change within Sardilli's operations. The most visible indicator of this change is the consistent diversion of approximately 12,500 pounds of food scraps per week, totaling 50,000 pounds per month and 600,000 pounds annually. These volumes demonstrate that source separation practices have been successfully adopted and maintained by staff.

Behavior change was determined through ongoing monitoring of diversion volumes, contamination levels, and operational consistency. The steady generation of source-separated organic material confirms that employees are properly following separation protocols as part of their daily workflow.

The most effective strategies in driving behavior change included:

- Clear, hands-on training that provided simple, actionable instructions.
- Strong leadership messaging, emphasizing both environmental responsibility and company values.
- Defined processes and designated containers, making proper separation intuitive and easy.
- Consistent communication and reinforcement, especially during the program's initial rollout.

By focusing on clarity, confidence-building, and leadership alignment, the program quickly transitioned from a new initiative to standard operating procedure. Over time, food scrap separation became second nature to staff, demonstrating that thoughtful implementation and employee engagement can produce lasting operational change.

**8. Benefits and Impacts (Economic, Environmental, and Social): Describe the economic, environmental, and social sustainability impacts of the program, policy, or initiative. This may include both positive and negative outcomes. You**

**may address impacts such as costs or savings, job creation, waste reduction, emissions, resource conservation, community engagement, equity, or public health. Please include data or qualitative observations where available and note any trade-offs or challenges.**

Sardilli Produce & Dairy's food scrap diversion program delivers measurable environmental, economic, and social benefits. The initiative diverts approximately 600,000 pounds of organic material annually from landfill and incineration, with food scraps processed through anaerobic digestion at Circular Services to generate renewable biogas energy and compost, supporting greenhouse gas reduction and resource conservation. While the program requires investment in training, source separation, and hauling, it strengthens long-term operational sustainability and regulatory compliance under Connecticut's Commercial Organics Recycling Law (CGS §22a-226e). Additionally, the initiative has fostered strong employee engagement and pride, reinforcing Sardilli's broader commitment to responsible sourcing, food donation, and leadership in sustainable food distribution.

**9. How Stakeholder Buy-In Was Achieved: Explain how the program gained support from key stakeholders (e.g., government agencies, businesses, residents, nonprofits).**

Sardilli's management team secured stakeholder buy-in by clearly communicating both the environmental and operational benefits of food waste diversion. Leadership emphasized that the initiative was not only "the right thing to do," but also an opportunity to position Sardilli as a sustainability leader within the regional food industry. Framing the program as part of the company's broader mission helped reinforce its importance across the organization.

Internally, success began with employee engagement. Through straightforward, hands-on training and clear process guidelines, staff were equipped with the knowledge and tools needed to confidently separate food scraps and participate in the program. By making implementation practical and accessible, Sardilli fostered a sense of ownership, pride, and shared accomplishment among team members.

Externally, collaboration with trusted partners — including All Waste and Circular Services — further strengthened confidence in the program's effectiveness and long-term viability. Together, these efforts created alignment across stakeholders and ensured a smooth, sustainable rollout.

**10. Stakeholders' Perspectives and Dynamics at Play: Highlight collaboration dynamics, challenges, or differing stakeholder interests and how they were addressed.**

The primary challenge Sardilli's management team faced during rollout was initial uncertainty around the program's impact and long-term effectiveness. As with many operational changes, there were questions about whether the effort would produce meaningful results and integrate smoothly into existing workflows.

To address this, leadership focused on consistent communication, transparency, and a unified message about the program's purpose and value. By reinforcing the environmental benefits, aligning the initiative with Sardilli's sustainability mission, and maintaining a positive, solutions-oriented approach, management built trust and confidence across the organization.

With clear expectations, ongoing support, and reinforcement from leadership, the new processes quickly became routine. Over time, food scrap separation became second nature to staff, demonstrating that early skepticism could be successfully overcome through strong leadership and collaboration.

**11. Lessons Learned: Share what worked well, what didn't, and recommendations for others seeking to replicate your approach.**

One of the most important lessons Sardilli learned is that a successful food scrap diversion program begins with strong employee engagement. Developing a clear, practical training program that is easy to understand and implement was critical to the initiative's success. Providing straightforward instructions, defined processes, and ongoing reinforcement helped ensure consistency and confidence across the team.

Early on, uncertainty about the program's impact presented a challenge. Addressing this through education, open communication, and leadership visibility helped build trust and buy-in. Once employees understood both the environmental benefits and their role in the process, participation became second nature.

For organizations looking to implement a similar program, Sardilli recommends investing time upfront in staff training, clearly defining roles and expectations, and partnering with experienced waste management and recycling providers. Building internal confidence and maintaining consistent communication are key to achieving long-term, sustainable results.