

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Protection Division

Land Protection Branch

4244 International Parkway, Suite 104, Atlanta, Georgia 30354

Noel Holcomb, Commissioner

Carol A. Couch, Ph.D., Director

404/362-2537

For Immediate Release

May 15, 2008

Georgia EPD Conference Looks at Diverting Food from Landfills

A study of municipal solid waste in Georgia published in 2005 revealed that more than 800,000 tons of food waste are disposed of in the state's landfills each year. At 12 percent of the overall solid waste stream, that makes food waste the largest segment of waste going into Georgia landfills.

This waste stream and the question of how best to manage it, was the subject of a day-long conference May 6 at the Atlanta Botanical Garden that drew more than 60 attendees representing hotels, K-12 schools, universities, government agencies, nonprofits, farms and businesses.

Held during Compost Awareness Week, the conference featured local and national experts on subjects ranging from food donation to composting to climate change, including executive editor of BioCycle magazine, Nora Goldstein, Brenda Platt of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, and Georgia's Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture, Terry Coleman.

The conference was the second in a series of meetings to raise awareness about options for diverting food waste and to encourage the development of markets in Georgia to compost food waste. Topics covered included food rescue, sustainable agriculture, purchasing locally grown organic food, and the greenhouse gas connection to organics in the waste stream.

In planning the conference, organizers selected a caterer who was willing to reduce the amount of disposables (such as paper plates and cups) used in the lunch and who buys as much locally grown and organic produce as possible. Flatware was also bio-compostable and was taken, along with any food waste, to the Cobb County composting facility.

The conference was sponsored by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, the Coca-Cola Company, the Georgia Recycling Coalition, and Region 4 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Presentations from the conference will be available on the Georgia EPD's Web site at www.gaepd.org. For more information, contact Stephanie Busch at stephanie.busch@gaped.org.

###