



## IMS Composting Operation – Action Plan Update

October 15, 2009

**Dear Thorold Resident,**

We understand that the odour from our compost facility is an unwelcome situation for our neighbours. We apologize for the inconvenience it has caused. We are working hard to address this situation quickly and professionally and will provide you updates as we progress.

### **Odour Sources**

Our odour problems have two causes, the most significant of which is an overload of grass clippings. The secondary cause is our work to modernize our compost facility which required us to move older compost to make space to construct a new GORE system.

The weather this summer caused us to be overloaded with grass from curbside collection. For effective composting the correct carbon to nitrogen ratio is required. Grass is a significant source of nitrogen, brush and wood are a great carbon source.

To manage the amount of grass received this year, we had to bulk it with a lot of wood material. The volume of this bulked mixture overwhelmed the new GORE operations. We have faced major back-ups of incoming grass clippings this year.

During the construction of our new GORE Compost Pad we had to move large amounts of the older compost to the site's North Pad. The centres of these piles are very odourous when they are disturbed.

### **Actions Taken**

- 1) We stopped receiving most wastes at the compost facility to clear out the high grass containing material awaiting processing. That work has been completed. On September 28, we started receiving some of the SSO from the Region of Niagara. If the system gets overwhelmed again we will divert this material.
- 2) On September 2, an action plan was submitted to the Ministry of the Environment to remove material from the North Pad within 2-3 weeks. We experienced complaints when we disturbed this material and as a result have revised the Action Plan to delay the work until freezing temperatures prevail. We are under an order from the Ministry of the Environment to remove the material.
- 3) We continue to look for alternative ways of managing the removal of the North Pad Material including the possibility of using a temporary building to enclose the area and contain odours. In the meantime, we have covered all odourous windrows on the North Pad with a biofilter of finished compost or wood chips.
- 4) We installed and are now operating a perimeter odour neutralizing system that mists essential oils. The odour neutralizer binds with the odour compounds and knocks them out of the air.



**Integrated Municipal Services**  
A Walker Environmental Group Company

P.O. Box 100 Thorold, Ontario L2V3Y8  
Tel: (905) 680-3745 Fax: (905) 680-1916

[www.walkerind.com](http://www.walkerind.com)

5) We are paying careful attention to wind direction and if the wind shifts to an unfavourable direction we limit operations at the site.

6) We are doing some processing at night to reduce impacts to neighbours.

7) We are working with local elected officials and joining their discussions on managing household grass clippings in the waste stream. The Niagara Region is considering a ban on curbside pick-up of grass clippings and is promoting the benefits of mulching grass to promote healthy lawns.

### **Your Odour Reports to Us Are Important**

If you smell what you believe is compost odour, we appreciate you letting us know:

- the description of the odour
- the time you smelled the odour
- the duration of the odour and the intensity of the odour  
(less intense/about the same/more intense?)
- the wind direction

You can let us know by:

E-mail: [odours@walkerind.com](mailto:odours@walkerind.com)

or

Public Response Line at 1-866-699-9425

If you call during office hours (8:00am – 5:00pm) we will be able to assess what we are doing and adjust operations to minimize odours. We will send a Walker employee your location to identify the odour and help determine next steps.

After hours we have a security guard who does odour surveys of our facility and the surrounding community. When a complaint is received security goes out to the location to identify the odour. If we are not operating at the time of the complaint, an immediate change in operations is not possible. We use this information to look for ways to continually improve our odour control methods.

### **Action Plan Update Meeting**

We have established with the City of Thorold the Thorold Compost Site Improvement Committee, Chaired by Councillor Luciani. The committee is a forum for open dialogue between the City of Thorold, Walker and the Neighbourhood. It provides an opportunity for community input into our odour reporting and response, communications and our site operations. Should you wish copies of the notes from those meetings you can email us at [odours@walkerind.com](mailto:odours@walkerind.com). The next meeting of the committee will be prior to recommencing the North Pad Action Plan.

### **Our Goal**

We will update you on our progress and will notify you prior to recommencing the North Pad Action Plan. Our long-term goal is to operate our compost facility in a manner that is acceptable to you and we believe we can do that.

Sincerely,



Mike Watt P.Eng  
Vice President, Walker Environmental Group