Piazza Produce, LLC

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BRUTE
Rubbermaid
Commercial Products
COMPOSTABLE
PRODUCE
WASTE ONLY !
NO: Plastics, Metals, Glass,
Wood or Other Trash

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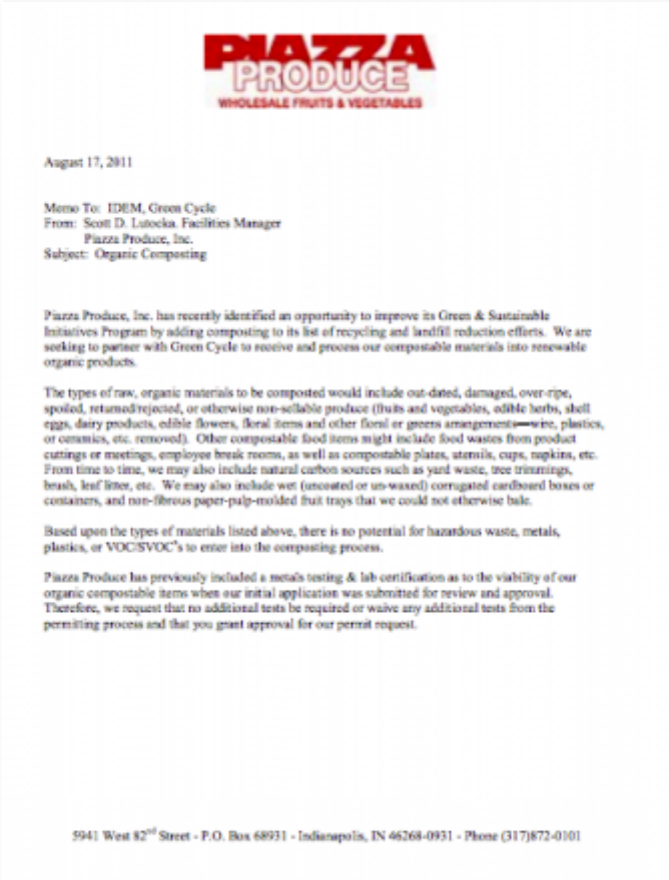

PIAZZA PRODUCE
WHOLESALE FRUITS & VEGETABLES

August 17, 2011

Memo To: IDEM, Green Cycle
From: Scott D. Lutocka. Facilities Manager
Piazza Produce, Inc.
Subject: Organic Composting

Piazza Produce, Inc. has recently identified an opportunity to improve its Green & Sustainable Initiatives Program by adding composting to its list of recycling and landfill reduction efforts. We are seeking to partner with Green Cycle to receive and process our compostable materials into renewable organic products.

The types of raw, organic materials to be composted would include out-dated, damaged, over-ripe, spoiled, returned/rejected, or otherwise non-sellable produce (fruits and vegetables, edible herbs, shell eggs, dairy products, edible flowers, floral items and other floral or greens arrangements—wire, plastics, or ceramics, etc. removed). Other compostable food items might include food wastes from product cuttings or meetings, employee break rooms, as well as compostable plates, utensils, cups, napkins, etc. From time to time, we may also include natural carbon sources such as yard waste, tree trimmings, brush, leaf litter, etc. We may also include wet (uncoated or un-waxed) corrugated cardboard boxes or containers, and non-fibrous paper-pulp-molded fruit trays that we could not otherwise bale.

Based upon the types of materials listed above, there is no potential for hazardous waste, metals, plastics, or VOC/SVOC's to enter into the composting process.

Piazza Produce has previously included a metals testing & lab certification as to the viability of our organic compostable items when our initial application was submitted for review and approval. Therefore, we request that no additional tests be required or waive any additional tests from the permitting process and that you grant approval for our permit request.

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Location

Indianapolis, Indiana

Percent of Overall Diversion Achieved

94 percent

Facility Size

65,000 square feet

Type of Operation

Wholesale foodservice produce & specialty foods distributor

Project Overview

In 2005 (our baseline year), we sent 2,415 tons of waste to local landfills at a cost of over $100,000 USD. Our monthly waste costs were escalating with no apparent end in sight. This prompted our company to take a look to see if we could somehow manage and control our waste costs. With the assistance of a waste diversion consultant, we learned that we had many recyclable materials in our waste stream. Our initial target was old corrugated cardboard (OCC), which represented about 50 percent of our waste stream. If we could divert the cardboard to a cardboard baling machine, we could reduce our waste costs by about 50 percent and earn recycling revenues at the same time. While our zero waste journey took several years, we didn't have a zero waste road map (or even knew what it was at the time). As we mastered one recyclable material, we targeted the next and continued material by material until we reached an 85 percent waste-to-landfill diversion rate. It was in 2011, that we discovered what zero waste was and just how close we were to the 90 percent threshold. This motivated our organization to tackle the final challenge within our waste stream: compostable materials. Once a commercial compost permit was received, we diverted enough compostable materials to achieve a 95 percent waste-to-landfill diversion rate in early 2012. We formed a Green Team that consisted of all of the company's employees. This helped change our culture and created awareness as well as increased employee participation to help achieve our goals. To date, the company has saved over $1.8 million dollars in waste hauling expenses. After breaking even on our waste costs by mid-2010, the company has been in the Black ever since and enjoys having benefited from receiving "The Ca$h in our Tra$h". Achieving GBCI’s TRUE Zero Waste certification in 2014 has further enhanced our company's recognition for environmental awareness and sustainability achievements, but has also benefited our company with additional sales and revenues from our customers (and prospective customers) who seek to align themselves with sustainable vendors.

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