*Food Waste*

There are very few facilities in the United States that separate food waste from the overall waste stream. Mostly, these facilities are built in response to local regulations around limiting the disposal of food waste in landfills. The costs of these facilities are not well publicized. However, a report from Massachusetts estimated the initial cost to separate one ton of food waste per day to be $1,100 and the annual cost to be $1,200 (MDEP 2005). It would be cost prohibitive to use food waste as a feedstock without having a separation facility.

If a separation facility exists, the cost of the feedstock may simply be whatever it costs to transform it into a usable feedstock for the receiving energy production facility. Otherwise, in an environment without regulations that demand such facilities, the cost could be similar to equation 1.

**Disposal site cost = operating costs + transport to site - tipping fee eq. 1**

The cost to operate a refuse truck is around $100/hour (personal communication with Rob Hallenbeck, Waste Management). Landfill tipping fees can be anywhere from $25-100 per ton, with a national average of $52 per ton. We will speak with other industry representatives to gather more information on this topic.

* What quantity of food waste is going through separation facilities? This would be an initial point on the supply curve. Where does this food waste go? Compost?
* Other points would have to do with cost of building transfer facility (may be regional). $2300/ton/day. Disposal site cost = operating costs + transport to site - tipping fee

**MDEP (2005)**

Trash disposal costs are averaging $90 per ton and are continuing to rise.

Composting is a less expensive disposal alternative, with “tipping” costs averaging $50 per ton, or a savings of $40/ton compared to trash disposal costs.

Questions for expert:

Food Waste

* Currently, what happens to the food waste at separation facilities?
  + e.g., Do they pay for a composting company to collect it? Or does the composting company pay them? How much does this cost/revenue vary by end use (compost, anaerobic digester, animal feed, other)?
  + What is the typical amount that you pay or are paid for the food waste to get rid of it? How much does this vary by region?
* What is the average capacity of a separation facility? Or do they vary too widely? (For example, I saw 250 tpd for a facility in NYC – Varick I.)

Questions for Alex:

Food Waste

* What are the states/communities that already have policy around food separation?
* How much food waste is handled by these states/communities annually?
* What is the cost of building a separation facility?
* What are the typical operating cost components (labor, maintenance, etc.) at one of these facilities? (Actual costs would be great, too, but I’m really looking for how some of the costs could vary by region.)
* What percent of food waste currently goes to compost, animal feed, anaerobic digestion, other?