

SNHU Uses Composter to Reduce Food Waste

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When you are producing 2,100 meals daily, any reduction in food waste is a big deal. That's why Southern NH University in Manchester invested in an Ecovim machine, a dehydration machine that reduces food waste to compost using high heat. The school purchased the machine from Integrated Veterans Services LLC (IVS), a New Ipswich company that has sold 30 of the machines and is presently the largest dealer in the country.

The machines are produced by EcovimUSA, a California company recently renamed EnicUSA that claims Ecovim users diverted more than 12,000 tons of food waste from U.S. landfills in 2011. "At one time I said I didn't want to get into the garbage business," says Butch Maki, founder of IVS, who runs the company with his children out of an office in New Mexico. "But this field is exploding so fast. Regulations are forcing people to look at other options than disposal."

Maki says IVS has historically provided businesses with a single point for purchasing green technologies, though for the past year he has focused almost exclusively on selling the Ecovim machines. The company grossed about \$700,000 selling the machines in 2013 and has already sold \$350,000 worth in the first quarter of 2014. IVS employs five and has 40 independent contractors who work as sales agents.

Maki says the machines, which comes in six sizes and are warehoused and programmed in New Ipswich, are used by hospitals, jails and other large-scale food service operations. The machine heats to 180 degrees Fahrenheit to ensure the compost is odor free and reduces food waste weight by up to 90 percent. This is critical given that more food reaches landfills and incinerators than any other material in municipal solid waste, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Food waste in landfills produces methane, a greenhouse gas.

Southern NH University purchased the machine for \$28,500 last summer. Dan VanAvery, general manager of SNHU food services, says the investment was more about sustainability than savings. Avery says SNHU saw a half a percent food waste reduction, or about 7,500 pounds, during the past year. "We put everything in there except the bones."

Maki says the potential for growth is huge, especially with the military studying the use of Ecovim machines at its bases.