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## Food Scraps and Wine: An Agreeable Combination

Fine wine and garbage aren't usually an appetizing combination, but a new venture by Jepson Prairie Organics brings the two together. Compost made from the food scraps of more than 1,500 food related businesses and thousands of residents in San Francisco is being used on vineyards throughout Northern California's wine country to enhance the quality of the soil.

Jepson Prairie Organics began making compost with food scraps from the city in 1997, and in 2002, a vineyard management company approached Jepson to purchase compost for use in its vineyards. More than 300 tons of food scraps are sent to Jepson's composting facility each day, and 12 vineyards are currently using Jepson's compost. The Organic Material Review has analyzed the finished compost and deemed it appropriate for use on organic farms.

Everyone involved in this project from is excited about the program because it is one example of "closing the loop"—organics are taken from San Francisco tables, composted, put back into the soil, and returned to San Francisco restaurants as wine. Chris Choate, regional manager for compost facilities, says, "San Francisco likes the program because it shows how restaurants can do their part to divert waste from the landfills."

Linda Hale, vineyard manager at Madrone Vineyards, thought using Jepson's compost was a great opportunity. "Farmers are environmental stewards and must be careful with the soil," she notes. Using compost produced with food scraps allows the vineyard to help both the soil and the environment. Since it was so easy to get involved, Hale could see no reason not to take advantage of this opportunity.

"Participating in this program is a win-win situation," agrees Darek Trowbridge, vineyard manager at Everett Ridge Vineyards and Winery. "The quality of the compost is better than what we used before, it is cheaper, and we are recycling a waste product." He attributes the good quality of the compost to the diverse feedstock. Trowbridge estimates a \$5 to \$10 savings per yard from using Jepson's compost at his vineyard since food scraps are seen as a

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waste product and therefore cost less than a new product. In addition, trucking costs less than transporting compost from afar. He thinks this program is a successful way to reuse some of the items society consumes.

Choate anticipates the partnership between Jepson and local vineyards will continue to thrive, as it is beneficial to the growers and the environment. There are no additional costs for growers, people are seeing the farm and city connection, and the program is right in line with current trend in the United States towards sustainable and organic agriculture.

For more information, see Jepson Prairie Organic's Web site at [www.jepsonprairieorganics.com](http://www.jepsonprairieorganics.com).