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New ASTM Standards Outline Methodology for Monitoring Real-World Composting Conditions for Compostable Products

The new ASTM standards define the range of conditions needed for certified compostable packaging to break down as designed and intended in a compost facility.

W. CONSHOHOCKEN, Pa., Aug. 8, 2025 -- ASTM International approved two new standards to outline how to test the breakdown of certified compostable products as intended in real world composting facilities, including a defined range of operating conditions based on best management practices. Compostable packaging is becoming more popular with consumers, businesses, and regulators as they work to divert methane-releasing food scraps from the landfill and return organic material to the soil.

The new standards (D8618 and D8619) were developed by the treatment, recovery and reuse subcommittee (D34.03), part of ASTM's waste management committee (D34).

D8619 was developed and launched alongside D8618, as the two standards have common procedures and conditions. The key difference between the two is that D8619 evaluates compostable items in a container (for example, a mesh bag) whereas D8618 evaluates compostable items without a container (for example, added directly to the compost pile).

"These two new field test methods will be useful for composting facility operators, system designers, policymakers, and product/packaging manufacturers, who are all asking what conditions are needed to successfully break down certified compostable products in real world composting facilities," says Rhodes Yepsen, ASTM member and executive director at Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI). "Because composting is not a standardized process, these test methods provide a critical tool by defining in-field composting conditions that must be monitored and reported, to understand how these variables impact the breakdown of compostable products."

According to ASTM member Mike Mazzotta, senior applications development representative at Eastman, "these test methods will be complementary to the ASTM D6400 lab-based standard that requires advanced analytical tools not available at composting facilities."

This effort directly relates to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals #8 on decent work and economic growth, #9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure, #11 on sustainable cities and communities, #12 on responsible consumption and production, #13 on climate action, #14 on life below water, #15 on life on land, and #17 on partnerships.

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