



## **A HORSE (AD25 Microdigester) is Coming to the Town of Tusten, NY!**

**April 19, 2021**

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), 40% of food in the U.S. goes uneaten. This wasted food is valued at approximately \$165 billion annually and when disposed in a landfill, is a significant contributor to greenhouse gases. To help address this issue, the Town of Tusten, a Bronze Certified Climate Smart Community, installed an Impact Bioenergy HORSE (High-solids Organic-waste Recycling System with Electrical Output) AD25 Microdigester at the Highway Department town barn, which will provide on-site generation of energy from food waste and similar organic materials. These microdigester systems are made to scale down the size and cost of industrial anaerobic digestion. The project was spearheaded by the Tusten Energy Committee and is funded by 2018 NY DEC Municipal Food Scraps Reduction, Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling Programs.

"Tusten is proud to be at the forefront of local solutions for the climate. By diverting food to people where possible and then feeding the HORSE, we are creating a positive focus on Tusten, helping the environment, and creating local training opportunities," noted Jennifer Porter, Tusten Energy Committee member and lead organizer for the DEC grant application.

The HORSE Microdigester will produce heat and power in addition to a soil fertilizer product. The unit is able to process two tons of organic waste (including food and paper products) per month from local businesses and voluntary collection points, such as the local farmers' market.

The non-profit Center for EcoTechnology (CET) is a partner to Tusten Energy Committee on the project. CET, an organization that has been addressing wasted food for over two decades, is helping local Tusten businesses understand and implement the principals of the EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy by reducing, recovering for donation, and then diverting wasted food to the HORSE whenever possible. Additionally, CET's guidance is ensuring that businesses have the proper information so the microdigester is as successful as possible.

"Tusten's effort represents a very exciting, replicable model of organics diversion, collection, and processing," said CET President John Majercak. "It's inspiring to work with innovative towns like Tusten that can lay the groundwork for initiatives like this in other communities."

The success of the HORSE hinges on important partnerships, including wide support in its DEC grant application from Cornell Cooperative Extension, Upper Delaware Council, Hudson Valley Regional Council, Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, Sustainable Bethel Committee, and the Narrowsburg Ecumenical Food Pantry. Prestige Towing and the Tusten Highway Department have also greatly assisted to date in getting the HORSE in place.

Already, local food waste generating businesses have expressed interest and support including Pete's Market, The Laundrette, The Heron, 2 Queens Coffee, The Blue Fox Motel, Tusten caterer for the Forestburgh Playhouse, Botanist Vegan Street Food, and others. There are also plans for a collection point at the Narrowsburg Farmers Market once the season opens in May and training/commissioning is complete for the HORSE.

"We are excited to have access to the HORSE food digester here in Narrowsburg. When we first opened The Heron in 2012, we had discussed composting behind the restaurant but logistically it never worked out. We are already focused on reducing food waste where possible, and this project will really take it over-the-top for us," said Marla Puccetti, co-owner of The Heron.