TMECC Quarterly Report

September 2026

The Compost Research & Education Foundation continues to advance the Test Methods for the Examination of Composting and Compost (TMECC) and make progress on several priority areas, including emerging contaminants, pathogen testing, and improved consistency across methods.

Preparations are underway for the TMECC pathogen shipping study. The study will evaluate sample handling and shipping conditions for pathogen analyses, with the goal of increasing shipping duration without negatively affecting compost analysis results. Results from this work will inform compost sample shipping logistics. Jessica Anderson of A1 Organics has generously volunteered to perform the hands-on study and is acquiring all necessary equipment and materials, and testing is scheduled to begin October 1. For PFAS method development, samples have been shipped to Dr. Youn Jeong Choi at Purdue University for the first round of method validation testing.

In addition to new method development, the TMECC team has made substantial progress in improving consistency across the manual. We have standardized language and terminology related to test portions, dilution ratios, and reporting on a dry-matter basis which are concepts that occur across nearly all TMECC methods. Establishing consistent terminology and instructions will improve clarity for laboratories and help promote greater comparability among analytical results.

The Standards & Practices Committee has also approved the inclusion of six new methods in TMECC. To maintain focus on the methods most directly relevant to the STA program, however, we are holding additional new-method additions until February 2027. This period will allow the team to concentrate on reviewing and updating current STA methods, continue priority validation studies for PFAS and pathogens, and raise funds to have these six new methods added.

We are always on the lookout for reviewers to support our efforts. If interested, please fill out this form.

We have minor notes about the TMECC updates to share as well. We reorganized the methods and therefore chapter and method numbers have changed. For chapters that allow different milling, drying, or digestion treatments, we now separate using a different method designation to enable clarity and comparable results for the user. We have provided an example of this in the table below. Please stay tuned for information about how we will roll out these changes in 2027. For TMECC users, please continue to use existing chapter numbers as designated in the 2002/2015 methods. We aim to complete updates to the methods used by the U.S. Composting Council's Seal of Testing Assurance methods by December 2026 aside from the physical contamination and pathogens chapters, which are part of the larger ReFED-related research and therefore each will undergo a major method overhaul.

We continue to fundraise for the TMECC updates and ongoing maintenance, so please contact us if you would like to provide support or partnership. We look forward to advancing the TMECC and continuing to strengthen the TMECC as the trusted resource for standardized compost testing methods.

Example Phosphorus Methods Overview

2026 Title	2026 Designation	Previous Designation (2002/2015)	Units	Status
Phosphorus by Microwave-Assisted Nitric Acid Digestion	5.6-A-2026	04.03-A	% dry matter	Current *STA**
Phosphorus by Dry Ashing and Acid Dissolution	5.6-B-2026	04.03-A	% dry matter	Current *STA**
Aqua Regia-extractable Phosphorus with no drying or milling	5.6-C1-2026	04.03-A	% dry matter	Current *STA**
Aqua Regia-extractable Phosphorus with drying and milling	5.6-C2-2026	04.03-A	% dry matter	Current *STA**
1: 100 Water-extractable Phosphorus by ICP-OES	5.5-D-2026	04.03-C	% dry matter	Current
Water-soluble Phosphorus by ICP-OES	-	04.03-B	mg/kg dry matter	*Retired*

*United States Composting Council Seal of Testing Assurance Method