



Stone Pine Consulenza, SRL Presents: The First Ever *International Vermicomposting Symposium*

The International Vermicomposting Symposium will take place at the StarHotel - Michelangelo in Florence, Italy, on 8-9 November 2023. The Symposium will feature vermicomposting experts from around the world who will share their knowledge and the benefits of vermicomposting.

What is "Vermicomposting"?

Vermicomposting is a method of *composting* -- recycling organic matter like food scraps, animal waste, and leaves into nutrient-rich fertilizer that supplements healthy soil and plants -- using worms. Worms feed on the organic matter and break it down as it passes through their bodies. The result is called *vermicompost* (vermi = worm).

The species of worms most used in vermicomposting is *Eisenia fetida*, or the "red wiggler". The vermicasts (ie. worm feces) reduce soil contaminants while producing a high quality, water soluble organic fertilizer.

How does vermicomposting benefit the environment?

When organic material goes to the landfill, it is generally buried under all the other debris and begins to decompose anaerobically (that is, without the presence of oxygen). When this happens, the greenhouse gas methane is produced, which is a major culprit in global warming.

When organic waste is allowed to decompose in an oxygen-rich environment, like composting or vermicomposting, it has the potential to divert millions of pounds of materials away from landfills and into the soil, as a highly desirable fertilizer. Large-scale vermicomposting has the capacity to prevent

millions of pounds of carbon from entering the atmosphere, thereby reducing the emission of greenhouse gases.

Why Italy?

Italians have always had an intimate connection with the earth that is either undervalued or missing in many of the more industrialized countries. Many Italians still work and labor much as their forefathers did, choosing to toil by hand when there are faster or easier methods available. Because they put such a high value on the soil and their agricultural products, often it is easy to trace this care for the environment from farm to fork. (Or farm-to-glass, as the case may be).

Because of Italy's rich agricultural heritage, there are tremendous opportunities for breweries, vineyards, winemakers, olive mills, schools, hospitals, restaurants, and municipalities to convert their post-production by-products (such as animal manure and bedding, spent grains and hops, grape seeds and skins, olive leaves, pits, food waste and mill wastewater) into vermicasts. This organic waste, commonly referred to as "black gold", can provide an often much needed revenue stream. Whether farmers or producers provide their organic waste to vermicomposting ventures, (often as a trade for the finished vermicasts), or they choose to vermicompost it themselves, on-site, there are mountains of empirical evidence demonstrating how this simple to produce "worm poop" can improve water infiltration and retention, fertilize crops, increase the soil microbiome, boost crop yields and improve overall soil health.

For more information on composting and vermicomposting, please visit the North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension website: <https://composting.ces.ncsu.edu>

Location of Symposium:

StarHotel - Michelangelo (Leonardo Room)

Viale Fratelli Rosselli, 2, 50123 Firenze FI

WhatsApp: +39 055 27841

Website: <https://www.starhotels.com/en/our-hotels/michelangelo-florence>

Highlights include:

- The two-day Symposium event will feature 11 speakers from 7 different countries;
- Thanks to a generous sponsorship from WORMGEAR, we are able to offer four students complimentary registration for virtual participation in the Symposium;
- Following the Symposium, a special 2-day "Worms and Wine Tour of Tuscany", organized with the assistance of Centro Lombricoltura Toscano, will showcase the role of vermicomposting in the wine industry;
- Attendees include academics, practitioners, corporate partners, social activists, soil health experts and more;

- Registration for the two-day International Vermicomposting Symposium is €349 (before October 14) with discounts available for students;
- Registration for virtual participation the Symposium is now open and will be broadcast via Zoom (CET) with recordings available after the event to all registrants;
- For more information about the International Vermicomposting Symposium, please visit: www.vermicompostingsymposium.com ;
- Sponsorship opportunities are still available.

What are people saying about the Symposium?

Quote from the organizers:

“Bringing together some of the foremost experts in the field of vermicomposting, especially this being our first year, demonstrates that there are a lot of very passionate individuals striving every day to make this world a better place. There is a natural bond within environmental community that tends to be very open with dialogue – choosing to help others and share their knowledge rather than shroud it in mystery. It is our hopes that this inaugural year, we will be able to bring to light to the important role that vermicomposting can play in reducing carbon emissions and improving soil health and regeneration not just here in Italy, but across the world.”

- *Lisa Forehand, Stone Pine Consulenza, Srl*
WhatsApp: +39 353 394 3758 | Email: info@stonepineconsulenza.com

Quote from vermicomposting expert, Rhonda Sherman

“This inaugural International Vermicomposting Symposium features some of the best and brightest minds in the vermicomposting world. It will be an outstanding opportunity for the soil health community to come together and share their experiences and learn from one another.”

- *Rhonda Sherman, Vermicomposting Expert, Educator and Former Director of the North Carolina State University Compost Learning Lab*

Quote regarding scholarships from WORMGEAR:

“We, here at WORMGEAR, are committed to educating the world about the importance of vermicomposting and recycling organic waste. It is our privilege and honor to be able to award these scholarships in hope that we can encourage the next generation of vermicomposters and to help those that would not otherwise be able to virtually attend this first-of-its-kind International Vermicomposting Symposium in Florence, Italy.”

- *Dan Lonowski, Owner and Cofounder of WORMGEAR (formerly Michigan SoilWorks)*
Mobile: +1 248-938-9311 | Email: Dan@Wormgear.com

Quote Regarding Vermicomposting in Italy

Target Audience:

The Symposium will present information that will help bridge the gap between academic researchers and the real-world practitioners of vermicomposting. The audience will not be entirely new to the topic of vermicomposting, and all attendees (from students and farmers, to large-scale producers and academics) will benefit from new contacts in the world of vermicomposting, as well as useful and exciting information.

Speakers include:

Jack Chambers - *President and Founder of TerraVesco (US)*

Session Title 1: “Billion of Microbes in one drop of Vermi-Extract”

Anna de la Vega - *Founder and Director of The Urban Worm CIC (UK)*

Session Title: “A New Worm Order: The Landscape of Vermiculture in the UK”

Steve Churchill - *Founder of the Urban Worm Company (US)*

Session Title: “From Trust to Profit: How to Build Direct-to-Consumer Sales”

Benny Erez - *Director of Urban Agriculture and Compost and Vermicompost Specialist at ECO City Farms (US)*

Session Title: “Vermicomposting at an Educational Urban Farm in Maryland, USA”

Marco Calcabrina - *Commercial Director of Centro Lombricoltura Toscano (IT)*

Session Title: “Centro Lombricoltura Toscano: From Research to Soil Regeneration – Our Experience in Vermicomposting Production in Italy Over the Last Decade”

Rhonda Sherman – *World Renowned Vermicomposting Expert, Educator and Former Director of the North Carolina State University Compost Learning Lab (US)*

Session Title: “Keys to a Successful Vermicomposting Operation: Sharing 30 Years of Observations”

Michael Quintern - *Founder of Noke Ltd. (NZ)*

Session Title: “From Challenges to Solutions: A New Zealand Perspective on Industrial Vermicomposting” (*online presentation*)

Francisco Niembro - *Cofounder of Aldea Verde (MX)*

Session Title: “How Aldea Verde Designs and Scales-Up a Viable & Successful Industrial Composting Systems”

Jack Chambers - *President and Founder of TerraVesco (US)*

Session Title 2: “Vermicompost and Extract Use in the California Wine Industry”

Dr. Grégory Sempo – *Head of Research and Development at PUR VER sa (BG)*

Session Title: “Ensuring Quality and Verifying Product Claims in Industrial Vermicomposting: A Scientific Approach”

Tom Herlihy - *Director of Compost Operations for Synagro (US)*

Session Title: “Two Case Studies: “Building, Integrating and Operating Large-Scale Vermicomposting Facilities into Agricultural Systems” and “Vermicomposting Production and Use”

Learn more about our speakers: <https://www.stonepineconsulenza.com/international-vermicomposting-symposium/speakers/>

Agenda

DAY 1 -- Wednesday, 8 November 2023		
Session Title:	Speaker:	Affiliation:
Billion of Microbes in One Drop of Vermi-Extract	Jack Chambers	<i>(President and Founder of TerraVesco)</i>
A New Worm Order: The Landscape of Vermiculture in the UK	Anna de la Vega	<i>(Founder and Director of The Urban Worm CIC)</i>
From Trust to Profit: How to Build Direct-to-Consumer Sales	Steve Churchill	<i>(Founder of the Urban Worm Company)</i>
Vermicomposting at an Educational Urban Farm in Maryland, USA	Benny Erez	<i>(Director of Urban Agriculture and Compost & Vermicompost Specialist at ECO City Farms)</i>
Centro Lombricoltura Toscano: From Research to Soil Regeneration - Our Experience in Vermicomposting Production in Italy Over the Last Decade	Marco Calcaprina	<i>(Commercial Director of Centro Lombricoltura Toscano)</i>
Keys to a Successful Vermicomposting Operation	Rhonda Sherman	<i>(Vermicomposting Expert, Educator and Former Director of the North Carolina State University Compost Learning Lab)</i>
DAY 2 -- Thursday, 9 November 2023		
Session Title:	Speaker:	Affiliation:
From Challenges to Solutions: A New Zealand Perspective on Industrial Vermicomposting	Michael Quintern	<i>(Founder of Noke Ltd.)</i>
How Aldea Verde Designs and Scales-Up a Viable & Successful Industrial Composting Systems	Francisco Niembro	<i>(Cofounder of Aldea Verde)</i>
Vermicompost and Extract Use in the California Wine Industry	Jack Chambers	<i>(President and Founder of TerraVesco)</i>
Ensuring Quality and Verifying Product Claims in Industrial Vermicomposting: A Scientific Approach	Dr. Grégory Sempo	<i>(Head of Research and Development at PUR VER sa)</i>
Two Case Studies: "Building, Integrating and Operating Large-Scale Vermicomposting Facilities into Agricultural Systems" and "Vermicomposting Production and Use"	Tom Herlihy	<i>(Director of Compost Operations for Synagro)</i>
Optional "WORMS & WINE TOUR OF TUSCANY" -- 10-11 NOVEMBER, 2023		

View the full schedule of events here: <https://www.stonepineconsulenza.com/international-vermicomposting-symposium/schedule-full/>

Special Thanks to Our Sponsors:

- **Presenting Sponsor:** Stone Pine Consulenza, SRL
- **Farmer-Level Sponsors:** [Centro Lombricoltura Toscano](#), [WORMGEAR](#), [Tuscany Wedding Celebrants](#), [IV Design](#)
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About Stone Pine Consulenza, SRL

Founded in 2020, Stone Pine Consulenza, SRL works with expats, individuals, and small businesses in the Valdichiana and Val d'Orca regions of Southern Tuscany to create, maintain, and grow vegetable gardens and landscapes founded on sustainable practices and biological control, with a special emphasis on promoting and preserving soil health.

About the Organizers:

Lisa Forehand is the lead consultant for Stone Pine Consulenza, a small organic and sustainable consulting firm based in Tuscany, Italy. Stone Pine's goal is to help expats benefit fully from life in Italy by installing and maintaining organic gardens, eco-conscious agriculture, and sustainable landscapes.

Lisa earned a BA (Honors) in Biology and an MA in Entomology from North Carolina State University (NCSU). It was during her studies at NCSU that Lisa became interested in organic and sustainable agriculture.

After graduating, Lisa joined the nonprofit Center for Environmental Farming Systems at NCSU and began educating farmers, Extension Agents, government officials, and the general public on sustainable, environmentally friendly gardening and farming. Lisa advocated for the use of cover crops, regular crop rotation, and the use of beneficial insects and compost over synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, and tillage.

Lisa's interest in local food systems grew, and in 2018, she helped organize and lead an *Agricultural and Gastronomic Tour of Italy*. During the event, Lisa's interest in food production systems grew, as did her network of Italian farmers and food producers. Struck by the Italian tradition of eating locally and farming organically, Lisa and her husband relocated to Italy full time in 2019.

Contact Information:

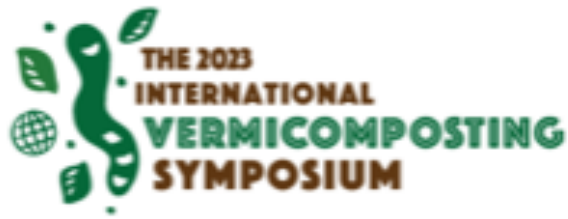
Lisa Forehand
Stone Pine Consulenza, Srl
WhatsApp: +39 353 394 3758 (English only, please)
Email: info@stonepineconsulenza.com
Website: www.vermicompostingsymposium.com

INFORMATION FOR PRESS:

Members of the Press are required to register for the day they intend to attend. Registration is complimentary but does not include food or beverages. Please send your press credentials to Lisa Forehand at info@stonepineconsulenza.com to receive the registration discount code. NB: The Symposium will be conducted in English. There are, however, several Italian-speaking experts participating who will be available for interviews.

<https://www.facebook.com/stonepineconsulenza>

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FLORENCE, ITALY 8-9 NOVEMBER, 2023 | WITH POST-SYMPOSIUM EVENTS

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