The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) formed a new partnership with ChicaGRO Intergenerational Growing Projects (Chicago), an urban gardening organization. The two reached a deal about dirt.

ChicaGRO Intergenerational Growing Projects owns 75 gardens that stretch beyond Chicago city limits. The gardens extend from as far south as Robbins, Ill., to as far north as Evanston, Ill. Last year, ChicaGRO grew 6800 kg (15,000 lb) of vegetables in its largest garden and donated its harvest to the City of Chicago.

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But growing all those crops requires a fair amount of soil. That is why ChicaGRO Executive Director Gregory Bratton reached out to MWRD.

MWRD will provide compost to be incorporated at 72 of the 75 community gardens. MWRD's biosolids are composted with woodchips to make an excellent soil enhancer. The compost will be used in raised planting beds. MWRD also will provide recycled woodchips that will be placed around the planting beds.

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By using tree debris as a bulking agent, the composting process raises the temperature of the biosolids and woodchip mixture and destroys pathogens. The process creates an exceptional quality (EQ) composted biosolids product. At MWRD, EQ biosolids and EQ composted biosolids are generated by following processes approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. MWRD has a goal of producing 9070 Mg (10,000 ton) of composted biosolids in 2016.

Camden County (N.J.) Municipal Utilities Authority (CCMUA) awarded Anaergia Inc. (Burlington, Ontario, Canada) a contract to design and supply equipment for new anaerobic digesters and to design, build, and operate a 3.8-MW cogeneration system at its Delaware No. 1 Water Pollution Control Facility. The facility treats the wastewater from 37 municipalities in Camden County, including the City of Camden.

The new equipment will enable the facility to accept and process post-consumer fats, oils, and grease and similar wastes. This project will help CCMUA transform the facility into a resource recovery and renewable-energy generation center.