Coram, NY – Highway Department crews tested the effectiveness of mixing beet juice with road salt to clear several icy roads across the Town of Brookhaven this weekend, following the season’s first significant snowfall.

Traditional salt melts ice on roadways down to about 15 degrees; once temperatures drop lower, the salt stops working. Adding beet juice to the mix improves salt’s performance, enabling it to continue melting ice at temperatures as low as 15-to-20 degrees below zero.

“The purpose of the trial run this past weekend was to compare the roadways that were treated with the beet juice mixture to those treated with traditional salt,” said Superintendent of Highways Daniel P. Losquadro. “We used about 600 gallons of beet juice on one of our trucks and I was very pleased with the results. Treating the salt with the beet juice, a process called ‘pre-wetting’, allowed us to use nearly one-half less salt by boosting its melting power and helping it stick to the roads.”

“We’re continuing to assess its effectiveness and may use it as a pre-treatment in the future, but that analysis is ongoing,” Losquadro continued. “Anytime we can apply less material, save taxpayers money and still have the same, if not better, results, it’s a win-win,” he continued.

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