



Report 05.84
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Committee Rural Services Wairarapa Committee
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Farm Waste Plastics

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the current situation and proposals for dealing with farm plastic waste.

2. What's the problem?

Farm plastics (i.e. silage wrap, containers, twine) are a problem for farmers and the environment. Waste plastics and containers take up storage space and if unrestrained can litter the environment. Currently the only available methods for disposing of them are costly and not environmentally sustainable.

3. What's happening on a national level to address this problem?

Growsafe has undertaken four years of research and pilot studies looking at;

- the environmental and economic costs associated with current disposal methods (burning and burying)
- ways to make farm waste recycling economically viable
- what has occurred around the world to address these plastic waste streams
- feasibility studies for implementing a nationwide recycling programme

Responsible Resource Recovery Ltd was engaged to write two draft business plans for the recycling of farm waste plastics. One, the Wrap Recovery programme, focuses on the collection and recycling of wrap, net-wrap, twine and pit covers. The other, GROWSAFE Container Recovery, looks at the collection and recycling of chemical containers. The draft business plans anticipate that the two programmes will be run in conjunction and managed by an appointed Programme Manager.

4. Wrap Recovery Programme

The WrapRecovery programme will co-ordinate the collection and delivery of waste plastics to the end user (recycler). The legal entity which owns WR will be a limited liability company owned by the New Zealand Farm Film Plastics Group (NZFFPG).

The income for the WrapRecovery programme will be raised by way of a levy from responsible brand owners who join the WrapRecovery program. The levy is set on the basis of \$0.17c per kilo of product sold in New Zealand.

An education and training plan will ensure that best practice is used by farmers and growers to ensure that recyclables are of an acceptable quality and are therefore useful to the recycler.

Farmers and growers will bring used wrap, net, twine and pit covers to one of 75 collection points sited around New Zealand. Collection points will be a mix of retail outlets and transfer station in convenient locations. It has not yet been decided where the collection points will be in the region. Where individuals have large volumes of wrap, it will be collected on site.

The collection points (shipping containers), will be cleared by mobile collection units (5 nationally). Plastic lumber and fence posts are possible end products made from the plastics recovered through this programme.

5. GROWSAFE Container Recovery

This programme will provide a nationwide collection scheme exclusively for high density polyethylene containers produced by the brand owners that financially support it. It is proposed that the scheme only collects those containers belonging to supporting brand owners which will be identified by a label stating "GROWSAFE Container Recovery". An application has also been made to the Sustainable Management Fund to fund the collection of existing containers held by growers and farmers.

Specialist collection vehicles are proposed that will 'process' the containers collected via a mobile shredding unit. The unit will also collect the waste plastics from the WrapRecovery programme. Smaller regions that are unlikely to produce a large amount of waste plastics will have access to a collection point once a month, and high volume regions will have access weekly.

Large scale farmers/manufacturers will have access to a website where they can log their collection requirements. The contractor will then collect the containers when next in the area to service the collection compound. There may be a user charge for this service.

6. Communication

The March edition of the Rural Services Newsletter will include an article on the WrapRecovery and GROWSAFE Container Recovery Programmes.

Greater Wellington will report any further developments on either programme in the Rural Services Newsletter.

7. Conclusion

It is anticipated that both programmes will manage the administration, promotion, management of contracted collectors, management of inspection staff and collection compounds, sale of products collected and reporting to brand owners. The revenue will be used to off-set costs.

The proposed collection system is unique as it combines the two programmes together. This will provide significant benefits financially and operationally, through having the two separately funded collection programmes managed and collected together.

Both of these stewardship programmes will enable farmers and growers throughout New Zealand to significantly improve environmental on farm performance.

The next stage for these programmes is to get 'buy in' from the Agrichemical industry and the farming groups with the hope of getting both programmes underway from September/October 2005.

8. Recommendation

That the report be received and the information noted.

Report prepared by:

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