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Waikato farmers embrace bale wrap recycling scheme

A recycling scheme for used farm bale wrap has seen a massive increase in the number of liners collected in the Waikato region.

It's one of several regions around New Zealand where a growing number of farmers are using the service.

Christchurch-based Agpac A Tapex Group Company, which operates the scheme, has recorded significant growth in Waikato because of the introduction of a new mobile baler.

Recycling Manager Chris Hartshorne says the baler was specially built for Agpac by Pioneer Engineering at Whangarei.

"The investment in the baler demonstrates our continued commitment to our Product Stewardship scheme. The baler allows us to transport the material more efficiently and this keeps the cost down to the farmers and at the same time reduces our environmental impact," Mr Hartshorne says.

"Once we have cleared all the liners in Waikato we will move the baler to Pukekohe where it will service the local collectors in that area."

Seven contractors collect waste plastic from Waikato farms and consolidate the material at the mobile baler before it is shipped to Auckland for recycling.

The baler needs on average six filled liners to complete the bale, with each one weighing around 750kg.

Collections have already been carried out in Northland in conjunction with CBEC in Kaitaia, where six tonnes of plastic has been collected from farms, baled and shipped to Auckland. Collections are also being carried out in Taranaki, Canterbury and Southland.

The network of collectors throughout New Zealand now stands at 33 spread from Kaitaia to Gore. A collection service has begun in Westland and new collectors are being put in place at Wanaka and Alexandra.

"Congratulations to Agpac and other companies who are working in this space as its important that we protect our 'clean, green' reputation for the agricultural industry and New Zealand as a whole," Trevor Mallard said.

"Using the proposed Waste Minimisation Bill, the Government intends to support businesses who take responsibility for their product once the customer no longer wants it. This will ensure that more New Zealanders have the services they need to reduce their waste."

For more information, contact Chris Hartshorne 03 338 2400 or 0274 375 781