

PRESS RELEASE

Agpac complete first round of farm plastic collections for used bale wrap.

Agpac's product stewardship scheme in the Taranaki and Waikato has recovered over 11 tonnes of used silage wrap for recycling that would have otherwise have most likely been burnt or buried on-farm.

Over 40 farmers participated in the scheme and Agpac's Chris Hartshorne thanked them saying "I congratulate all the farmers who have supported this recycling initiative and thank them for their support. The collections demonstrated that this is an easy to use collection scheme and the material is where it is supposed to be—at a recycling facility".

But he warned that this is only a beginning and that there was still too much plastic being disposed of incorrectly. "We have only collected from 2 hubs in this round but we are expanding the collection points throughout the country all the time. We now have 20 hubs in place in the North Island and 4 in the South Island but at the end of the day it needs farmers to use it or lose it".

The scheme has been supported by Fonterra, the Ministry for the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund and Replas, the recycler.

Acting Minister for the Environment, David Parker, commented "I'd like to encourage farmers to recycle their plastic wrap through such services as Agpac's product stewardship scheme."

"Burning plastic is unsightly and releases dangerous chemicals into the air. If the plastic is buried it remains in the soil for many years without breaking down. Doing nothing results in wind-blown plastic littering the countryside. But, if we recycle the plastic into new products instead, we're not only avoiding these undesirable outcomes we're also being more responsible about our use of fossil fuel resources like oil."

"New Zealand trades on its clean green image and, as our exports come under increasing scrutiny from environmentally-conscious consumers, farmers must ensure that their practices meet these expectations."

"I'm pleased the Government has been able to put its support behind this product stewardship scheme, helping Agpac prove the system is practical and by making it available to ever increasing numbers of farmers."

The products stewardship scheme uses the Agpac Bin and Liner system to ensure the used silage wrap is kept clean and is able to be easily collected. The first round of on-farm collections, carried out at Stratford and Matamata, collected 65 large liners and 11 small liners. Once it had been collected by the local collection hub the material was

rebaled by Southern Xpress into 8 large bales prior to transport to the recycling plant in Auckland.

The plastic is currently being recycled to produce bins for the growing list of participating farmers, but in the long term they expect to see the plastic being used for a range of products including a standard 1.2 X 2.4 meter sheet that can be used to replace wood or metal in a farm environment.

Roger Slattery of Slattery Contracting Ltd who operates the Matamata hub commented “The system is easy for farmers and for us to use. We collected the filled liners from farms and consolidated the material at our yard before the mobile baler arrived. Once it was baled the material was collected and sent to Auckland for recycling. This scheme is long overdue and we are really pleased we are now able to offer this recycling service to our customers and other users of plastic wrap”

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