

FAQ's

Q. Why do farmers have to store plastic like this?

A. Because when it is left lying on the paddock it becomes very contaminated with mud and water. It also gets mixed up with other waste materials like tyres and stones and this hinders its use as a recycle. Because it is so dirty the plastic has to be washed prior to recycling into other products and there are limited opportunities to get this done in New Zealand. In order to encourage recyclers to tackle this difficult waste stream we need to reduce the high levels of contamination found in this plastic.

How does the Bin and Liner system work?

The circular Bin is designed to hold a heavy duty liner in such a way it allows farmers to pack the most plastic into each liner. The Bin has a horizontally sliding lid to keep out rain and to keep the plastic secure in the liner. When the liner is full you simply take off the lid, tie the liner off, undo the two latches at the front and remove the filled liner.

What do farmers have to do?

We are asking farmers to place their waste plastics into the Bin straight away and not leave it lying in the paddock where it becomes very dirty. This simple action of placing the waste materials in the Bin as soon as possible after feed out keeps the plastic much cleaner and this means recyclers are better able to use the plastic. It also helps to keep your farm tidy and there is less risk of the plastic polluting the countryside.

Why can't you pick up the loose plastic?

Apart from the contamination issue, loose plastic is difficult to collect. It is hard to judge how much material is lying in a pile and it is not easy to agree a price for collecting a random pile of material without having to go to the expense of weighing the collection vehicle after each pickup. It is also complicated to plan collections, as the collector does not know how much material to expect at each pick up point. The liner serves as a unit both for planning purposes and for making a fair charge to everyone.

Isn't there always some mud or water on the bale wrap?

Yes and that's fine. We accept there will always be some dirt. We are trying to stop the *excessive* contamination that happens after the bale has been fed out. In particular heavy objects are often thrown on the piles of plastic to stop them blowing around and these types of objects cause serious damage to recycling machines.

Can I use a wool fadge or another type of bag?

No. This is because the whole of the liner and its contents are recyclable together. This means there is no further sorting to be done when the filled liner gets to the recycling plant. Also by having the same type of filled liner everyone is using the same standard “unit”. This means when we are organising collections in each local area we will know exactly what volume is available at each farm and this keeps the cost down. Everyone will be paying the same uplift fee based on each liner regardless of the type of plastic or the amount in each liner.

Do I have to buy a Bin?

No. But you must use the liner. If you want to make your own holder that’s fine, but remember that this recycling Bin has been specially designed for you to allow you to get the maximum amount of plastic into each liner. It has been designed by farmers for farmers. Remember you pay a fixed uplift charge for each liner regardless of how much is in the liner so the more plastic you get in the liner the better for you. The Bin has also been designed to allow you easy access to the filled liner so you can get the heavy liner out ready for collection.

How much plastic do I get in the liner?

This depends on how much care you take in filling the liner and whether or not you chose to use a Bin. You should aim to get around 150 used wraps into each liner but you will need to roll up the wraps before putting them in the Bin. If you only use a liner you will not get as many wraps in. Remember the Bin is designed to allow you to pack the most used wraps into each liner and that, as you pay a fixed uplift charge per liner, it is in your interest to pack as much plastic in each liner.

What are the Bins made from?

The Bins are made from recycled farm baleage wrap so we can close the recycling loop. Recycling is concerned with reusing materials into another product—this is when the recycling process is complete (closed loop). Creating the demand for recycled products is important because it also creates a need for more waste materials. The Bin is made from a single flexible sheet folded to make a circle. The plastic is strong enough to withstand the New Zealand conditions.

Can I put other farm plastics in the Bin?

Yes you can. This system also allows you to segregate plastics at source which again helps the recycling process.

You can mix your baleage wraps with silage pit covers, plastic feed bags, and plastic packaging that comes on farms. If you take your silage pit cover off in strips then put the

strips into the liner. If you fold the cover off the pit in one, and you want to dispose of it, then simply fold the cover into a parcel and leave it by the Bin ready for collection. There will be a small charge to uplift this parcel.

If you have half tonne or one tonne feed or fertiliser bags these should be kept separate from the other plastics as they are a different plastic.

What about the net wrap?

It is important that you do not mix baler twine or net wrap with the baleage wrap as they are different plastics. Please separate the net wrap from the baleage wrap before putting only the baleage wrap in the Bin.

How do I know which types of plastic can be mixed together?

Once you have joined the scheme you will be sent a leaflet telling you which plastics can be mixed and which plastics cannot be accepted and have to be kept separate. If in doubt either phone your local collector or Chris Hartshorne at Agpac.

When my liner is full what do I have to do next?

Before you remove the liner from the Bin tie off the liner and add the ID tag. The collector will not collect liners that have not been tied or tagged. The liners are clear in order that the collector can see what is in the liner before uplift. Liners with mixed plastics or unsuitable materials in them will not be uplifted.

Why do I have to have an ID tag?

Traceability is an accepted concept for farmers. We are offering a recycling service, not a rubbish collection service, and we have to work with the recycling industry to make sure they only receive materials they can work with. By doing this we can develop a sustainable collection service for farm plastics and this will benefit the whole of the agricultural industry.

How can I prove that I have disposed of my plastic wastes properly?

Once you have had a collection you will be sent a recycling certificate to confirm you have disposed of your plastic wastes properly. You can show this to quality assurance inspectors. We will keep a database recording how much waste has been collected from your farm.

What will happen if a farmer puts unsuitable or unwanted materials mixed in with the plastic?

They will be charged for the full cost of disposal including any remediation costs. We will be unable to collect from them again and they will have to make alternative arrangements for the collection of their plastic.

Do I have to take my liners off the farm to a collection point?

No. This is an on farm collection service.

Where do I have to leave my filled liners on the farm?

You should leave your liners at the farm yard with easy access for a lorry. This should be a hard standing area clear of overhanging trees and cables. Please do not stack liners too close to a building.

What happens when I want to have my liners collected?

Each area will have its own collector and he will contact you in advance of the collection date. They will give you plenty of notice either by ringing you, sending you a text message or by sending you an email. Because he is able to plan his journey to collect the maximum amount of plastic on each round this keeps the costs down for everyone. When the collector contacts you he will ask how many liners you have ready and what types of plastic are in each liner.

How often will you collect the plastic?

Initially we will plan to collect in each area twice a year. Collections will be timed to coincide with the end of the winter feeding season and after the autumn shoulder feed season. As more farmers take part we will extend the collection schedule.

How much does all this cost?

The set up costs are as follows:

The Bin is priced at \$530 plus GST. Each new liner is \$15 plus GST.

After that you only pay \$40 plus GST for the collection of each liner.

What will it cost per year?

This depends on how many bales per year you feed out. Based on average use of 200 bales per farm the cost per farm will be between \$40 to \$80 per year.

Is there a membership fee to join the collection service?

No. This is a simple “pay as you go” service.

Do I have to buy my bale wrap plastic from Agpac?

No. This service is available to any farmer.

Can I continue to burn or bury my plastic on farm?

The practice of burning and burying waste plastics on farm is not good for the environment and is not best farming practice. Many farmers continue to do this because there has been no alternative. However global supply chains are demanding increased emphasis on greener production methods and these include environmental issues such as waste disposal. Some regional and local councils already have clean air legislations which prohibit the burning of plastic and more are likely to introduce bans in the near future. The more farmers who support the collection scheme the cheaper and more widespread it will become.