

Industry developing solutions to manage agricultural waste plastics in Saskatchewan

January 16, 2012 – The Government of Saskatchewan has partnered with CleanFARMS to develop an appropriate way to manage on-farm plastic waste, such as bale wrap and grain bags, in an effort to reduce the environmental footprint of farming in the province.

As it currently stands, there are either limited or no recycling options for many agricultural plastic waste products in Saskatchewan.

“We know that farmers are more than willing to participate in stewardship programs where they exist; they want to do the right thing. CleanFARMS currently operates a national empty pesticide container recycling program and an obsolete pesticide collection program, both of which have very high participation rates,” says Barry Friesen, general manager of CleanFARMS.

The challenge Prairie farmers have managing their plastic grain bags has been well documented as of late.

“We are pleased to see industry, government and the broader stakeholder community work together to develop a recycling program for farmers,” Saskatchewan Environment Minister Dustin Duncan said.

CleanFARMS recently did a study of the agricultural waste stewardship programs in the province. The research revealed that the most successful programs had government legislation mandating participation such as those to manage used oil, oil filters and their containers, tires, paint and electronics.

The Government of Saskatchewan has tasked CleanFARMS with bringing together stakeholders to develop the framework for a program to recycle agricultural plastics such as bale wrap, twine and grain bags.

“Saskatchewan is an innovative province that is well positioned to become a leader in agricultural plastics recycling,” says Friesen. “In many cases, the technology is already in place. Bridon Corage, a highly successful twine manufacturer with a plant in the province, is currently making new twine out of used twine.”

CleanFARMS led a consultation with industry stakeholders today, which will help guide its work going forward. Its recommendations on a potential program structure will be ready for the Ministry of Environment by early spring of this year.

CleanFARMS is one of Canada's leading agricultural waste management organizations. It currently operates a national empty pesticide container collection program and an obsolete pesticide collection campaign. To learn more, visit www.cleanfarms.ca.

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