

Ontario Agricultural Waste Webinar
January 19, 2011
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1: Are the presentations available?

A: Yes, you can download all the presentations at <http://www.cleanfarms.ca/studies/>.

Q2: How do recycled content requirements fit into overall EPR?

A: Recycled content requirements can be a goal for an EPR program. To date in Canada there are no EPR programs that offer incentives for recycled content. However, more recently in the packaging and paper program in Quebec, where industry helps finance the municipal curbside program, the operating agency has announced that it will be offering a credit for recycled content.

Q3: What counts as 'recycled'? Who would verify?

A: The definition of 'recycling' can be tricky since not every recycling process is the same. Ideally, a material is recycled back into the same type of material. The challenge is that many packages and products, once used, can only be recycled into 'secondary' products (one that is less valuable than the original material) because they are too degraded or too contaminated with other substances. In some cases, recycling isn't possible at all because the product has been so degraded that it can't be recycled or is far too complex to recycle efficiently. In those cases safe disposal (landfill or incineration) is the only alternative. Regardless, all EPR programs need to accurately assess what can occur with each specific material. We believe all programs should strive for the most efficient end-use of a product at the end of its useful life. A successful EPR scheme will identify who will verify that end-use.

Q4: Will we look at international jurisdictions and best practices?

A: Absolutely. Fortunately, CleanFARMS™ in Canada has 'sister' organizations around the world. We will be looking at those programs and others to learn and to tailor programs in Canada that can be successful here.

Q5: Can you name a few positive 'incentives' to industry/producers to get into EPR?

A: Well, for one, backstop legislation from a province or territory requiring participation is certainly an incentive to get industry/producers into EPR. The ability to sell materials for a profit is another incentive to get stewards involved. Finally, consumer pressure is another very important incentive to move forward on EPR.

Q6: Are there any tax incentives to the private sector in Canada for producers that get into EPR?

A: There are none that we know of. In fact, for programs that have a 'visible fee' or an 'eco-fee', the fee is also taxed.

Q7: What is the definition of 'recycler'?

A: A 'recycler' is normally defined as a person or company that converts a used material into a new product.

Q8: Does recycling mean you can bale the product and ship overseas or should it be put into product that stays in Canada?

A: Used materials are an international commodity that can be shipped and recycled in other countries. However, in developing an EPR program, one must be careful how those materials are managed in other countries to ensure that the material is recycled into appropriate products and that the recyclers meet acceptable health, safety and environmental standards. These standards can sometimes make it inefficient to utilize markets overseas. For instance, the CleanFARMS™ pesticide container recycling program requires its recyclers to meet stringent health, safety and environmental standards. It would be far too onerous to monitor these standards overseas and, as such, CleanFARMS™ will not ship its containers to overseas recyclers. All of the material is recycled in Canada or the US. Other products that have much greater volumes, however, may be able to be shipped overseas for recycling. Regardless of whether the recyclers are here in Canada or overseas, it is important for any EPR scheme to have recycling goals and appropriate standards and to ensure they are met by all of its recyclers either here at home or in other countries .

Q9: Most spent agricultural products containing plastic can be turned into oil and/or energy along with farm bio-wastes. Many of these technologies allow for mixed plastic resins. What is being done to support technology ventures to get solutions for agriculture?

A: This study, in the next phases, will examine all of the recycling options for agricultural wastes. Our experience to date is that thermal treatment of wastes, such as plastic to oil or plastic to ethanol may have its place with difficult to recycle plastics and fibres. However, for plastics that have value, and most do, thermal treatment facilities can't compete financially with recycling technologies. For instance, all of the HDPE that CleanFARMS™ collects is recycled into new plastic materials. If we were to use waste to oil or energy from waste facilities to manage the plastic, it would raise our program costs substantially.

Q10: Are there recycling companies that are currently collecting agricultural film from municipalities? Or landscape plastic?

A: Think Plastics is one company in Ontario that is actively collecting plastics (balewrap) for recycling into a plastic lumber product. There are other companies as well that recycle these plastics and other materials. We will be examining these recyclers in the second phase of this project.

Q11: What is the definition of a 'collection site'?

A: The surveyed respondents were asked how they dispose of each material and were read the following list:

- a) Return to a collection site for recycling or safe disposal
- b) Return to the retailer or supplier
- c) Take to the municipal or town landfill
- d) Bury on farm

- e) Burn on farm
- f) Store or save to deal with later
- g) Wait to take to a safe disposal site when one comes into your region
- h) Re-use
- i) Put into municipal or town recycling