

New Zealand's Agrecovery introduces a unique opportunity to recycle agri-plastics

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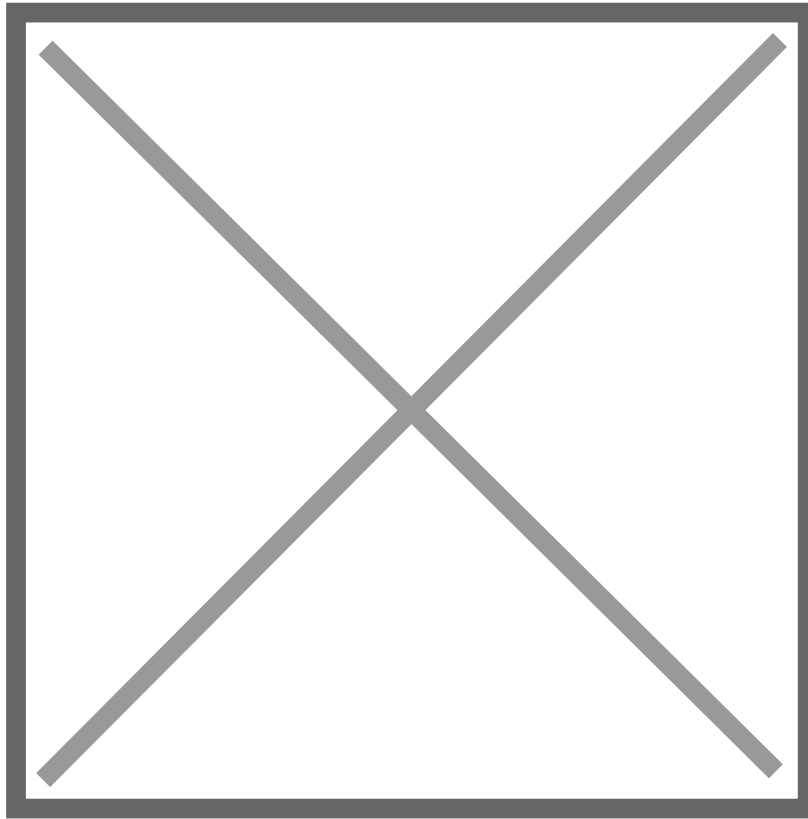


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A new pilot programme by Agrecovery offers farmers and growers in the New Zealand's Hurunui District the opportunity to recycle agri-plastics for free. During the period of 19 February to 13 March 2025, this initiative will promote the recovery and recycling of more farm plastic, improve sustainability, and gather insight for a nationwide recycling program.

Currently, Agrecovery is operating a number of voluntary Product Stewardship Schemes. Richard Carroll, Head of Commercial, emphasized the importance of providing farmers and growers with easy access to recycling solutions. It is anticipated that most of the plastics collected during the pilot will be processed for recycling ensuring they are repurposed instead of being burned or buried. Carroll said the goal is to build a circular economy where agri-plastics are no longer treated as waste but as valuable resources.

Plastic waste on farms is a growing issue and there needs to be practical, sustainable solutions to get buy-in from farmers and growers, and avoid the plastics being burned or buried. As part of the Green-farms Product Stewardship Scheme (GPSS), Agrecovery is trialing this service. The GPSS aims to address the growing issue of agri-plastics by creating a regulated nationwide system that supports farmers and growers in reducing waste. In 2023, Agrecovery ran a pilot program in Southland that recovered over 600 tonnes of farm plastics, primarily bale and silage wrap.



Head of Commercial, Richard Carroll says, "A wide range of agri-plastics will be accepted during the pilot, Carroll says. "We anticipate receiving a variety of different agri-plastics. This will help us to gain a better understanding of what is being used by the primary sector and to develop long-term sustainable solutions for the plastic. This pilot is a critical step in testing the design and implementation of this scheme. It allows us to identify what works best for farmers and growers and ensures that future systems are practical, cost-effective, and widely accessible."

"The Southland pilot showed us the potential for large-scale recycling," said Carroll. "Now, we're broadening our scope to tackle other diverse plastics on farms."

Nicole Hurinui, Waste and Compliance Support Officer for Hurunui District Council, said the Council was looking forward to supporting Agrecovery on the pilot programme.

"Our Hurunui farmers, winegrowers and rural businesses do a great job supporting the Agrecovery programmes for container and small bag recycling, and we're thrilled this pilot programme is running in the district. It's a great way to further empower our rural sector to participate in the circular economy through recycling farm plastics into useful products."

Carroll said proper presentation of the plastic by participants would be crucial to the pilot's success, noting contamination such as dirt, stones, wire, excessive residues, and mixed plastics, can pose health and safety risks, damage processing equipment and prevent the plastic from being recycled.

Agrecovery already provides agrichemical container and small bag recycling and agrichemical recovery for New Zealand farmers and growers. The majority of brand owners that distribute agrichemical, animal health and dairy hygiene products pay Agrecovery a voluntary fee to cover programme costs. This enables free access to users.

The pilot is funded through the Ministry for the Environment's Plastics Innovation Fund with additional funding support from Farm Source, Farmlands, PGG Wrightson and Agrecovery. The pilot is supported operationally by Hurunui District Council, Waipara Wines, Amberley Lions Club, JJ International and Plasback.