

Cornell University's Recycling Agricultural Plastics Program promotes on-farm baling to make recycling easier than disposal.



Farm Plastic Collection Success

A good percentage of bale wrap and greenhouse plastic on New York farms is being turned into trash bags and plastic lumber, thanks to Cornell University's Recycling Agricultural Plastics Program (RAPP). The program promotes on-farm baling to make recycling easier than disposal.

"In the first 3 to 4 years we collected and shipped about 1.25 million lbs. of plastic. In the past 6 months alone, we've shipped about 650,000 lbs.," says Nate Leonard, field coordinator for RAPP.

In 2010 New York funded the program to reduce burning and landfilling of waste plastics. A year earlier, a statewide ban had been placed on burning ag plastics. At the time, an estimated 50 percent of all ag plastics were burned on the farm. There were almost no markets for ag plastics and no market at all for the plastic film used on greenhouses and for mulch.

RAPP attacked the problem at the demand end first, working with recycling companies to find new markets. With markets identified, they placed mobile balers around the state with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) and worked with local extension offices to help farmers understand what level of cleanliness was needed to recycle ag plastics.

"Our collection rate is going up dramatically," says Leonard. "If you don't make it too difficult for farmers to participate, a large percentage want to recycle and are

willing to transfer plastic bales to local or regional recycling centers. In one county with large dairy operations, we went from no collection to more than 40 percent."

Farmers are asked to think about recycling as they remove the plastic from bales, silage, or mulched crops, cutting it into pieces small enough for residue to be shaken off. One farmer built homemade bins for collecting bale wrap as bales are fed out.

"It's easier to put several pallets together and build a pile on them than to stuff dirty plastic into a dumpster," says Leonard. "We can tolerate some moisture. The big concern is gravel and stone grit, which can damage recycling equipment."

Once farmers have enough plastic to make a 1,000-lb. bale, they contact the local extension or SWCD. They are then added to the list for the next round of on-farm baling.

The farm provides labor to help the operator compact the plastic into 40-in. cubes and then stores the bales for future collection.

An early use for bale wrap was plastic sidewalk pavers. Another company is making 4 by 8-ft. sheets of plastic plywood. Still another makes plastic trash bags.

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"It quickly pulls in and wraps up a quarter mile of fence at a time," says Preston Williams about his cordless drill-powered wire winder.

Cordless Drill-Powered Wire Winder

Winding up electric fence wire is easy with Preston Williams's cordless drill-powered wire winder.

"It quickly pulls in and wraps up a quarter mile of fence at a time, and has saved me many hours of labor," says Williams. "It pulls the wire in straight and without any curls or twists."

He runs an 8-in. long, 3/8-in. carriage bolt through the reel and uses a 4-in. length of tubing as a handle. The tubing goes all the way to the head of the bolt and is loose enough to spin freely. He screws a nut and washer onto the handle side of the reel, stopping about 1/2 in. from the end of the tubing. Then he slides the spool onto the

bolt and screws another nut and washer onto the drill side of the spool, tightening the nut firmly against the spool.

"It works great," says Williams. "I grind the end of the bolt to a square shape so it won't slip inside the drill. When winding up wire I make sure the wire is free to be pulled so it won't hang up in the field. By holding one hand on the handle and the other on the drill, I can easily wind up a complete spool of wire. You may need to tack weld the nut near the handle or strip the threads so the nut can't back off."

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"FreedomWeeder" Lets You Kill Weeds 2 Ways

"Our new FreedomWeeder provides you with 2 convenient ways to kill weeds. It combines a spot applicator and a trigger sprayer into one tool that's very easy to use," says Johnny Tuttle, Tieton, Wash.

The patent pending FreedomWeeder consists of a 44-in. long, 1-in. dia. schedule 40 pvc tube with a spot applicator at the bottom end, and a handheld trigger sprayer with an adjustable nozzle. The reservoir within the tube holds 20 oz. of herbicide.

The spot applicator is equipped with a double action valve and kills individual weeds by dabbing on a small amount of liquid weed killer. The valve dispenses about 1 cc. of herbicide each time you tap down.

The handheld trigger pump sprayer is connected to a feed tube via a brass elbow at the base of the tube. When you're done using the trigger sprayer, you just attach it to the handle where it's out of the way.

"The FreedomWeeder gives you a choice in how you want to kill weeds," says Tuttle. "The spot applicator allows you to quickly dispense herbicide with pinpoint accuracy and works great wherever you're using a nonselective herbicide and want to avoid killing nearby vegetation. It eliminates the need for any spraying or digging and greatly reduces the amount of pesticide released into the environment."

He says the unit is made to last. "The tube is made from schedule 40 pvc, and the end caps on the top and bottom of the tube are made from schedule 80. All machined parts are made from solid brass or stainless steel, and are manufactured in the U.S."

The FreedomWeeder is available through



Freedom Weeder comes with a spot applicator at the bottom and a handheld trigger sprayer with an adjustable nozzle.

amazon.com or eBay.com and sells for \$44 plus S&H.

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Hoof Cinch Eliminates Founder Pain, Realigns Hoof

Horse owners have a new, inexpensive option to relieve the pain - and to fix - founder and laminitis. Hoof Cinch is a patented, U.S.-made metal band that tightens around the front part of the hoof to prevent the hoof from flexing, which eliminates the pain.

"We are bringing the hoof back to normal," says Chuck Potter, a Minnesota farrier who invented the device after a year of research and development with his business partner, veterinarian Dr. Jan Doelle, DVM.

Instead of expensive traditional treatment involving nerve blocks, sedation and shoeing, without a real solution for fixing the rotation, a \$60 Hoof Cinch set can be installed in minutes, and provide instant pain relief.

"Once it's rotated, the coffin bone (main foot bone) cannot be moved back to its original position," Potter says. "The Hoof Cinch stabilizes the hoof wall and forces the hoof wall growth back toward the coffin bone. As the hoof wall grows down along the coffin bone, it realigns with the rotated coffin bone. Since we cannot move the coffin bone back to the hoof wall, we move the hoof wall back to the coffin bone."

After many hoof dissections with Dr. Doelle and learning how the hoof flexed, Potter experimented with his device and the proper placement.

In a video on the Hoof Cinch website, he demonstrates how to place the metal cinch band about an inch below the horse's coronary band (where hoof meets leg). With a cordless drill, the cinch is easily fastened with screws and attaching plates into the hoof (dead zone), then tightened to prevent the hoof from flexing.

The response is usually immediate.

"The very first was a mini horse that had



Metal band tightens around front part of hoof to keep it from flexing.

gotten founder and couldn't use her front feet at all. I made up tiny cinches and the next day she was running everywhere," Potter says.

Potter emphasizes that the Hoof Cinch doesn't fix the underlying problem causing laminitis or founder, so horse owners must work with a veterinarian to do blood testing and come up with a treatment plan with medicine and/or diet.

The Hoof Cinch is easy to install and remains on the hoof for at least 12-16 weeks, while the horse is in treatment and to allow the bone to realign. The bands come in three sizes for miniature, standard and draft horses. All sell for \$60 (plus \$5 shipping) for a set of two. Both the front (and sometimes back) hooves need the cinches to avoid stressing a good leg.

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