

CleanFARMS to develop program to manage agricultural plastic waste in Ontario

Jan 5 , 2012 – A new service for farmers who want to safely get rid of plastic agricultural waste, including bale wrap, will be piloted in 2012 in the Lake Simcoe watershed by CleanFARMS, a national, industry-led stewardship organization.

“This pilot project will lay the groundwork for a comprehensive program to responsibly manage all agricultural waste plastic across the province,” says Barry Friesen, general manager of CleanFARMS.

According to recent research conducted by CleanFARMS, farmers in Ontario generate more than 14,000 tonnes of non-nutrient based waste on their farms each year.

While there are stewardship programs in place for some agricultural waste products, there are many products for which no recycling options exist.

“Farmers don’t want to burn waste or send it to landfills but it’s difficult for them to be good stewards when there aren’t programs in place to help them,” says Friesen. “Where there are programs in place, farmers overwhelmingly choose to participate. The success of CleanFARMS’ empty pesticide container recycling program is a prime example.”

The pilot program in Lake Simcoe is being funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

"I congratulate the folks at CleanFARMS for working with us to pilot this service that will help farmers better protect our environment," said Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Ted McMeekin.

CleanFARMS’ empty pesticide container recycling program has been in operation since 1989 and its obsolete pesticide collection program began in 1998. Both have earned a reputation for being among the best agricultural stewardship programs in the world.

Funding for this program comes from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs through the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem. The Canadian Animal Health Institute and industry have pledged additional cash and in-kind contributions.

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