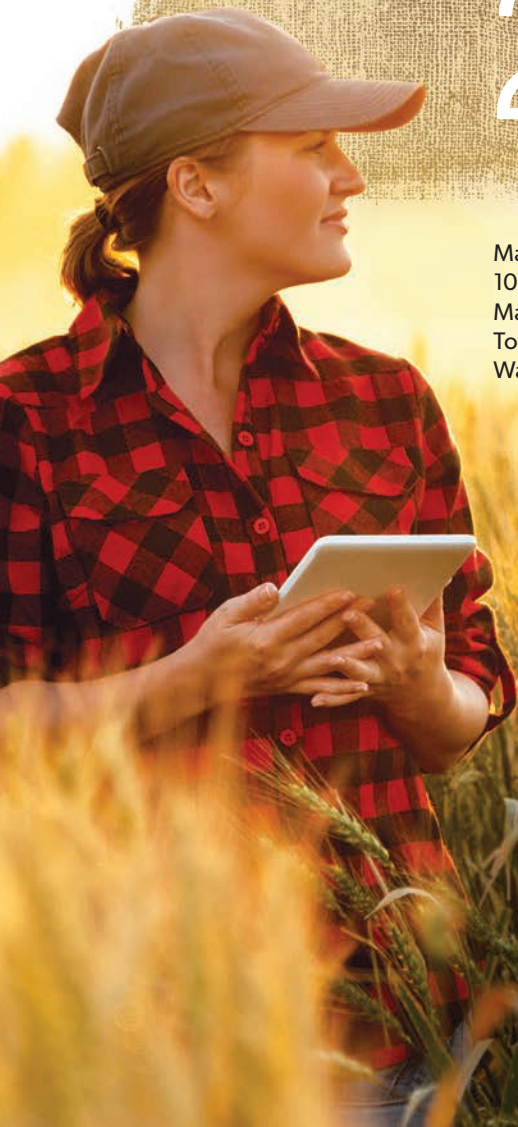




# Annual Report 2020

Marking  
10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:  
Making Progress  
Toward Zero  
Waste Goals

2020 Program  
Highlights



# Agricultural Industry Contributing to Cleaner Farm Communities in Canada

The agricultural waste management programs that Cleanfarms proudly documents in this 2020 annual report have been made possible through the ongoing stewardship and funding support of our member companies. Together they comprise manufacturers, distributors and retailers in the crop protection products, fertilizer, seed, livestock/ equine medications, bale wrap, and grain bag industries.



# Promoting Agricultural Sustainability

## Who We Are

Cleanfarms is a non-profit industry stewardship organization committed to environmental responsibility through the proper management of inorganic agricultural waste. Cleanfarms' programs are available across Canada and have been emulated internationally. The success of these programs highlights the commitment of manufacturers, distributors, retailers, municipalities, provinces and farmers/producers to agricultural environmental responsibility and sustainability.

## Vision

Cleanfarms contributes to a healthier environment and a sustainable future by recovering and recycling agricultural and related industry plastics, packaging and products.



## Table of Contents

### 2

Report from the  
Board Chair and  
Executive Director

### 4

Cleanfarms' 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:  
Different Than Planned, But  
Bursting with Achievements

### 6

Board of Directors 2020

### 7

2020 Program  
Operations Highlights

### 8

Pesticide and Fertilizer  
Small Container  
Recycling Program

### 9

Curtis Construction Helped  
Write Cleanfarms' Small  
Container Recycling Story

### 10

Non-deposit Bulk  
Container Program

### 11

RPM eco's Collection System  
Puts an Environmental Spin  
on 'No Touch'

### 12

Seed, Pesticide and Fertilizer  
Bags Collection Program

### 13

Dale Waddell's Contract  
Work with Cleanfarms  
is in 'the Bag'

### 14

Unwanted Pesticides  
and Livestock/  
Equine Medications  
Collection Program

### 16

Saskatchewan Provincially-  
Regulated Grain Bag  
Recycling Program

### 17

Manitoba Agricultural  
Plastics Recycling  
Pilot Program

### 18

Alberta Ag-Plastic.  
*Recycle It!* Pilot Program

### 19

Quebec Agricultural  
Plastics Recycling  
Pilot Program

### 20

Pilot Projects Across  
Canada Will Keep Plastics  
Out of the Environment

### 21

Staff





**Report from the Board Chair and Executive Director**

## **Marking 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Our Journey to Zero Waste**

A year of living with COVID-19 has changed the way we live and work. Like the majority of businesses in Canada and around the globe, Cleanfarms has adjusted to accommodate the “new reality”. While we social distanced, we actually connected in new and innovative ways, drawing on our ability to be resourceful and resilient. This is an important learning and it bodes well for our future as an industry whose success depends on connecting with people at various levels to keep the wheels of our programs turning.

As we moved into 2020, we planned to mark our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary by celebrating milestone achievements and recognizing the contributions of many people and organizations who make it possible for Cleanfarms to succeed in reaching our goals. The pandemic got in the way of our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary plans, but our appreciation of our partners as they faced these unprecedented challenges grew.

Though some Cleanfarms collections programs started a bit later than planned, the end results showed we could still depend on farmers/producers to find a way to bring recyclable resource materials back to Cleanfarms collections sites. Similarly, events in four provinces for old, unwanted pesticides and obsolete animal health medications still offered a meaningful option for farmers to manage those materials responsibly.

We are grateful to our ag retail and municipal collection site operators, service contractors and, of course, Canadian farmers/producers for figuring out how to adopt COVID precautions while utilizing Cleanfarms programs. We are also grateful for the support we received from the Government of Canada's Department of Environment and Climate Change as well as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Canadian Agricultural Strategic Priorities Program (CASPP) which enabled us to implement our 'Building a Zero-Plastic Waste Strategy for Agriculture', a plan that will open doors to new opportunities to achieve zero waste in the ag sector for many years to come.

In past annual reports, we've profiled people and organizations that are central to Cleanfarms' ability to fulfill our mission. This year, we shine the light on three service contractors who represent the fine organizations which work closely with us to collect, transport and manage ag waste materials. On behalf of the members of Cleanfarms, we want to thank them and their fellow contractors for all they do to see that Cleanfarms materials are collected and delivered safely to their destinations.

Cleanfarms exists to do this important work that is leading the way toward zero waste in the agricultural sector because of its members' commitment to packaging and product stewardship. The crop


protection industry was among the first in Canada to step forward, voluntarily, to take responsibility for recovering and managing packaging and products when no longer needed or wanted in the agricultural sector. Now 78 members strong, in 2020 we welcomed 10 new members in the seed, fertilizer and grain bag sectors.

All in all, while our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary was different than planned, it was remarkable in so many other positive ways. We welcome you to continue with us on our journey into our next decade.



**Brad Orr**

*Marketing Leader Canada  
Corteva Agriscience™  
Chair, Board of Directors*



**Barry Friesen, P.Eng.**

*Executive Director  
Cleanfarms Inc.*

Cleanfarms exists to do this important work that is leading the way toward zero waste in the agricultural sector because of its members' commitment to packaging and product stewardship.



2020 in Review

## **Cleanfarms' 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Different Than Planned, But Bursting with Achievements**

In 2020, Cleanfarms marked our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The decade just past was worthy of pride, accented by innovation, solid growth and expansion. As we prepared for the anniversary year, adding final touches to a suite of permanent programs and pilot projects, and a special logo, little did we expect a pandemic would sweep the world into survival mode.

The impact of this situation led Cleanfarms to wonder if we could operate anything close to a normal year. Yet with the determination of staff and the collaboration of the entire network of Cleanfarms partners, we prevailed.

Cleanfarms staff, industry members, retail and municipal collection sites, service contractors and end markets worked cooperatively, addressing changing needs for health and safety, while still providing collections of ag plastics across the country. Our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary was different than the year we imagined, but it still went into the record books as a year of achievements. Read on.

- ➔ In keeping with the maxim that you can't manage what you don't measure, we implemented a strategic plan to advance our knowledge and understanding of the kinds of non-organic waste generated on modern farms. Cleanfarms was awarded financial support from the Government of Canada through Environment and Climate Change Canada to complete a groundbreaking national study to quantify the types and volumes of on-farm plastic wastes and identify recycling facilities for recovered agricultural plastics across Canada.

## Cleanfarms Programs

### Materials Collected Since Inception (numbers rounded)

Pesticide and fertilizer containers (23L and under)	<b>137.4M containers</b>
Non-deposit bulk pesticide and fertilizer containers (23L to 1000L)	<b>247,000 drums and totes</b>
Empty seed, pesticide and fertilizer* bags, Eastern Canada	<b>1.95M kg</b>
Unwanted, old pesticides	<b>3.7M kg</b>
Old Livestock/equine medication	<b>52,000 kg</b>
Grain bags, ag-film and twine	<b>6.9M kg</b>

*\*Collected only in Quebec*

- Linked with learning more about how to manage on-farm plastic waste, we developed “Building a Zero-Plastic Waste Strategy for Agriculture” with three broad-based objectives – to build consensus on appropriate management, to identify current patterns of disposal, and to operate pilot programs across the country to assess best practices in ag waste management. The objectives are being partially funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s Canadian Agricultural Strategic Priorities Program (CASPP).
- A vital outcome of the pilots is to determine how waste ag plastics can be used as feedstock not just in recycling but in fueling the emerging circular economy that espouses maintaining the same or higher value uses for these recovered resources. To prepare for this evolution in ag plastic management, in 2020, Cleanfarms challenged farmers/producers to put extra effort into preparing materials properly for recycling.
- On a parallel path, we supported industry members to think through how they can make ag product packaging more sustainable. A Cleanfarms “Sustainable Packaging Committee” was constituted in 2020 to take on the task.
- With increased attention globally on the impact of single use packaging of all types, some provincial governments stepped up their discussions on extended producer responsibility (EPR) which would require industry to take responsibility for recovering and recycling packaging and products when consumers no longer have a use for them. These EPR, circular economy and engagement activities have increased dialogue among stakeholders around roles and responsibilities. This has given Cleanfarms valuable opportunities to talk about our voluntary roots and our “on-the-ground” operations, and share insights into how to shape stewardship programs that benefit all stakeholders and advance environmental goals.
- On that note, in 2020, Cleanfarms welcomed new members, adding bench strength to the work of voluntary stewardship programs, plus we began to lay the groundwork for a potential surge in membership as both Manitoba and Quebec moved closer to EPR policies covering agricultural products.



## Board of Directors 2020

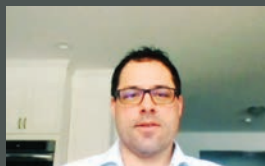
# Providing Programs that Help Farmers Keep Farms and Farm Communities Clean



**Brad Orr (Chair),**  
*Corteva Agriscience™*



**Phil Bailey,**  
*SeCan*



**Boyd Bergstrom,**  
*Nufarm Agriculture Inc.*



**Mei Chung-Lewis, IPCO**  
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**Trish Jordan**  
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**Howie Kroon**  
*The Boddker Group of Companies*



**Paul Lake**  
*Bio Agri Mix*



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**Fernando Olea**  
*Syngenta Canada*



**Pierre Petelle**  
*CropLife Canada*



**Lana Zdunich**  
*BASF Canada*



**Barry Friesen**  
*Executive Director, Cleanfarms*





# 2020 Program Operations Highlights

Due to COVID, some ag retailers in eastern Canada delayed opening from May until July when they opened with COVID precautions. In western Canada, collection site operators adopted social distancing practices that allowed most Cleanfarms programs to proceed cautiously. Despite these challenges, Cleanfarms staff and partners developed program momentum and kept it going.

- Cleanfarms continued to use traditional and digital media to build awareness of collection programs for small and large pesticide and fertilizer containers. This, combined with the promotion and education from ag retailers, encouraged farmers/producers to recycle properly prepared containers.
- The actual number of small containers returned topped 5.5 million. Due to the schedule for calculating the recovery rate, that information will be released later in 2021. The three-year average recovery rate for small containers reached 71% for the first time in 2019. The hope is a similar achievement will be realized in 2020.
- Producers returned 12% more large non-deposit pesticide and fertilizer totes and drums (23L to 1000L) in 2020 over 2019.
- The Saskatchewan grain bag recycling program operated by Cleanfarms saw tonnage returned double to 2,536 tonnes, an increase of 12.4%.
- The 'Alberta Ag-Plastic. Recycle It!' pilot expanded its collection locations for grain bags and baler twine to 32, up from 28.
- Cleanfarms completed year two of its three-year pilot in Quebec collecting a range of ag plastics to test collection, transportation and recycling best practices. The ground-breaking news in the Quebec pilot is the successful test of a silage and bale wrap press which received favourable reports.
- After Cleanfarms operated a pilot collection program for agricultural plastic waste in Manitoba, the provincial government asked us to transition the pilot to a permanent, province-wide program. We drafted a transition roadmap and conducted a stakeholder consultation. If Manitoba approves the plan, Cleanfarms will begin transitioning toward an extended producer responsibility funded program in 2021.
- Cleanfarms expanded its presence in western Canada when it located staff in Lethbridge, Alberta in early 2020. Cleanfarms staff are now located in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec.

# Pesticide and Fertilizer Small Container Recycling Program

## Jug Recycling Remains High – Edges Closer to 100%

Collecting and recycling empty, rinsed 23L and under single-use plastic pesticide and fertilizer jugs is the flag bearer of Cleanfarms' industry stewardship programs. In 2019, the program celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with recovery rates edging higher and for the first time breaking through the 70% ceiling. 2020 proved to be a solid year for small ag plastic containers, too.

Small jug recycling originated in 1989 when the pesticide industry voluntarily launched a fledgling recovery program in Alberta, earning recognition as one of the first packaging stewardship programs in Canada. Cleanfarms was founded in 2010 to assume responsibility for the program.

The complete picture of the 2020 recovery rate will be available later in 2021 but we do know now that the three-year rolling average calculation showed that producers reached a new high in 2019 returning 71% of the jugs, up from the previous average rate of 65%. Every jug counts.

## By the Numbers

In 2020


### Pesticide and Fertilizer Small Containers Collected for Recycling (23L and under)

**5.5M\* Small Containers (Jugs)**

1.5% more than 2019 \*rounded

### Small Containers Collected by Province

British Columbia	103,016
Alberta	1,222,334
Saskatchewan	2,305,527
Manitoba	316,387
Ontario	1,012,936
Quebec	443,255
Prince Edward Island	64,037
New Brunswick	52,684
Nova Scotia	26,903
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,547,079</b>



## **Curtis Construction Helped Write Cleanfarms' Small Container Recycling Story**

Rod Anderson

For three decades, Curtis Construction Ltd. has been making a quiet but critical contribution to Cleanfarms' agricultural pesticide and fertilizer small container recycling success story.



During that time, many thousands of tonnes of ag plastic have been picked up from collection sites throughout the west and transported to Curtis' Saskatchewan facility to be thoroughly washed and shredded so that the flakes can be re-manufactured into new products. It's that kind of historical connection that helped Cleanfarms continue with Curtis when it took over the small ag container recycling management program in 2010.

One thing leads to another in successful relationships, so when it came time for Cleanfarms to contract with a western Canada service company to manage the collection-through-shredding stages of its new programs for non-deposit large bulk containers for recycling and then seed, pesticide and inoculant bags for responsible, safe disposal, it was an easy decision to call Curtis.

"Every year, Curtis recycles more than 1,360 tonnes of ag plastic that if not for Cleanfarms' programs, farmers would have no option but to dispose of in landfill," said Curtis's Recycling Division General Manager, Rod Anderson. Curtis also manages the residue liquid from the washing process by shipping it to a hazardous waste facility for safe disposal. Through its recycling division, Curtis provides 40 jobs in the green sector, adding to the ag recycling industry's growing contribution to Canada's economy.

Not only is Curtis supplying a vital service to Cleanfarms, it also does the job adhering to the safety and environmentally protocols that are a necessary component of a Cleanfarms contract.

"Helping to protect the environment is something that the owners of Curtis Construction and our employees take pride in and we strive to improve each year," Anderson added. And that, too, is in perfect harmony with Cleanfarms' goals.



# Non-deposit Bulk Container Program

## Recovery Number Continues to Climb

Non-deposit bulk pesticide and liquid fertilizer containers are described as totes and drums that are used once and not refilled, and range in size from 23 litres to 1,000 litres. The use of these containers is growing more popular and the number returned to retailers continues to increase since Cleanfarms launched the Canada-wide recovery program in 2016 and the program matures.

### By the Numbers

In 2020

#### Non-deposit Bulk Containers Recovered

**62,000\* Totes and Drums**

Up 12% over 2019


\*rounded

#### Non-deposit Bulk Containers Recovered by Province

British Columbia (Peace Region)	132
Alberta	20,413
Saskatchewan	31,379
Manitoba	4,210
Ontario	4,358
Quebec	1,135
Maritimes	352

**Total 61,979**





## **RPM eco's Collection System Puts an Environmental Spin on 'No Touch'**



*Dominic Payette*

Cleanfarms promotes safety procedures that ensure people along the collection value chain understand responsible handling when it comes to empty containers and bags that held ag crop protection and nutrient products.

## **RPM ECO**

Nowhere are those safety precautions embraced as a business philosophy more than at RPM eco, a Montreal-based Cleanfarms' service contractor for the past five years that is processing plastic jugs and seed, pesticide and fertilizer bags.

RPM is a new breed of green tech recycling facility in the ag sector. It provides an integrated management system for recovered ag materials that applies a leading edge, proprietary, 'no-touch' process.

Once farmers put empty, rinsed plastic jugs in a collection bag, the jugs are never touched again by humans through the entire collection, transportation and processing stages. This ensures employees are fully protected, which is of paramount importance to RPM.

"We truly believe that we offer farmers, Cleanfarms and the ag industry peace of mind when it comes to safely managing these materials for recycling or disposal. Plus, our unique service takes materials a step further by recovering the inherent resources to be reused again. It's a partnership with farmers and Cleanfarms that contributes to sustainability and a circular economy," said Dominic Payette, RPM President.

RPM's processes focus on environmental health beyond its own doors, too. The company has an on-site treatment plant that collects industrial wastewater from neighbouring businesses. The clean water produced eliminates the need to use fresh drinking water to clean jugs.

"Our technologies, now industry standard, also ensure our product output is of the highest quality. The clean plastic flake we produce can be used to manufacture new products such as agricultural drainage tiles. That's an outcome we can all get behind," added Payette.

# Seed, Pesticide and Fertilizer Bags Collection Program



## Slight Dip in Recovery Numbers Could Be COVID Related

Managing farm-generated non-organic waste materials and managing COVID-19 restrictions may have intersected in early 2020 to result in a slight decrease in the recovery rates for seed and pesticide bags in Eastern Canada and fertilizer bags in Quebec.

2020 marked the fifth year seed and pesticide bags were collected for safe disposal in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. It was year two for collecting fertilizer bags in Quebec. The growing impact of the pandemic in the late winter of 2020 led to the decision to keep collection locations closed until July to ease requirements for collection site staff and producers and to ensure their safety.

Despite that, producers in these provinces came very close to matching previous recovery numbers.

In Western Canada, Cleanfarms had planned to launch the third year of a pilot for seed, pesticide and inoculant bags in the Prairie provinces; however, due to COVID-19 restrictions, this was postponed.

## By the Numbers

In 2020 – kg collected

### Seed, Pesticide and Fertilizer Bags Collected

**421,000\* kg**

**\*rounded**


### Seed, Pesticide and Fertilizer\*\* Bags Collected by Province

Prince Edward Island	9,079
Nova Scotia	359
New Brunswick	1,494
** Quebec (fertilizer bags collected only in Quebec)	265,445
Ontario	144,453

**Total kg**

**420,830**

2% decrease in kg 2020 over 2019



## **Dale Waddell's Contract Work with Cleanfarms is in 'the Bag'**

When a service contractor has been managing empty seed and pesticide bags for safe disposal over a 15-year span, he's definitely a valuable Cleanfarms' team member.

Raised on Prince Edward Island, Dale Waddell grew up in the agricultural sector. He developed a strong connection with the environment early on. His respect for agricultural crop protection products and their value in growing food is pragmatic, particularly when it comes to giving PEI producers peace of mind that bags are managed properly when they're empty.

In the Maritimes, producers take empty bags back to the ag retailers. Waddell's contract with Cleanfarms involves collecting the bags from ag retailers in Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and safely transporting them for disposal at high temperature incinerators with strict emission controls. One incinerator in PEI recovers energy to heat nearby buildings; the other in NS manufactures cement.

Waddell credits the ag retailers as the cogs in the Cleanfarms wheel that "make the program work". Without this service, producers in the Maritimes would have no environmentally responsible disposal options.

"The farming community sees this as a good program to protect the environment. They appreciate that it is industry-driven at no cost to them."

When it started, the program was ahead of its time and more progressive than what other provinces were doing.


Collecting empty bags for proper management actually started in PEI when the crop protection industry launched a pilot in 2006. Waddell operated that pilot, developing the collection system.

"I'm a firm believer in taking a cradle to grave approach to responsible waste management. Helping to develop this empty bag program has been rewarding. When it started, the program was ahead of its time and more progressive than what other provinces were doing," Waddell reflected.

For him, it's still more than just a job.

"When you and your family live here, breathe the air and drink the water, it feels good to know that we're being proactive to keep our environment healthy," he said.





# Unwanted Pesticides and Livestock/Equine Medications Collection Program

## Ag Retailers and Service Contractors Managed COVID-compliant Collection Events

As with all Cleanfarms producer-facing programs in 2020, COVID-19 challenged the annual collection of unwanted pesticides and old, obsolete livestock and equine medications. When it took place in the fall, Canada was in the second wave of the pandemic. Thanks to the excellent preparations of our retail partners who provided event locations, and our site supervisors and service contractors, the collections ran smoothly.

The unwanted pesticides and old, obsolete livestock and equine medications collection is an essential Cleanfarms program that improves the health and well-being of the environment by ensuring safe practices are used to manage obsolete and old pesticide and animal health products and packaging. This program gives producers peace of mind that these materials are disposed of responsibly, helping them to keep their farm properties clean.

Part of the plant science and animal health industries' commitment to responsible lifecycle management of their products, the program rotates to regions across Canada every three years. In 2014, Cleanfarms partnered with the Canadian Animal Health Institute (CAHI) to add old and obsolete livestock/equine medications to the program.

2020 key findings indicated that the majority of producers who brought materials were using the program for the first time. Much of the product was five to 10 years old. The only Canadian incineration plant licensed to accept these materials stopped accepting pesticide and farm medication waste in 2020; however, Cleanfarms quickly pivoted with service suppliers to re-route waste to approved US facilities.





## By the Numbers

In 2020

### Unwanted Pesticides Collected – kg recovered

British Columbia (Vancouver Island & Fraser Valley)	24,873
Saskatchewan (South)	183,844
Quebec	63,499
Prince Edward Island	25,911

<b>Total Pesticides Collected – kg</b>	<b>298,127</b>
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### Old Obsolete Livestock/Equine Medications Collected – kg recovered

British Columbia (Vancouver Island & Fraser Valley)	603
Saskatchewan (South)	949
Quebec	1,368
Prince Edward Island	469

<b>Total Old Obsolete Livestock/ Equine Medications Collected – kg</b>	<b>3,389</b>
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# Saskatchewan Provincially-Regulated Grain Bag Recycling Program

## 59% of Producers Report They Recycle Grain Bags

The provincially-regulated grain bag recycling program in Saskatchewan began operation in 2018 with more than 30 collection sites accepting used, empty bags for recycling. In that first year, producers returned 1,257 tonnes of empty, rolled bags. That was just the beginning.

Recovery numbers have been climbing ever since. By the end of 2020, the number of collection locations had swelled to more than 40 and the tonnes of used grain bag plastic returned has doubled to 2,536 tonnes since inception in 2018. Fifty-nine percent of producers reported they recycle grain bags.

Cleanfarms developed and operates this collection and recycling program on behalf of grain bag first sellers (companies that supply grain bags into Saskatchewan)

which are obligated to take operation and funding responsibility for the program under Saskatchewan's *The Agricultural Packaging Product Waste Stewardship Regulations, 2016*. To help cover collection and transportation costs to end markets for recycling, a non-refundable Environmental Handling Fee (EHF) applied at the time of purchase went into effect in November 2018. Recycled grain bags are made into new products such as plastic bags.

Growing producer participation in grain bag recycling prompted Cleanfarms to launch a pilot program in 2020 to recover used agricultural baler twine for recycling. Once again collection sites stepped forward to collaborate with Cleanfarms to keep this ag tool out of landfill when it is no longer useful. This pilot is funded in part by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Canadian Agricultural Strategic Priorities Program (CASPP).

## By the Numbers

In 2020

### Grain Bags Collected in Saskatchewan for Recycling

**2,536 Tonnes**

12.4% increase over 2019



# Manitoba Agricultural Plastics Recycling Pilot Program

## Cleanfarms Asked to Consider Options to Transition Pilot to Permanent Program

Cleanfarms has been conducting pilot programs in Manitoba to collect grain bags, silage wrap and baler twine for recycling since 2013. Under this government-funded pilot, Cleanfarms set out to determine and assess best practices for managing these agricultural waste plastics cost-effectively and to ensure the collected materials would be recycled into new products.

A highlight of 2020 was the province of Manitoba's decision to request that Cleanfarms consult with stakeholders and develop a roadmap to transition the pilot to a permanent, province-wide, financially self-sustaining agricultural recycling program.

Toward that end and despite COVID restrictions, Cleanfarms drafted and consulted on a stewardship program plan which, by the end of 2020, was nearing completion of the stakeholder consultation phase. The plan, if approved, will establish an industry funded

recycling program for used grain bags and agricultural baler twine that will be launched throughout the province beginning in 2021.

Engagement from grower groups suggest there is a keen interest among producers to manage plastic agricultural materials when they are no longer needed, continuing the momentum started by the pilots.

## By the Numbers

In 2020

**Grain Bags, Bale and Silage Wrap and Twine Collected in Manitoba for Recycling**

**38.4 Tonnes**

Down\* from 51 tonnes in 2019

*\* The decrease in tonnage likely the result of COVID restrictions and lower than usual spring volumes*



# Alberta Ag-Plastic. Recycle It! Pilot Program

## Pilot Will Point to Roll-out of Province-wide Recycling Program

2020 marked the second year of the three-year 'Alberta Ag-Plastic. Recycle It!' pilot program which collects agricultural grain bags and baler twine for recycling at 32 collection partners throughout the province. As this pilot got underway late in 2019, 2020 provided the first full year of data collection. It examines and assesses best practices in collecting these materials in Alberta and transporting them to markets, including domestic markets such as PolyAg Recycling Ltd., in Bashaw, Alberta and Crowfoot Plastics, near Hussar, Alberta (in partnership with Merlin Plastics).

Cleanfarms operates the three-year program with oversight by the multi-stakeholder Agricultural Plastics Recycling Group. Funds to administer and operate the pilots were provided by the Government of Alberta and are administered by Alberta Beef Producers. The objective is to develop a permanent province-wide program when the three-year pilot concludes.

### By the Numbers

In 2020

#### Alberta Ag-Plastic. Recycle It! Pilot Program

<b>Grain Bags Collected</b>	<b>505 Tonnes</b>
<b>Baler Twine Collected</b>	<b>18 Tonnes</b>







# Quebec Agricultural Plastics Recycling Pilot Program

## Year Two of the Pilot Assesses Time-saving Plastics Press

Cleanfarms' pilot program in Quebec entered its second year in 2020. It focused on identifying and assessing best practices at every step of the agricultural recycling process from preparations of on-farm plastics materials through collection, transportation and recycling, including cost efficiencies. The results were impressive.

In collaboration with five rural MRC (around 100 municipal regional counties) in the Montérégie Region, Cleanfarms set out to test best options to collect silage wrap and bale wrap for recycling or energy recovery.

A key test of year two assessed the operation of 24 on-farm presses which enabled producers to compress between

200 and 250 loose plastic silage and bale wrap into dense bales weighing an average of 450 kg. Producers who used the presses reported positive results noting the presses helped them improve how they handled the plastic, kept it cleaner and saved time. For example, on-farm presses reduced the number of trips producers had to make to the collection locations. Pre-baled plastic also helped reduce transportation costs.

Cleanfarms is grateful to the multiple participating stakeholders who helped this pilot to run smoothly and to Lynn Levitt of Prince Edward County, Ontario for his innovative foresight to create the press and sharing the invention with Cleanfarms.

In the third and final year of the pilot, Cleanfarms will expand the pilot across the province, generating data that will inform a potential extended producer responsibility program.

## By the Numbers

In 2020

**Plastic Film for Silage Bales and Hay Bales, Twine, Netting, Tarps and Silo Bags for Silage collected in Quebec**

**182.1 Tonnes Collected**

Compared to 40 tonnes in 2019



# Pilot Projects Across Canada Will Keep Plastics Out of the Environment

Some plastic agricultural materials such as baler twine and silage and bale plastic wrap are increasingly popular agricultural tools, but recycling opportunities have not kept pace with growing use. Cleanfarms aims to change that.

In 2020, we finalized our “Building a Zero-Plastic Waste Strategy for Agriculture”. It has three broad-based objectives:

- To build consensus on the appropriate management of non-organic agricultural waste;
- To survey farmers to establish current patterns of disposal before and after pilots and education programs; and
- To demonstrate best practices in ag waste management through pilot programs conducted throughout Canada.

One of the first projects to get off the ground was a grower survey which asked producers about current practices and attitudes toward disposal options for various types of agricultural plastic waste generated in their operations.

The survey provides important baseline data to measure uptake in upcoming pilot projects which will be available in Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. A baler twine collection pilot was launched in December in time for Saskatchewan’s winter-feeding season.

This work is funded in part by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s Canadian Agricultural Strategic Priorities Program (CASPP).

The outcome down the road will see producers be able to take items like silage plastic and bale wrap and twine, along with pesticide and fertilizer containers, grain bags and seed, pesticide and fertilizer bags to collection locations for recycling or safe disposal, helping them to manage their operations more sustainably and returning valuable resource materials to a circular economy.

Another important component of the initiative to develop a national strategy for zero waste in the agricultural sector in 2020 involved quantifying the volume and types of waste used in different farming sectors and identifying recycling end markets. Cleanfarms will use this essential information in future projects to help identify the types of materials to be assessed for potential recycling. The Government of Canada through the Department of Environment and Climate Change provided funding support for this research.



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