



2020/2021 British Columbia Farmer Survey Synopsis

In the fall of 2020, Cleanfarms commissioned market research that surveyed 64 British Columbian farmers. The primary purpose of the survey was to benchmark agricultural plastic (ag plastic) disposal practices and gain insights into attitudes towards their disposal. These metrics will allow Cleanfarms to evaluate the effectiveness of its multi-phased [Building a Zero Plastic Waste Strategy for Agriculture](#) initiative.

This document highlights findings that are most relevant to the execution and evaluation of Cleanfarms-led pilots targeting plastic baler twine and silage plastics (includes bale wrap, and silage bags, tarps/covers), collectively called ‘pilot materials.’ These pilots were launched in the summer of 2021. Data related to pesticide and fertilizer containers (PF Containers) is provided for comparative purposes.

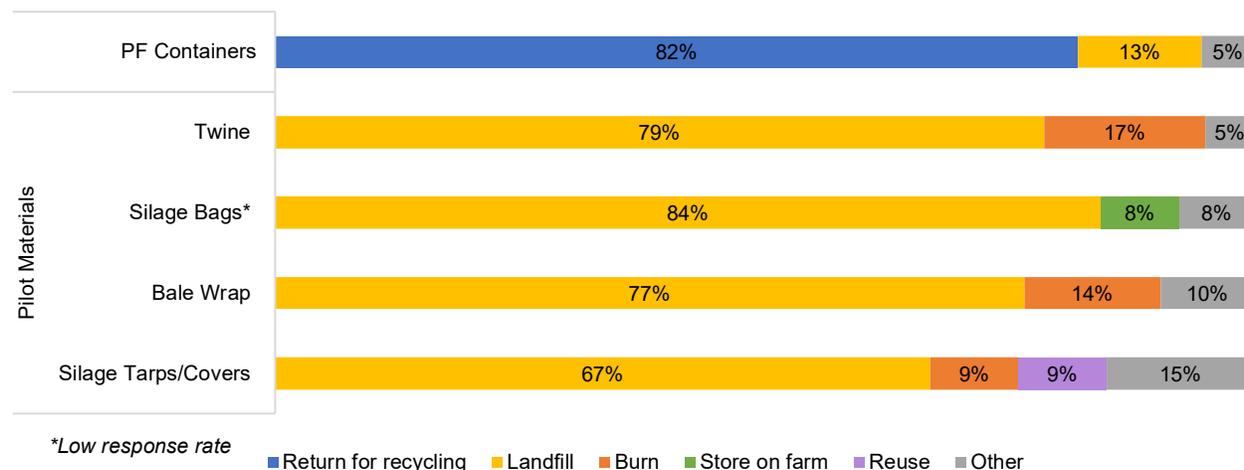
Methods of disposal

Farmers were asked to identify the ways they dispose of various types of ag plastics. Figure 1 displays select results which will help determine future farmer uptake in pilots.

Key findings & analysis:

- Farmers primarily dispose of pilot materials through landfilling.
- Recycling is the top disposal method for PF Containers.
- Disposal habits likely reflect the availability of recycling programs.

Figure 1: Top methods of disposal for select ag plastics



Satisfaction with the most common method of disposal

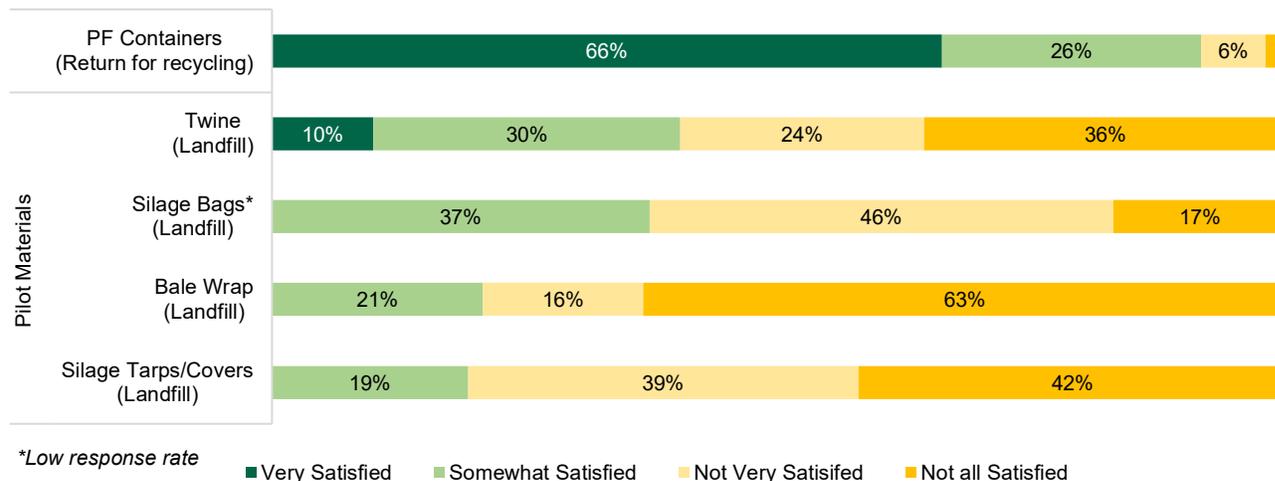
Farmers were then asked to rate how satisfied they were with the methods of disposal that they used. Figure 2 displays satisfaction levels with the most common method of disposal (shown in parentheses).

Key findings & analysis:

- Farmers report dissatisfaction with landfilling and most other disposal methods.
- Farmers report very high levels of satisfaction with recycling PF Containers.
- Dissatisfaction with landfilling and other disposal methods* may indicate a willingness to change disposal methods.

*Note: Figure 2 displays results for the most common method of disposal only. Farmers did not report high levels of satisfaction with any other methods of disposal noted in Figure 1.

Figure 2: Satisfaction with the most common method of disposal



Likelihood to participate in pilots

Respondents were given a description of how pilots generally operate, i.e., farmers separate and prepare ag plastics on farm to minimize contamination before bringing them to a collection site. They were then asked for feedback.

Key findings & analysis:

- Farmers expressed an appetite in taking part in recycling initiatives for pilot materials.
- Accessibility (distance to a collection sites), ease of disposal/transportation, convenience and associated costs are factors that might limit participation.

A very high percentage (93%) of twine users are very or somewhat likely to participate in the pilot if there was a collection site in their area. This figure is 84% for silage plastics.

Longer term outlooks

The empty pesticide and fertilizer container recycling program is a province-wide, permanent (available every season & easily accessible) recycling program. This type of mature, stable recycling program is currently not available for pilot materials. Farmers were probed on their positions related to the roll out and financing of potential permanent programs for pilot materials.

Key findings & analysis:

- Farmers expressed very strong support for recycling programs. At the same time there is strong opposition for farmers covering associated costs.

- There is very strong farmer support for making recycling programs for pilot materials available on a permanent basis, with 98% of twine and 100% of silage plastics users being either very or somewhat supportive.

Next steps

To access the full results of this survey, please [contact us](#). Another farmer survey will likely be commissioned towards the end of this project to help evaluate the pilots and gauge if farmer attitudes towards ag plastic disposal have changed.