



2020/2021 Saskatchewan Farmer Survey Synopsis

In the fall of 2020, Cleanfarms commissioned market research that surveyed 413 Saskatchewan 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 projects 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 fall of 2020 and spring of 2021. Data related to existing, permanent recycling programs for empty pesticide and fertilizer containers (PF Containers) and grain bags is provided for comparative purposes.

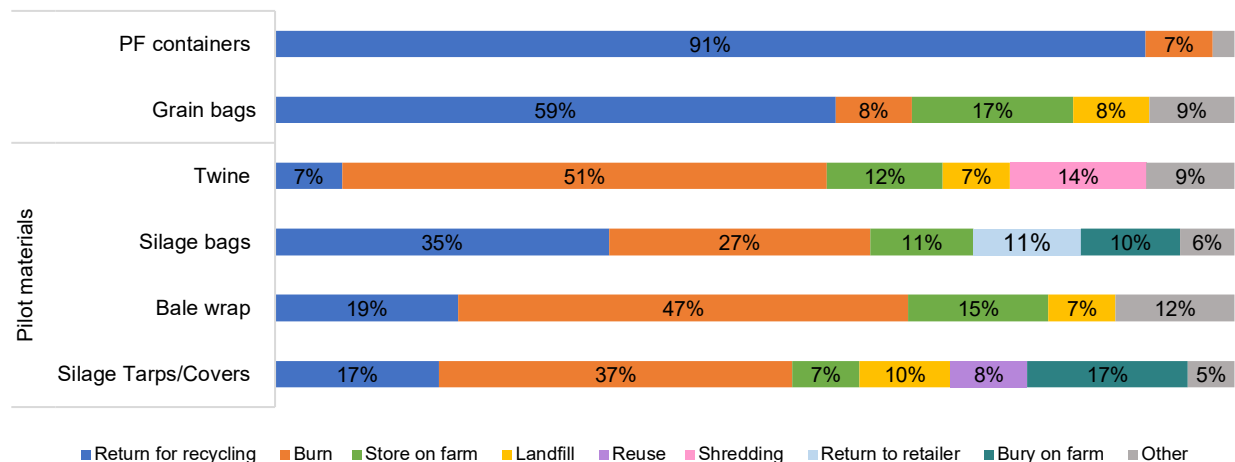
Methods of disposal

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

Key findings & analysis:

- Recycling is the top disposal method for PF Containers and grain bags.
- Disposal habits likely reflect the availability and maturity of permanent recycling programs.
- There is a lot of variation in disposal methods for pilot materials.
- Recycling is frequently used to dispose of silage bags. This may indicate that farmers are using a permanent recycling program for grain bags to recycle silage bags.

Figure 1: Top methods of disposal for select ag plastics



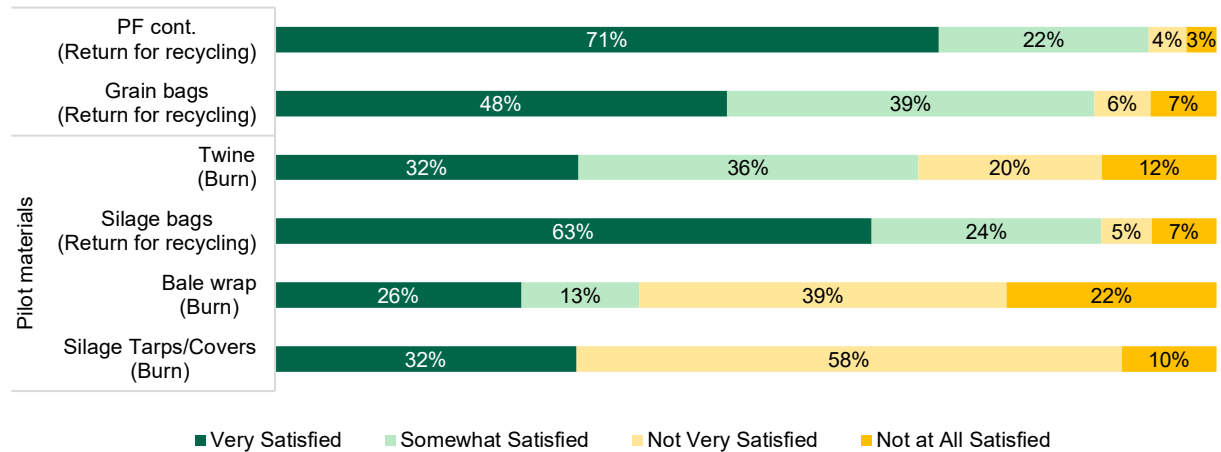
Satisfaction with methods of disposal

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 very high levels of satisfaction with recycling PF Containers and high levels of satisfaction with grain bag & silage bag recycling.
- Farmers reported dissatisfaction with the disposal of bale wrap or silage tarps/covers through burning.
- Farmers are moderately satisfied disposing of twine through burning.

Figure 2: Satisfaction with the most common method of disposal



Likelihood to participate in pilots

Respondents were given a description of pilots under development, i.e., farmers separate and prepare materials on farm to minimize contamination before bringing ag plastics 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 (i.e., distance to collection sites), expected need for sorting and transportation, and associated costs are factors that might limit participation.

- 70% 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 72% 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 twine and silage plastics. Farmers were probed on their positions related to potential permanent programs and financing of recycling programs.

Key findings & analysis:

- Farmers expressed 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 85% of twine and 93% 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 plastics have changed.