

## **Taking a few extra moments to store or dispose of those farm plastics well**

Spring is a busy time of the year on any farm, and a time when increasing volumes of agri-chemicals are purchased and stored.

### **The Haz Shed**

Is your storage shed lockable and secure, large enough to allow for segregation of incompatible chemicals, and your shed clearly marked with NO Smoking and HAZCHEM 2WE agrichemical sign?

When placing the chemicals within the store, to reduce risks and spills place

- Large liquid containers on the floor
- Powders, granules and other dry formulations above liquids
- Vaccines and other heat sensitive products in the fridge

Always keep

- Insecticides and fungicides away from herbicides
- Drenches away from dips
- Fumigants away from other chemicals

Always store the following in a separate building from agrichemicals

- Fertilisers
- Fuels and lubricants
- Any animal or human foodstuffs
- Explosives

HSNO Emergency Management Regulations require that an accurate record must be kept and that this information must be available within 10 minutes.

## **What to do with those empty Agri-chemical containers**

Triple rinse or power wash all containers disposing of the rinsings in the tank so all the chemical is used for the intended purpose. (see Section 6 Growsafe Manual for other options) Then puncture the container three times - on each side and bottom of the container works the best as it provides every opportunity for any residual water to drain.

## **To bury or to burn farm plastics**

On farm burning and burying of plastics, including balage wrap creates air quality problems as they release greenhouse gases, and cause air acidification. When plastic silage wrap is burnt on-farm with other combustible material, the plastic wrap gives off dense black smoke and toxic gases, such as formaldehyde and acrolein. Do not burn other plastics with balage wrap at the same time.

The plastic film needs to be as clean and dry as possible and fed progressively into the fire that should be up to 600 C. The fire should not be smothered with wrap and tyres should not be used to aid the burn.

On-farm burning overall has the greatest negative effect on the environment and is not recommended.

Air quality issues also come from the use of diggers etc to dig holes to bury the plastic. It is calculated that if you cost in all the time capital and operational costs, burying the plastics it is also a very expensive operation. Burial on-farm is not such a

good option because, unless the plastic is tightly packed and buried deep, it has a tendency to work its way to the surface within a year or two. This creates problems of unsightly plastic blowing loose around the farm and the possibility of stock ingesting it.

Landfilling of waste farm plastics, using existing transfer stations and landfills, has the least adverse effects on the environment.

One of the best alternatives for farmers is to tightly pack the plastic wrap into bales and transport them to an approved public landfill site for deep burial.

Recycling plastic wrap is not a viable option in New Zealand although work on a national disposal/levy scheme is currently being investigated.

It is thought that a levy in excess of \$377/tonne balage wrap (LDPE) film and \$0.51 per 20-litre container (HDPE) would be required. At this level, the levy option is substantially more costly than the alternative option of disposal to landfill.

Timeliness of operation is the key to disposing of farm plastics. When a container is empty take an extra minute at the time to rinse, puncture, and place for disposal. With used balage wrap, pick it up straight away to prevent excessive contamination, wrap it into a tight bale and place in a dry area for disposal at a later date at the landfill/transfer station. Just a few extra minutes a day dealing with used farm plastics can make life so much easier than dealing with it a later date when it's wet, mucky and an eyesore on the farm.



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