

Agricultural Sector – The safe storage and collection of low grade plastic waste

The issue

Due to recent changes in the global markets for waste plastics, we are aware that domestic operators of dedicated farm plastic collection schemes have come under pressure and there are no longer dedicated collection schemes for farm plastics.

As a result, there is an emerging concern from the agricultural sector, farm assurance schemes, land users and fisheries groups regarding the appropriate storage and collection of low grade plastic wastes from farms.

There is unsubstantiated evidence that low grade plastics from the agricultural sector are being stockpiled on farms (pending a change in the market) and are not being stored properly resulting in windblown litter in the countryside and in water courses.

Purpose of Brief

To assist the agricultural sector in understanding the requirements for storage and the appropriate methods for ensuring this waste is managed properly.

Sources of Low Grade Agricultural Plastics

Low grade plastics are often used on farms for the following purposes: wrapping for silage, hay and straw bales, crop coverage and poly tunnels etc

They can take the form of a plastic film or a netting.

How do I store my waste at my farm?

You can store this material using waste exemptions, some of which don't need to be registered. These are called Non- Waste Framework Directive (NWFd) exemptions. These are appropriate when temporarily storing it at the place where it's produced before collection.

Although you don't have to register these exemption, you must still comply with the terms and conditions of the exemption.

- **Temporary Storage at place of production**

You can:

- only store waste in a secure place at the place of production
- carry out some treatments on the waste to help with storage and collection

These treatments are only to make waste you have produced easier to store and collect for recovery or disposal somewhere else.

The treatments must not result in a change in the characteristics of the waste. Treatment must be purely to help with transport or collection of different wastes. For example: baling the plastic.

The waste must:

- be stored in a secure place
- not be stored for longer than 12 months

- **Temporary storage at a place controlled by the producer**

If you are a farmer with several farms you can collect up the farm plastics and temporarily store these at one location. This exemption does not allow you to collect waste produced on other farms not under your control.

The main conditions of this exemption are:

- There are specified quantities for solids and liquids – for solids its 50m³
- Any waste stored must remain separate – not mixed
- You cannot store any waste for longer than 3 months

More information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/waste-exemptions-storing-waste>

If you cannot comply with these then you may need to register S1/S2 exemptions. You may have already registered these for your farm. For more information on these exemptions and how to register go to:

<https://naturalresources.wales/permits-and-permissions/waste/register-your-waste-exemptions/?lang=en>

Can I dispose of my waste on the farm?

No, the waste must be collected by a registered waste carrier and taken to a site that either has a registered waste exemption or Environmental permit to store or treat waste or a waste permit that allows this type of waste.

You must not bury or burn any plastic waste on a farm. This is an offence.

How do I get my farm plastics collected?

If you are getting someone else to transport your waste, then they must be a waste carrier with a valid registration (please note that lower tier carriers can transport agricultural waste). You can find registered waste carriers here:

<https://naturalresources.wales/permits-and-permissions/check-for-a-permit-licence-or-exemption/?lang=en>.

You can also transport the waste yourself if you have registered as a lower tier carrier, this is simple to do and cost-free. You can register here:

<https://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/permits-and-permissions/waste/register-as-a-waste-carrier-broker-or-dealer/?lang=en>