

## New Changes For Plastic Film Recycling in Ireland

- New ownership structure and board appointed
- 9,500 tonnes recycled in 2003, 32% increase on 2002
- Calls on Farmers to check if plastic suppliers are paying for recycling
- Non compliant film suppliers put recycling at risk

(13.04.04) The Irish Farm Films Producers Group (IFFPG), has announced major changes to the organization which were ratified at the recent EGM in the Green Isle Hotel. The IFFPG scheme is now a wholly Irish company and will now be operated by the IFA, producers and suppliers of plastic film in Ireland.

The EGM, which was attended by leading producers and suppliers of Farm Film from around Europe and members of the IFA, formulated a number of changes to the previous scheme to ease the collection of material from farmers and also to tackle the issue of non compliant suppliers of plastic film, who pay nothing for the recycling of plastic film.

The scheme has enjoyed considerable success with over 9,500 tonnes recycled in 2003. This is an increase of 32% on 2002 and is 36% over the government target. The nationwide scheme has been operated since 1997 by IFFPG, with Farm Relief Service operating as collecting agents and Repak acting as management agents. To date over 33,000 tonnes of plastic film have been diverted from landfill.

### Quality of Service to Farmers

This year the organisation will take a number of steps to enhance the quality of the service it offers to farmers. In order to help plan collections better and give farmers a clearer idea of collection dates, farmers are asked to contact the free phone number on **1800 300 444** as early as possible. When calling to register for collection farmers need to give the details of the **amounts for collection and their respective herd number**. This information will facilitate the identification of collection routes and allows the organization to more clearly give farmers a better idea of when to expect a collection of their used farm plastics. Another key change to the scheme for 2004 is that farmers are being asked to keep separate their pit cover sheet plastic and their bale plastic. Pit cover plastic should be brushed clean and kept in a neat bundle separately but beside bale wrap plastic.

### Threats to the Scheme

One of the most serious threats to the recycling of farm film in Ireland is the number of plastic film suppliers who are not paying the recycling levy for the material they sells to farmers, thereby undermining the viability of the collection

scheme. By law all producers and suppliers of farm plastics are required to either join IFFPG (to whom the levy is paid) or to operate their own independent collection scheme (deposit & refund). The organization is calling on all farmers to only purchase plastic film from IFFPG accredited suppliers. As the scheme becomes more successful and recycles additional tonneages of plastic film (which would otherwise end up in landfill) the practice of non-compliance will jeopardise the collection scheme. Last year the cost of collection and recycling of farm plastics throughout the country led to a deficit in the scheme due to the cost of handling plastic from non accredited companies, which did not pay the legally compulsory levy. Farmers can ensure that their suppliers are paying for the recycling of the material by:

1. Checking if they are members of IFFPG  
or
2. Asking for details of their own deposit and refund scheme, where the supplier must collect and organise for the recycling of the plastic, independently of IFFPG.

New and greater enforcement procedures are in place and non compliant companies will be pursued vigorously by Local Authorities for prosecution. It is estimated that up to half of the plastic recycled was from companies who have not paid the levy. According to the organization this could put the future of the scheme in question, which could add additional cost to farmers for the disposal of farm film.

Speaking at the EGM Micheal Slattery Chairman said "The practice of suppliers not paying the appropriate levy will no longer be tolerated and we will work closely with the Local Authorities and Supplier to ensure this practice is stamped out "

### **About the Legislation**

Irish Legislation places obligations on manufacturers, importers and suppliers of farm plastics to arrange for the collection and recovery of used plastic film. The Irish Farms Films Plastic Group scheme was established in 1997, and formalised under the Waste Management (Farm Plastics) Regulations, 1997 – S.I. No. 315 of 1997, updated I 2001.

Under the regulations producers of farm films are obliged to:

Operate a deposit and refund scheme for collection/recovery of waste farm plastic put on market, to register and submit returns to Local Authorities in whose areas they provide plastic for sale.

Or

Alternatively participate in collection/recovery scheme operated by IFFPG, which is the sole government approved body under the regulations.

For each roll sold an E.P.C. (Environmental Protection Contribution) is paid directly to IFFPG. This fund is then used by IFFPG to pay for the collection, storage, bailing and recycling of used silage packaging.

To register with IFFPG suppliers should call 01 4578200.  
For collection farmers should contact  
Farm Film Recovery Hotline: **Freephone 1800 300 444**

For further information please contact:  
Eoin Kennedy,  
Slattery Communications,  
Tel: 353-1-6614055, 353-86-8669540