

PRESS RELEASE

UK FARM PLASTIC COLLECTION SCHEME GOES NATIONAL

APE UK [Agriculture, Plastics & Environment UK] is pleased to announce that a new industry-led National Collection Scheme for used non-packaging agri-plastics is now operating across all regions of the UK.

2,800 tonnes have already been collected and recycled, with almost all collectors of farm plastics contributing to the APE scheme. Farmers now have an environmentally responsible solution for their used non-packaging agri-plastics.

The scheme is not subject to the new packaging plastic tax¹ due to come into force in April 2022. All the benefits of the non-profit Scheme are retained within the Plasticulture community and all stakeholders are invited to share in its governance. All agricultural businesses have equal access to the Scheme which operates under the principles of Extended Producer Responsibility and encourages the market to operate freely so as to ensure a cost-effective service is provided to all.

The Environmental Protection Contribution (EPC) of £20/tonne, applied on sales of new products in 2020 by the major manufacturers of agri-plastics who represent 80% of all non-packaging agri-plastics placed on the market, is now contributing to the cost of collecting and recycling them after use, in 2021.

A list of collectors and Regional Collection Managers (RCMs) will be published in agriculture and horticulture media over the next week or so and a location map will be uploaded onto a new APE website, www.ape-uk.com (est. mid-June).

APE expects to collect 17kt in 2021, 30kt in 2022, with a target of 65kt (70% of all used non-packaging agri-plastics) by 2025. But there is still much to do and no doubt there will be some areas of the UK not yet covered by the Scheme. APE invites all farmers and growers, who may not yet have a local collector, to contact their RCM. If a local collector is not available, APE will work with the RCM to set up another solution, such as a bring centre, collection site or maybe even a local municipal site².

Even with the best will in the world, an EPC of £20/tonne cannot pay everyone for everything, collectors still need to charge for their services. The contributions made by APE should allow fees to reduce over time.

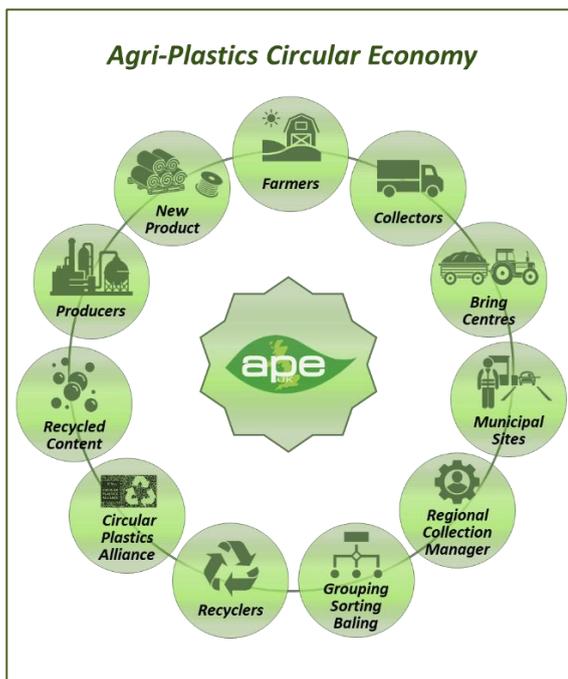
APE aims to increase the quantity of used agri-plastics collected and also their quality: “*leave the soil in the field.*” A new *Farmers Handbook* on how farmers can help will be available via the APE website soon.

UK Collections - 2021

Used Non-Packaging Agri-Plastics
(tonnes)

Region	Total
England	1,050
N. Ireland	236
Scotland	1,248
Wales	331
Total	2,865

Source: APE UK



The economies of scale gained by collecting, grouping, sorting and preparing much larger quantities on a far larger scale should attract new investment in much needed recycling capacity, especially since the supply chain will be more sustainable, consistent and reliable.

APE expects the demand for used agri-plastics to increase, as the pellets produced by recyclers will be sought after by the manufacturers who, as signatories to the EC Circular Plastics Alliance (CPA)³, are committed to increase the % of recycled content in new products.

Farmers, growers, retailers, distributors, co-ops, collectors, recyclers and manufacturers, are aligned in reducing the environmental impact of agricultural production, sharing a common objective: “Zero plastics left in the field, 100% recycled,” enabling complete circularity in the Agri-Plastics Circular Economy for a cleaner environment for everyone.

APE thanks everyone for their commitment to this Herculean task and for everyone’s patience.

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¹ UK Govt Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced in the 2020 Budget that all packaging plastics containing less than 30% recycled content will be taxed at £200 per tonne from April 2022. APE Europe lobbies Govts. both in UK and in Brussels to recognise the unique role played by non-packaging agri-plastics in agricultural production, without which 60% of Europe’s food production would be at risk, seriously compromising the security of Europe’s food production.

² Pilot operations are being considered in Wales to permit pre-segregated used farm plastics to be dropped off at dedicated zones at suitable landfill sites for collection by APE for recycling; potentially the first such development of its kind anywhere in the UK, with special thanks to the **Welsh Government Depts** of: Resource Efficiency and the Circular Economy; Waste Resource Efficiency; Agriculture - Sustainable Development; Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs.

³ The **EC Circular Plastics Alliance (CPA)** is a commitment by signatories to incorporate 10 million tonnes of used plastics in new products, thereby increasing the demand and value of collected used plastics. https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/circular-plastics-alliance_en