



PRESS RELEASE

Tonnes of plastic recycled by Somerset farmers

100,000t of waste is produced by UK agriculture per year, and with the ever-increasing worry of the new waste regulations looming, are farmers beginning to scratch their heads and ask 'so what's the alternative?'

Well the answer is probably yes, but farmers in Somerset are some of the fortunate ones, that do have an option other than burning, burying (soon to be prohibited) and landfill, thanks to a scheme that has been set up by FWAG (Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group) with support from Steering Group members NFU, CLA, Somerset Agricultural Advisory Service, Environment Agency, Defra, Somerset Wildlife Trust and Somerset County Council.

269 farmers delivered a massive **320t** (approx) of plastic to one of 13 designated collection sites that operated across the county during April and May 2005. 'The numbers far exceeded our anticipated attendance, which is fantastic' says Emma Parris of FWAG, 'which just goes to prove the demand from farmers for such a responsible scheme to continue. The whole aim of the scheme is to offer farmers a sensible alternative when the new regulations come in'.

Farmers were asked to deliver certain types of plastic only, at a charge of £20/load, the full cost of recycling the plastic is much higher and therefore additional funding has been sourced from Exmoor National Park, Leader+ Levels & Moors, Mendip AONB, Mendip Strategic Partnership, South Somerset Together, Somerset County Council, WRAP and the Quantock AONB.

The waste was then collected and baled by Wyvern Waste, and transported to the re-processor in South Wales. It will then be washed and turned back into pellet form, which will be re-sold back into the plastics market.

Emma Parris says 'we are going to repeat this scheme across the county in winter 2005/06 (giving farmers the opportunity to clear supplies half way through the winter). Ensuring that farmers keep the different plastic types separate is critical to the future of the scheme. **Tyres, netting, string etc. must be separated, and the easiest time to do this is when the silage bale is opened. Trying to keep the plastic as dry and as clean as possible is also very important.'**

For further details of the scheme please contact Emma Parris at FWAG on 01823 355427 or email somerset@fwag.org.uk



Photo: Some of the 320 tonne of plastic recycled by 269 Somerset farmers.