

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES
COMMITTEE BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY, 9th NOVEMBER 2004

Question

Waste Management (Farm Plastics) Regulations 1997 (No. 315 of 1997) came into operation on 1st August 1997 in the European Union, imposing an obligation on importers and manufacturers of farm plastic to arrange for their collection and recovery. Companies or persons placing farm plastic on the market have a choice of how to discharge the obligation imposed; they can do so individually or by directly undertaking the requirements of the Regulation or collectively by joining a body approved on the basis that it will pursue agreed waste recovery objectives.

Would the President advise members –

- (a) how farm potato plastic is recovered in Jersey including bale wrap and bale bags for silage?
- (b) what percentage is recovered annually?
- (c) in Jersey, does the onus fall on the importers or manufacturers to arrange for collection and recovery, as in the EU, and if so, how do they discharge this obligation? If not, is this undertaken by the Committee and do the importers or manufacturers reimburse the Committee for this work?

Answer

- (a) Waste polythene crop cover is currently rolled onto plastic cores by growers and delivered to Bellozanne. The material is then shredded, baled and loaded onto trailers for export to British Polythene Industries' (BPI) reprocessing factory in Dumfries.

The BPI plant specialises in dealing with heavily soiled plastic waste and recycling it into granules which are sold as raw materials for the plastics manufacturing industry.

Other types of waste farm plastic such as bale wrap, bags and heavy duty plastic sheeting used for poly tunnels are incompatible for recycling with the crop cover. This material is also received at Bellozanne where it is received in relatively small quantities and is shredded and blended with other waste before being incinerated with energy recovery.

- (b) The Committee does not have access to actual figures for all types of farm plastics imported but estimates that between 600 and 800 tonnes of crop cover plastic is imported annually. In a typical year between 500 and 600 tonnes are received at Bellozanne processed and exported for recycling.

Exports for recycling in recent years	
2002	534 T
2003	142 T (price increase led to reduced deliveries)
2004 (to date)	454 T

On this basis an estimated 80% of crop cover is recycled through the Public Services scheme. It is assumed that growers manage the remainder themselves.

Specific records are not kept for the quantity of other types of agricultural plastics delivered to Bellozanne although technically 100% of this waste is 'recovered' through the energy from waste plant.

- (c) In Jersey there is currently no obligation for importers or manufacturers of plastics used in agriculture to recover or contribute financially to the costs of managing this waste. Following a decision by the then Public Services Committee in October 2002, a gate fee was introduced at Bellozanne for the disposal of agricultural crop cover of £188 per tonne. The fee was subsequently reduced to £158 per tonne in August 2003, following successful negotiations with the reprocessor. On this basis growers currently cover the costs of recycling this material.

The Waste Management (Farm Plastics) Regulations came into force in Ireland in 1997. The legislation was introduced by the Irish Government to promote the recycling of agricultural plastics. There is no specific EU Directive requiring this legislation to be introduced by Member States. No such obligation on producers or importers exists in the UK and waste agricultural plastics are not covered by the *Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997*, as most agricultural plastics such as crop cover do not fall under the definition of packaging.

The principle of introducing a levy on polythene crop cover imported into the Island thereby placing a financial responsibility on importers, and subsequently their customers, to cover the costs of recycling this material, was proposed in 2002 by the then Public Services Committee but rejected by the Finance and Economics Committee of the time due to concerns over high administrative costs for collecting such a levy.