Best Management Practices to Keep Plastic Clean Enough to Recycle

- **AVOID MUD** and **MANURE** as much as possible. Don’t run tractor over plastic. Locate silage bags and bales on a concrete pad, asphalt, or on high, dry ground.

- **CUT FILM BEFORE REMOVING SILAGE.** Cut into pieces of size and weight one person can handle.

- **SHAKE** or **BRUSH OFF** forage, soil, stones.

- **ROLL** or **FOLD DRY FILM** into bundles about the size of a large pillow (2’x 3’). Stored film must be dry!

- **SEPARATE DIFFERENT PRODUCTS** and **TYPES.** Do not mix different products in one bale (e.g., separate bale wrap from silage bags and bunker covers; twine or bale net from bale wrap, etc.). Separate cleaner film from dirtier. No PVC accepted.

- **CHEMICAL CONTAINERS:** Triple rinse to clean. See Ag Container Recycling Council (ACRC) website: [www.acrecycle.org](http://www.acrecycle.org).

- **STORE UNDER COVER:** Keep clean and dry as possible — e.g., store on pallets in a barn, trailer, hay wagon or outside under a tarp.

- **BALING:** Make 1000 – 1200 lb bale. Label with permanent marker: type of material, date, contact/phone/location.
Developing infrastructure and markets for waste film and rigid plastics from dairy, livestock and horticulture.
RAPP is a collaboration of Cornell University with agriculture producers and agriculture, environment, economic development and solid waste/recycling agencies, organizations and businesses.

What are Agricultural Plastics?
Plastics have taken the place of the longer lasting and/or natural materials that used to be widely used on farms. Many of these substitutions make good sense: Plastics are often safer to use, improve production efficiency, cost less, and permit more flexibility in management than the concrete silos, glass greenhouses, silo twine and other products and packaging they replace.

How Do Farmers Get Rid of Ag Plastics?
Some used ag plastics are hauled to a solid waste transfer station or landfill. Much of the rest is either left in the fields, plowed into the ground, or burned in an open fire.

Burning “ag plastics” in an open fire generates high levels of dangerous, polluting emissions (including particulates that settle in the lungs) and extremely toxic dioxins that can deposit on food and feed and enter the food chain. Stashing waste plastic on the farm can clog water channels, be a choking hazard for livestock and wildlife, and create breeding habitat for mosquitoes and rodents. And it is not pretty.

Biodegradable plastics are rarely a feasible alternative to conventional ag plastic products and recycling has not been a viable option for most types of ag plastic products and recycling has not been a viable option for most types of ag

Recycling Ag Plastics Project Goal: Recycling!
It isn’t an easy goal to achieve because ag plastics are typically dirtier than other used plastics. They are also bulky and widely dispersed across the rural landscape, adding complexity and cost to collection.

To jump these hurdles, RAPP is facilitating a national dialog about product stewardship of agricultural plastics.

Ag plastic recycling is still in an experimental phase, but recycling projects are being implemented in several regions of NYS and elsewhere. Contact regional or statewide project leaders to get involved:

- **NY-Capital District**: David Cox, Schoharie Co CCE (dcgc23@cornell.edu, 518-234-4033)
- **NY-Lake Champlain Watershed District**: Steve Mahoney, SWCD Clinton Co and Anne Barlow, CCE Clinton Co (smahoney@tny.nacdnet.net, 518-561-4616 or alb26@cornell.edu, 518-561-7450)
- **NY-North County West**: Chanda Lindsay, St Lawrence/Black River RCD (Chanda.Lindsay@ny.usda.gov, 315-782-7289 x129)
- **NY-Southern Tier**: Diane Fiorentino, SWCD Chemung (dfinorentino@tntny.com, 607-739-2009)
- **Vermont**: Annie MacMillan, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets (anne.macmillan@state.vt.us, 802-828-3479)
- **Other New England**: Northeast Waste Management Officials’ Association (agplastics@newmoa.org)
- **Local Contact**: Jason Cuddeback, SWCD Cayuga Co. (jcuddeback@cayugaswcd.org, 607-255-1471)

**Recycling Ag Plastics Project (RAPP)**
- Department of Communication
- Cornell University
- 311 Kennedy Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853

Office: 607.255.4765. Mobile: 607-216-7242. Email: envrisk@cornell.edu

**How Do Farmers Get Rid of Ag Plastics?**

- **Bundled**
- **Separated**
- **Covered**
- **Dry**
- **Clean**

**Criteria for Evaluating Quality of Plastic Submitted for Recycling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>UNACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>FAIR</th>
<th>GOOD: BMPS FOLLOWED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clean</td>
<td>Some debris</td>
<td>Clean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry</td>
<td>Moist</td>
<td>Dry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covered</td>
<td>Inadequate cover</td>
<td>Covered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundled</td>
<td>Bundles too big</td>
<td>Appropriate-size bundles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>Some mixing of different types, but separation feasible</td>
<td>No inappropriate mixing of different kinds of plastic</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**AG PLASTICS INCLUDE**
- DAIRY SILAGE BAGS • BUNKER SILO COVERS • BALE WRAP • BALE NET • POLYTUBE • MAPLE TUBE • IRRIGATION DRIP TAPE & TUBES
- GREENHOUSE & HOOPHOUSE COVERS • HIGH TUNNELS • NURSERY POTS & PLUG TRAYS • MULCH & FUMIGATION FILMS • TARPS • BIRD NETTING • PESTICIDE & DRY CHEMICAL CONTAINERS • SEED, FEED & FERTILIZER BAGS • LOW TUNNELS • ROW COVERS • BEE HIVE BODIES & FRAMES • AQUACULTURE SUPPLIES •