



# Proposed product stewardship regulations: Agrichemicals, their containers, and farm plastics

## Discussion document summary

We are seeking your views on proposed regulations to enable a national take-back and recycling scheme for agrichemicals, their containers, and farm plastics. This document summarises the proposed options. For further details, we recommend you read the full discussion document.

## Scope

We are consulting on regulations covering a subset of the products declared as a priority<sup>1</sup> under the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 (WMA), listed below.

### In-scope products

- agrichemicals sold in plastic containers and drums of 1,000 litres or less (including household pest and weed control products)
- plastic bale wrap and silage sheet
- small plastic bags (40 kilograms or less when full) containing products such as seed, feed, fertiliser, soil and crop inputs, farm and animal supplements
- bulk woven polypropylene bags (over 40 kilograms when full) containing products such as seed, feed, fertiliser, soil amendments, minerals and bulk nutrition.

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<sup>1</sup> New Zealand Government. 2020. *New Zealand Gazette*. Declaration of Priority Products Notice 2020 (updated 29 September 2020).

# What is the problem?

Currently, not all farmers have access to take-back and recycling services for agrichemicals, their containers, and farm plastics. This contributes to ongoing but avoidable practices, such as on-farm burning, burial or indefinite storage in some rural areas. This in turn risks harming the environment and our health, and losing recyclable materials. Regional council rules to control on-farm waste disposal – including bans on burning plastics – vary between regions.

Since 2006, two voluntary product stewardship schemes – run by Agrecovery and Plasback – have offered take-back services for agrichemicals and their containers, and some farm plastics. Both schemes have made steady progress in reducing waste, but engagement by producers and farmers has plateaued, and some parts of the country remain poorly served.

## The proposal

Building on the two voluntary schemes, agricultural sector groups have worked together to design a single consolidated national scheme that simplifies and increases access to take-back services for farmers and other consumers. This national scheme – provisionally named Green-farms – was accredited in October 2023. This scheme is not operating yet, pending government decisions on supporting regulations. The product stewardship organisation (PSO) managing the scheme is the Agrecovery Foundation, a not-for-profit charitable trust governed by representatives of the primary production sector.

We are consulting on two options:

- **Option 1: Introduce WMA regulations.** These will support the accredited scheme for the in-scope products.
- **Option 2: No action (maintain the voluntary approach).** No regulations would be made. The current schemes may continue with voluntary stewardship of agrichemical containers and other farm plastics including bale wrap, but this cannot be assured.

Your responses to this consultation will inform Cabinet consideration of the options.

### Option 1

Under Option 1, WMA regulations would prohibit the sale of agrichemicals in specified container types and certain farm plastics, except in accordance with the accredited scheme. The obligation for producers and importers to sell only in accordance with the scheme would apply to the four in-scope product groups listed in the box above.

All producers and importers placing in-scope products on the New Zealand market would be required to pay a stewardship fee (per unit of in-scope product sold) to cover end-of-life management of the products. The proposed fees are typically around one per cent or less of the full product price. The PSO would be responsible for collecting the fee.

Table 1 shows the proposed fee rates.

**Table 1: Proposed stewardship fee rates – agrichemicals and farm plastics**

| Category                           | Product   | Fee rate (\$)                             |  |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Agrichemicals and their containers | Packaging part of fee   | Per litre                                 |  |
|                                    | Containers up to 60 litres  | 0.10                                      |  |
|                                    | Containers over 60 litres, and less than Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBC)                   | 0.025                                     |  |
|                                    | IBC (approx. 1,000 litres)  | 0.02                                      |  |
|                                    | Chemical part of fee  | Per litre                                 |  |
|                                    | Group 1 – chemicals unlikely to be brought for disposal (the consumer typically uses them up) | 0.01                                      |  |
|                                    | Group 2 – chemicals with lowest disposal cost   | 0.03                                      |  |
|                                    | Group 3 – chemicals with higher disposal cost   |   |  |
|                                    | • In containers up to 60 litres   | 0.04                                      |  |
|                                    | • In containers of 60 litres or more  | 0.06                                      |  |
|                                    | Household pest and weed control products  |   |  |
|                                    | Cost per container  | 0.10                                      |  |
|                                    | Group 1 - Chemicals unlikely to be brought for disposal (per kilogram or litre)               | 0.02                                      |  |
|                                    | Group 2 - Chemicals with lowest disposal cost (per kilogram or litre)                         | 0.08                                      |  |
|                                    | Group 3 - Chemicals with higher disposal cost (per kilogram or litre)                         | 0.10                                      |  |
| Farm plastics                      | Bale wrap and silage sheet  | Per tonne                                 |  |
|                                    | Bale wrap   | 462.02<br>(or 0.52 per bale) <sup>2</sup> |  |
|                                    | Silage sheet  | 462.02                                    |  |
|                                    | Bags  | Per bag                                   |  |
|                                    | Small bags  | 0.20                                      |  |
|                                    | Large bags  | 3.58                                      |  |

A small part of the fee revenue would be transferred by the scheme manager to the Ministry for the Environment, to cover the cost of monitoring the scheme's performance.

The PSO would be required to provide a take-back service for in-scope products. Requirements could include, for example, that the collection network has sufficient geographical coverage.

Farmers and other consumers of the products would be able to either:

- drop off their agrichemical containers and in-scope farm plastics at no charge to one of the collection sites
- have the products picked up from their premises, if they meet criteria for remoteness and product weight.

Farmers' and other consumers' participation would not be mandated by regulation.

<sup>2</sup> Plasback estimates that a tonne would typically include about 40 rolls of stretch film, and each roll would conservatively make about 22 large bales. The cost per bale would therefore be about \$0.52.

The scheme manager would collect and provide data to the Ministry about the above requirements.

The regulations aim to address the shortcomings of the current voluntary schemes by:

- establishing a level playing field, in which all producers and importers of priority products share responsibility (and costs) for managing the in-scope products at end of their life
- offering farmers and other consumers across the country a free-to-use and convenient take-back service – reducing the incentive for inappropriate disposal (eg, burying or burning) and diverting waste away from landfill
- enabling the Government to enforce the requirements.

Over time, the scheme may include – on a voluntary basis – other farm plastics, such as irrigation piping, shrink wrap, tunnel house covers, wool fadges, potted plant pots, vineyard netting, hail netting and other coverings. However, these are not among the materials currently proposed for the regulations to cover.

## Option 2

Under this option, no WMA regulations would be introduced to support product stewardship of agrichemical containers, residual agrichemicals, and farm plastics. Producers’ and importers’ participation in stewardship schemes for these products would remain voluntary, and is unlikely to increase beyond current levels. Without the fee revenues from increased producer participation and the efficiencies of scale from a national scheme, take-back and recycling services are unlikely to expand significantly.

If regulations are not made, the new scheme could either start operating on a voluntary basis, or not proceed. The latter outcome is more likely, as it was co-designed by industry as a regulated scheme, in line with the broad intent of the priority product declaration. If the new scheme does not proceed, Agrecovery and Plasback may continue their voluntary schemes. However, this is not guaranteed.

# Consultation questions

**Table 2: Questions from *Proposed product stewardship regulations: Agrichemicals, their containers, and farm plastics. Discussion document***

| Questions |  |
|-----------|--|
| 1.        | Do you agree with the description of the problem posed by agrichemicals, their containers, and farm plastics? Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____   |
| 2.        | What other information should we consider in analysing the problem?  |
| 3. a)     | In line with its accreditation, the new scheme's provisional name is Green-farms. Do you support this name? Yes   No   |
| b)        | If you have an alternative suggestion, please specify.   |
| 4.        | Do you agree the options presented (Option 1 – Introduce WMA regulations; Option 2 – No action) are the appropriate ones to consider? Yes   No<br>If not, what other options do you suggest? |
| 5.        | Do you support a national take-back and recycling scheme for agrichemicals, their containers, and farm plastics? Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____  |

## Questions

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 6. a) | <p>Do you support the proposal to only allow sale of the following products in accordance with an accredited product stewardship scheme?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agrichemicals sold in containers and drums of 1,000 litres or less (including household pest and weed control products). Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Plastic bale wrap and silage sheet. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Small plastic bags (40 kilograms or less when full) containing products such as seed, feed, fertiliser, soil and crop inputs, farm and animal supplements. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Bulk woven polypropylene bags (over 40 kilograms when full) containing products such as seed, feed, fertiliser, soil amendments, minerals and bulk nutrition. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> </ul> <p>b) If you answered no for any of the product categories above, what changes could we make to the proposal to gain your support?</p>                                |
| 7. a) | <p>Do you support the proposal to set a product stewardship fee on the following imported or domestically manufactured products, to cover their end-of-life management?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agrichemicals sold in containers and drums of 1,000 litres or less (including household pest and weed control products). Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Plastic bale wrap and silage sheet. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Small plastic bags (40 kilograms or less when full) containing products such as seed, feed, fertiliser, soil and crop inputs, farm and animal supplements. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Bulk woven polypropylene bags (over 40 kilograms when full) containing products such as seed, feed, fertiliser, soil amendments, minerals and bulk nutrition. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> </ul> <p>b) If you answered no for any of the product categories above, what changes could we make to the proposal to gain your support?</p> |
| 8.    | <p>Do you think that any particular products in the four proposed categories should be exempt from regulation? Yes   No.</p> <p>If yes, please specify which products, and provide details.</p>   |
| 9.    | <p>From the following list of products proposed to be in scope of regulations, are you aware of any imported products that are subsequently re-exported in the same packaging without being used in New Zealand?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agrichemicals sold in containers and drums of 1,000 litres or less (including household pest and weed control products). Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Plastic bale wrap and silage sheet. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Small plastic bags (40 kilograms or less when full) containing products such as seed, feed, fertiliser, soil and crop inputs, farm and animal supplements. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Bulk woven polypropylene bags (over 40 kilograms when full) containing products such as seed, feed, fertiliser, soil amendments, minerals and bulk nutrition. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> </ul>   |
| 10.   | <p>The following products are out of scope of the regulations proposed through this consultation. However, they may be considered for regulation in future. Do you support their inclusion in a regulated product stewardship scheme in future, subject to further government consideration?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irrigation piping. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Shrink/pallet wrap. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Tunnel house covers. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Wool fadges. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Potted plant pots. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Vineyard netting. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Hail netting and other coverings. Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</li> <li>• Other agricultural plastic products. Yes   No. If yes, please specify which ones.</li> </ul>  |
| 11.   | <p>Do you support the proposal to require the product stewardship organisation to provide a take-back service for in-scope products, and to prescribe requirements for that service (eg, that the collection network covers enough of the country)? Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____</p>  |

| Questions |  |
|-----------|--|
| 12.       | Do you support the proposal that the Ministry will charge the accredited scheme to recover the costs of monitoring the performance of the scheme? Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____ |
| 13. a)    | Do you agree with the description of the expected impacts of Option 1: Introduce WMA regulations? Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____   |
| b)        | Are you aware of other data or information that would help us assess the impacts of this option? Yes   No. If yes, please specify.   |
| 14. a)    | Do you agree with the description of the expected impacts of Option 2: No action (maintain the voluntary approach)? Yes   No. Comments (optional): _____                               |
| b)        | Are you aware of other data or information that would help us assess the impacts of this option? Yes   No. If yes, please specify.   |
| 15.       | If you had to take part in the proposed regulated scheme, how would this affect your business?<br>Please give details of anticipated costs, benefits and any other impacts.            |

## Have your say

We welcome your comments on this consultation. For further details on the proposals, see the [full discussion document](#).

The consultation questions can be found in [table 2](#). They are a guide only, and you do not have to answer them all.

## How to provide feedback

There are two ways you can make a submission:

- via Citizen Space, our consultation hub:  
<https://consult.environment.govt.nz/waste/agrichemicals-their-containers-and-farm-plastics>
- by writing your own submission.

If you want to write your own submission, you can provide this as an uploaded file in Citizen Space.

**Submissions close at 11.59pm, 1 June 2025.**

## More information

For more details on how to make a submission, see the [Citizen Space consultation page](#).

If you have questions or want more information about the policy proposals or the submission process, please email [rps@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:rps@mfe.govt.nz).