

Agricultural Waste Stakeholders' Forum

Communiqué 16

Forum Discussions

- The Forum received an agricultural waste update from the Environment Agency. The number of registrations still remains low, but is slowly increasing. Since 05 January 2007, 4,638 reminder letters were sent out to those who requested an exemption pack but haven't completed and returned the form. Since the adverts and editorials were published, calls for exemption packs have increased.
- Whole Farm Approach (WFA) has had 1027 submissions (on average, 5 registrations a day) and 3000 users. WFA is currently working with the Environment Agency on sending out notifications. A reminder note is planned to go to the remaining 2000 users.
- The NFU are using text messaging to remind members to register their exemptions with the Environment Agency and the Horticultural Development Council are planning to put reminders out in magazines and newsletters aimed at fruit and vegetable growers.
- Alan Barnden from the Environment Agency provided a useful and interesting presentation on how integrated farm inspections are to be performed. The "IRAP" Project will ensure inspections are based on pollution risk.
- Defra have launched a consultation on the controls on the handling, transfer and transport of waste. This ends on 06 March 2007. For more information visit <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/waste-controls/index.htm>
- The supplementary consultation on agricultural waste exemptions closed on 15 December 2006. Defra are currently analysing responses and will submit a final response to ministers in March 2007, coming into force May 2007. For more information visit <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/wasteman-agri/index.htm>
- The whole area of waste exemptions across all industry sectors, including agriculture, is being re-examined. This Exemptions Review is a joint project with the Environment Agency, Defra and Welsh Assembly Government. Regulations are due to come into force April 2009. A Stakeholder Forum is being held in February 2007. This will be supported by smaller meetings looking at the principles underpinning exemptions and will inform a formal consultation in the future.

Exemption Implementation

- The Monitoring and Implementation Sub-Group scheduled for 26 February 2007 has been postponed, until the Environment Agency have established a new Chairperson.

The Agricultural Waste Plastics Collection and Recovery Programme

- Robert Caudwell updated the group on the 3 trials that have been funded by the Farm Plastics Collection and Recovery Programme
 - Somerset FWAG - baling and logistics
 - Shropshire Sastak - hubs
 - Agricycle - brush/clean crop cover

Research projects will also be undertaken to look at:

- Pyrolysis of agricultural waste plastic
- UK agricultural waste plastics - waste arisings

Results are expected by the middle of this year.

Waste Strategy Sub-Group

- The Sub-Group's January meeting discussed a report from the Environment Agency on the number of exemption registrations received and considered current progress in implementing the agricultural waste regulations. Updates on the Agricultural Waste Plastics Collection and Recovery Programme and of the Advisory Group on Farm Plastics were also discussed.
- The Sub-Group also discussed the implications of planning controls on those wishing to operate agricultural waste recovery operations. It was agreed to revisit this subject in May in the light of experience received from both the ongoing AWP trials and commercial activities. It was proposed that the WRAP-funded research on tyres would be reviewed at the groups next meeting on 12 April.

Forum Action Plan

- The Vision and Strategy Plans are to be reviewed at the next main meeting.

Other Communications

- The Environment Agency is currently working on promoting awareness of the need to register waste management exemptions. During January and February, communication campaigns including guidance notes, adverts and editorials will appear in the farming and trade press. The Environment Agency is also producing a general guidance note on Hazardous waste and specific sector-facing guidance on the use of consignment notes. The main Forum and WS Sub-Group made a number of suggestions and recommendations to help improve the general guidance note.