



# News

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Crop Packaging Association News

Issue No.12

Season 2008

## A summer for hay?

Who would have thought that so much grass would be baled last year? After a promising start, then the deluges of June and July, one could have been excused for thinking right then that the summer was well and truly over, and the chance of any more decent baling was gone. How wrong we all were! When the rain finally stopped and the sunshine returned, most were treated to the best silage harvest for many years, with distributors of silage stretchfilm reporting extremely low stocks, as every last bit of grass was baled into silage. But what about those who wanted hay?

Hay is probably everyone's preferred option, though often the most difficult to harvest

satisfactorily. With the ease at which baled silage can now be produced, hay baling has taken a 'back seat' in the farmers' choice of fodder, however, with plastic prices continuing to surge upwards, could it be that the desire to return to hay making might be making a strong comeback? It has always been a difficult decision. In fact, more of a gamble with the odds lengthening all the time to risk cutting late and hoping for more than a day or two of dry weather for wilting. We all know that there is hay and there is bad hay; no 'in between'. But there are now additives available that allow you to bale hay on those days when the sun just doesn't come out, or start a few hours early and bale longer after the sun has

disappeared and make the most of haying weather. Such additives make it possible to bale hay with moisture content within 16% to 30%.

Whilst no amount of preservative will give full protection to bales stored outside, the quality of the baling job has as big an effect on the preservative qualities of the valuable forage. This reporter has seen hay bales stored outside from one summer to the next and still be used. A bale fully covered with net gives much more protection than one would imagine. It is important to understand and appreciate what is meant by 'fully covered' with net. There are so are many round bales that can never be



described as being 'well covered'. John Deere and Tama Plastic Industry had the right idea when they developed the CoverEdge system, a unique combination of baler and net, that produces the best covered round bale possible, bar none.

Consider how safe your crop will be with the net not only going to the edge of the bale, but actually over the edge. The top surface of the bale is given a great 'roof' and then the bottom edges of the bale are gathered up and pulled in. Also, lift any crop off the ground, reducing any chance of moisture 'wicking' into the bale.

Further protection can be given by the application of an extra turn or two of net, effectively reducing the mesh size of the net on the bale's surface even more. This gives a great protective surface to the bale, which can shed moisture well through capillary action, allowing the water to track along the net threads and off the bale, not into exposed edges that are always found with 'standard' netwrap. The CoverEdge netwrap was originally produced specifically for the John Deere CoverEdge baler. But many customers with other makes of balers have since learned of its properties for valuable hay bales. The net roll is slightly wider than

other rolls, which restricts its use on some machines, but it is possible to exploit its clever spreading and covering properties on most balers, including New Holland, Vicon and Welger. The genius in this net is not only its edge to edge technology, it is the elasticated edge thread which makes it so different and, therefore, of such value to hay balers. The elastic thread has the ability to act as a draw-string to pull the net tight to the edge of the bale, after spreading down its side by up to 4 inches. Clearly, where valuable dry crop is concerned, this could help tip the balance on whether to make hay this summer or not.

## ***A roll is worth how much ?***

How many of our subscribers have agonised over the cost of a roll of netwrap, thinking that the most important point in your buying decision is the actual price of the roll?

We are pretty sure that few of you will have ever considered just what value of crop your chosen netwrap will eventually contain. It may come as quite a shock to discover that your roll purchase will eventually wrap over £4,000 worth of straw or a staggering £6,000 of haylage. A sobering thought, that your netwrap choice could bring with it a serious risk, when the value is almost 70 times the price of the original roll. Quite long odds, if you were a betting man!

The significant rise in the value of grain last season brought with it a corresponding increase in the value of good baled straw. Good straw, as the weather reduced the opportunities for baling and with it, seriously degraded the quality of the crop available. Straw merchants and market auctioneers all agree that the appearance and quality of a straw bale definitely have an effect on its value and saleability. Tidy looking bales always sell first and at the best price, but the interesting point is just how much valuable crop value can and does get wasted or lost with bad bales.

If the bale has exposed shoulders, the combined width of these exposed parts of the bale could be equal to 15% of the full width of the bale. This is almost one sixth of the bale width, meaning, in effect, the equivalent of one bale in seven is not being covered. This leaves a lot of valuable crop at risk, all because of a

saving of a few pounds at the start of the operation.

This thinking can be applied to stretchfilm as well, where the quality of the wrapping job will have a direct effect on the ultimate value of the bale. One roll of film can be responsible for almost £400 of silage, if wrapping with 4 layers or, with a 6 layer covered bale haylage up to £500 worth of forage is being wrapped with one roll. A poor wrapping job, or poor bale handling, can risk a huge proportion of the bale value, either losing money by affecting its value at point of sale or, more commonly, reducing its eventual feed value on farm, requiring more bales for the same feed value, therefore, increasing your direct costs for feeding.

If an extra 2 layers are applied to a silage bale, the result and improvement in bale quality far outweighs the cost of the extra film layers. A 6 layer covered bale has been shown, in controlled tests, time after time to retain almost all of its feed value, with almost no spoilage through air or water penetration and a consequent huge reduction in effluent run-off, compared with conventional thinking of wrapping with 4 layers. The 4 layer wrapped bales lost, on average, 9% of their feed value, effectively losing £1 worth of feed value, where as the extra film layers would have cost half that and increased the bale's value by double that at least. Are you a gambling man ...?



## *In round baling, there is only one Winner*

There are now quite a number of netwrap manufacturers in Europe, many of whom offer their products to the UK farmer and contractor. Some are obviously better known than others, a few have 'come and gone' over the years and some of the early names have almost faded from the scene. There is one very well known name, however, that has been around since the very beginning, who is still at the fore-front today.

Italian net producer Novatex was one of the very first producers to supply netwrap to the UK market in the early 1980s, at the time a very small market. Amongst the many producers of net, Novatex was, and still is, totally unique, as the only company to design and build their own knitting looms and produce the net on these machines; unlike all others who utilise basically the same type of knitting machine produced by a loom manufacturing

company. Nowadays, Novatex is well known as the manufacturer of the distinctive Winner netwrap, with its characteristic Italian flag colours.

With a long history of supply to the UK, most farmers and contractors know and trust the Novatex name. When introduced, Winner net was an instant winner too, which continues to this day. The distinctive look is for a number of reasons: firstly, the different colours help to easily identify one side of the roll from the other when loading in the baler, also making bale un-rolling more obvious, knowing which way the bale was made from the differing coloured edges.

However, it is the exceptional bale covering performance of Winner net that makes it so popular. The net is manufactured with the unique 'edge to edge' technology, invented and



patented by Tama Plastic and used under sole license by Novatex in the production of this net. This unique feature allows the net to remain its full width of 4' when being applied to the 4' wide bale, unlike 'normal' white net which has the natural tendency to 'neck-in' to a narrower width when passing through the baler and onto the bale. The result of this is a fully covered bale, leaving no exposed edges, which is exactly what is really required for good baling.



Fully covering the bale means silage bale wrapping becomes easier and less problematical, as exposed 'fluffy' edges to a bale are a perfect trap for air, which will spoil the fermentation process, vital in good silage making, as well as being a danger to the flimsy film when wrapping. The fully covered bale, with no 'shoulders', will also reduce the risk of film damage as it is pulled over the edges of the bale, which on badly covered bales can puncture the film causing breaks and costly hold-ups when wrapping.

**winner**<sup>TM</sup>  
**HAS IT ALL!**

Working with  
**CROP**  
packaging  
ASSOCIATION

[www.croppackaging.com](http://www.croppackaging.com)

**NOVATEX**

## Grasslands is coming

It's the year of the big Grasslands event and, once again, you'll all be watching the weather to see if it's a trip to Stoneleigh between showers, or all hands on deck as you get stuck into your own baling and wrapping jobs while the sun shines! So, what can you expect from a crop packaging standpoint?

Big news is the popular up-take of the new extra, extra long netwrap from Tama, being shown in their own black and white colours as

Marathon 4.2km, working on both the Vicon and Welger baler plots. Claas have introduced this new technology into their Rollatex Pro netwrap, now part of their 'Select' range, and John Deere XtraNet is also now being produced with Tama's 'Bale+' technology, that allows the extra length and higher strength net on the XtraNet 4200m same diameter roll, as the existing XtraNet 3600m. Both types of net will be shown and used extensively on their respective plots.

The interest in the new longer net has shown itself, with almost all this year's production being snapped up by eager customers, keen to take advantage of the benefits of 40% more net on a roll. One lucky customer, though, will receive a full pallet of this new netwrap FREE, as first prize in this year's Crop Packaging Association's Prize Draw, full details of which can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.



## Come and visit us at Grasslands

It's that time again; Grasslands 2008 is just around the corner. Is it really three years since we all made the journey to the NAC showground at Stoneleigh?

Europe's premier grassland event is THE place to see anything and everything related to grass forage and its associated businesses. As usual, the 'consumable' on show on every plot will be 'crop packaging', meaning this event is right down the Crop Packaging Association's street, so to speak.

Your Crop Packaging Association will be well represented, located within the UAT marquee at **stand 478** in the trade stand area. Representatives from the product manufacturers, industry and sales personnel as well as our well respected technical team will be on the stand for both days, offering information and advice of all your needs and requirements related to crop packaging.

What to look for this year? Tama Plastic launched its revolutionary 'extra long' netwrap, Marathon 4.2km, at the recent Agritechnica

show in Germany, following its thorough volume trial in parts of the UK and Europe over the past 3 years. Come to the UAT stand and see this new net for yourself, and find out just how Tama manage to put all this netwrap on a roll that is no bigger in dimension than an old roll of 'standard' net, which contains 40% less net than the new Marathon. One wonders what market there must be nowadays for the 'old' standard netwrap, as it is still old 'non-edge to edge' technology and now completely outclassed by this time saving long net.

Big Bale twine will be the other product used for baling at the event and here, again, there is something to learn. As reported in the last Crop Packaging Association newsletter, it is now possible to have a greater confidence of the quality of your baler twine, through a new assurance scheme recently introduced. The Sima Group, who make the machinery that most baler twine manufacturers in Europe are using, have introduced an accreditation guarantee to confirm their approval of the manufacturing process and quality product produced on their machines. This means,

those twines which reach these standards have an assurance of the quality of the raw material and manufacturing process, right through to the finished product certified. Come and ask us what this means to you as a user... is your chosen twine up to scratch?



# WIN!

## Win a pallet of Tama Marathon™ 4.2km worth over £3,500



To be in with a chance to win all you have to do is return this form by freepost.

Closing date: 15th June 2008

The winner will have the pallet delivered to their choice of address within Great Britain & Ireland by the end of June 2008



[www.croppackaging.com](http://www.croppackaging.com)



### Number of SILAGE or HAY bales per

Up to 1,000    1,000 - 5,000    5,000+

### Number of STRAW bales per year

Up to 1,000    1,000 - 5,000    5,000+

### Quantity of Netwrap per year

Up to 1 pallet    2 - 5 pallets    5 pallets +

Type/Brand \_\_\_\_\_

### Quantity of Stretchfilm per year

Up to 1 pallet    2 - 5 pallets    5 pallets +

Type/Brand \_\_\_\_\_

### Make and Model of Baler

\_\_\_\_\_

### Make and Model of Wrapper

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

Company

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Fax

E-mail

### Conditions:

1. This is a FREE prize draw – entry is FREE to anyone except employees of Tama, or other suppliers approved by the Crop Packaging Association.
2. To enter, simply fill in this competition card and return to the Crop Packaging Association, Freepost (SCE6386), Alton, Hampshire, GU34 1BR or visit our website: [www.croppackaging.com](http://www.croppackaging.com).
3. Closing date – 15th June 2008
4. Winner will be notified in last week of June 2008.
5. The winner will have the pallet delivered to their choice of address within Great Britain & Ireland by the end of June 2008
6. Prize delivery will be managed by UAT.
7. Decision on winner is final – No correspondence will be entered into.

## ***A bird on the bale is worse than two in the bush***

Funny how you never see them, although they are everywhere. They are always the culprit but never at the 'scene of the crime'. Birds!



This is how valuable silages are easily damaged

What is worrying is just how much damage one bird can do to a bale and the subsequent loss in value, either feed or monetary, this can cause. We are all aware of this, in fact it is surprising just how many calls this subject generates every season to UAT or the Crop Packaging Association. The problem is always the same... "the film on my bales is punctured, I've opened them and they are mouldy". These comments are indeed related, as the mould is a direct result of the punctured film. Punctured film allows air into the bale, air inside the anaerobic environment of a silage bale allows mould growth and the resultant consequences, spoiled silage. Lost crop means more expense on the farm.

Essentially, there are two options for such a situation. Firstly, ignore the fact that you can take action to prevent it and blame the film supplier. Or, take action to prevent it! This is not an ominous, expensive exercise. In fact, it is one of the cheapest and easiest things to reduce wastage and preserve your valuable forage, which can serve its purpose for the next few years without any extra cost and, without question, will pay for itself within a season.



An easy remedy, fine mesh netting

The remedy: Fine mesh silage protection net, a simple answer to bird damage on bale stacks. For less than the cost of a roll of stretchfilm, one roll of Novatex silage protection net, measuring 8m x 25m, can safely protect a stack of over 100 bales. Losses, when bad, can easily render more than 10% of the bales' volume un-palatable for the cattle, effectively

meaning ten bales in the stack of 100 lost due to bird damage. This level of loss equates to significantly more than the cost of the net, which, if looked after at the end of the winter, after bale feeding out, can be rolled back up and stored in the shed for the next year. The net is easily un-rolled across the bale stack, held off the bales' surface by old tyres or sand bags and held in place by the same, allowing the net to move slightly in the wind above the bale stack, but denying the bird to settle on the bales.

How much simpler can forage protection be, and what better value for money can you find on the farm nowadays?



Bales easily protected from bird damage by the covering of fine mesh net

## ***Do you surf the net ?***

Farmers and contractors surfing the net...? Some might think this will never happen, but we know differently. Computers and computing are now an essential part of every farmer and contractor's business, even if it is just to make up the job sheet and bill for the baling job for your customer. Computers are no mystery anymore and many of us actively use them as a tool of the business, from 'Googling' for information, to e-mailing your dealer for news or help.

Surfing supplier websites is also a useful exercise, especially if in need of more information on a product. However, many sites simply read as 'electronic sales brochures', giving little ability to help or allow more

understanding of your query. The Crop Packaging Association has its own website ([www.croppackaging.com](http://www.croppackaging.com)), with comprehensive information on all crop packaging products, as well as direct links to their manufacturers. There is also information on the range of OEM branded products and links to the OEMs' websites, including Claas, Fendt and Massey Ferguson. In addition to product information, [www.croppackaging.com](http://www.croppackaging.com) contains many useful operating and troubleshooting information for twine, netwrap and stretchfilm, with hints and tips on how to avoid troubles and rectify problems. Often, end users and subscribers seek the advice and assistance of other subscribers via the Agri-Chat forum pages, where questions can

be asked on any and all subjects. Submissions for this and responses to questions are simple and straight-forward to do and can often be of great help to everyone, not simply those posing the questions.

Every year the Crop Packaging Association runs a free entry prize draw competition, where every entrant is entered into the prize draw (this year to win a pallet of new Tama Marathon 4,200m netwrap), by simply filling in their details on the on-line entry form.

Why not visit [www.croppackaging.com](http://www.croppackaging.com) and see what you can find out?

## Ideas and inventions

It is often said that the best ideas are the simplest ones. Many of today's innovations started on the workbench in the farm workshop, with someone realising the need for something and then understanding how to achieve it. Many ideas have made it to mass production, as equipment manufacturers turned a 'cottage industry' idea into series production reality.

Making the best of a good idea is not necessarily to produce something tangible, often it is simple actions to ease work on the farm or provide a better solution for a problem that yield the best rewards.

For all it is a long way away, farming in Australia and New Zealand is quite similar to that found here in the UK, albeit on a greater size sometimes. Owing to the vast size of some properties, the ability to collect and return bales to the farm from the outlying fields, (or should that be paddocks?), is costly and time consuming. As a consequence, many farmers chose to leave their bales out in the fields in which they were baled.

Often, depending upon the type of season, this could mean many thousands of bales remotely stored around a great area, often for more than a year. Whilst it may be hard for some to believe, Australia does get rain, at times, a great deal of rain. In having many dry crop,

hay and straw bales stored outside, there is the need to reduce the effects of weathering, to preserve and protect the bale, without the ability to go to too much expense. Covered storage may be much too costly and any form of a temporary covering is always susceptible to the ravages of winds, especially when not able to be inspected regularly for safe keeping. As a result, farmers in the 'outback' store their bales simply, in a way that makes the most of the natural conditions, which could, perhaps, be a benefit to us over here.

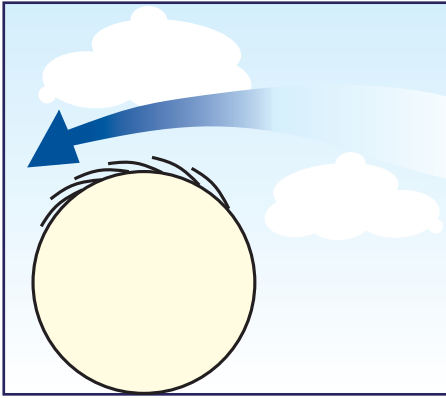
Understanding the potential losses that can arise from stacking dry crop round bales in huge pyramid stacks, from trapping water

between bales on all levels and the bales never able to dry out, as we are prone to do here, Aussie farmers have a very simple solution. Over the years it has become an accepted practice to store bales end-to-end, separating the lines so they do not actually touch, creating the 'trap'. However, it is the orientation of the bales that is the most important point. The bales are simply lined up North/South, giving the best option for both sides of the bales to get the benefit of sunshine sometime in the day. If the bales were lined up East/West, then one side of the bale would NEVER have the benefit of sunshine, thereby never allowing it to dry out fully. ▶



Advertisement for John Deere Crop Packaging Products. It features the John Deere logo and the text "Crop Packaging Products Net - Twine - Silage". The products shown are XtraTwine Type 130, XtraNet 4200, and XtraFilm (750mm x 1500m). The background shows a field of tall grass.

Advertisement for HI-YIELD for Big Balers. It features the text "HI-YIELD for Big Balers" and a list of bale types: Fine 22,300, Supersoft Hay 10,000, Medium 12,000, and Big Bale 7,200. The background shows a stack of hay bales and two rolls of twine. The SIMA logo is also present.



Added to this is the way the bales are sat on the ground. It is always advisable to try and store the bales so that the bale is positioned to allow the prevailing wind to go over the bale 'with the crop', so that the bale acts like its own thatched roof. Storing bales with the weather acting 'against the crop' can allow deeper water penetration from the rain.

We may not have as much room available as some farms in Australia, but storing bales well to preserve them in better condition has to be something worthwhile, considering the value of the bale and the trouble you went to harvesting and baling it.

Here's another clever, yet inexpensive idea from 'down under', which could make life much simpler for those of you preferring to store wrapped silage bales in a better fashion, on their ends. We all know and understand the benefits of storing bales on their ends. The ends have many more film layers than the bale

sides, giving protection to the bale from stones and sharp objects on the ground and also offering more protection against bird damage. Storing on end also avoids the risk of water pooling between the bales in a stack, which over a prolonged time, can penetrate between the film layers, in exactly the same way as if the bale was sat in a pool of water.

Most of Europe and certainly people in Australia and New Zealand already store their bales on end and, as a consequence, have a good market for bale wrappers equipped to place the bale on end and bale handlers adapted for bales this way up. All this equipment is also available here, but as most folks will agree making the change might incur extra expense to the already stretched farm budget.

Take heed of clever New Zealand baling and wrapping contractor Noel Preen, who devised a simple solution to allow his bales to fall off the wrapper on their ends. The following pictures clearly show how easy it can be, with a length of box-steel, with a plastic tube from a silage roll around it to allow the bale to roll off it, two wheels and an attachment to the bale wrapper.

Noel says "this was definitely one of my better inventions, devised, designed and constructed on a wet day, when I was stuck in the workshop. The most expensive thing I had to buy in making it was the pot of paint to match the bale wrapper!".



### Crop Packaging Products

- Silage Stretch Film
- Netwrap





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