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## Bale Quality – it's all in the twine

NOBODY would try to secure a load with rope that was wrong for the job. And the same goes for baler twine, particularly in high density balers.

Using the wrong twine risks broken bales and knots that pull through, something no farmer or contractor wants to see. Using twine that is strong enough to cope with the pressures involved, and supple enough to hold knots tight, is essential.

High density balers are attracting considerable interest thanks to their ability to pack almost as much forage or straw into a bale measuring 1.2m wide and 0.9m high as a regular 'big-square' bale measuring 1.2m wide and 1.2m high. That is great for getting more straw or forage onto each trailer for transport, and cuts storage space too.

But high density balers are revealing the frailty of many baler twines, notes Graham Robson, technical expert for crop packaging specialist Tama. Some users are even reducing bale density so twine can cope, effectively squandering their investment in a high density baler!

The traditional way to increase strength in twine is to make a thicker yarn, but often the knotting systems cannot handle such extreme thickness, which can cause mis-ties or damage to the knotter.

Creating twines with knotting characteristics to hold a knot properly is increasingly important. That is particularly so in high density balers using



If twine is made only thicker, in an attempt to make it stronger, it may have difficulty holding together as the bale is being formed – so pulling the tail of the knot through and risking the knot coming undone.



Tama's new HD twine was specially developed to avoid the risk of knotter problems, so making better formed knots that hold under extreme pressure.



a double-knotting system, where the top strand is knotted to the strand which runs from the front and under the bale to the back of the bale. It puts less total pressure on the twine, unlike single-knot systems where the twine is held tightly as the bale is formed, so putting huge pressure on the twine. If the twine is too stiff, or lacks the grip required to hold the knot, each of the 30 or so ram strokes packing material into the bale can cause that initial knot to work loose.

"The tail can pull through, causing bale failure. And the same can apply to the final knot too," says Mr Robson.

It's all down to twine technology. "Knots hold best if twine is supple and soft. But some manufacturers have made twines so stiff and wiry, in search

of strength, that suppleness has been sacrificed and knots are failing as a result."

Mr Robson admits that Tama's evaluation trial programme involved many different twine recipes in extensive trials that saw thousands of bales produced in the toughest of baling situations in France and Eastern Europe and the super-dry conditions of south Australia.

Producing a strong yet supple twine means extruding the right polymers in the right way. Even the way twine is wound onto a spool (with a large centre, to reduce kinking) helps.

Those lessons have been extended to twines throughout Tama's range. "We understand that farmers and

contractors want to have full confidence that when they set out baling they can spend the day baling, not dealing with burst and mis-formed bales."

Tama's Big Spool Twine ensures the maximum amount of twine is carried in the spool box, reducing time spent re-loading. While Tama twine quality ensures maximum technical performance, to realise the full potential of high density baling that manufacturers have invested so much effort in developing.

"Twine is so much more than string, it's a scientific product," says Mr Robson. "Users need to ask themselves whether it's worth saving a few pennies but risking all those problems. It seems to be a false economy." ■

## LAMMA show success

LAMMA show's move to the East of England Showground at Peterborough was a huge success, despite some of the worst weather the British climate could create, says netwrap, stretchfilm and twine supplier Tama.

A record-breaking attendance of over 40,000 visitors braved heavy rain to visit over 900 stands on the showground in mid-January. "Fortunately we were inside, in hall 8, which provided a great location to promote our top quality netwraps and twines," says Sales Manager Tim Carr.

"Over the two days we had an excellent level of enquiry from farmers and contractors from all over the UK. We had particular interest in our new Big Spool twine for high density balers, and the longer than ever Tama 4500 netwrap, designed to minimise baling downtime."

Next year's LAMMA, the 34th running of the event since it started in rural Lincolnshire, is set for Wednesday 21st and Thursday 22nd January 2015.

[www.lammashow.co.uk](http://www.lammashow.co.uk)



# New thinking on baling

ATTITUDES to baling are changing, with a growing realisation that the whole process needs costing properly if profits are to be maximised. It is something Tama's new territory sales manager Mark Helps believes to be of fundamental importance to the industry.

From a rural background in Devon he has a strong track-record of working

recognition of the advantages of a well made bale – one that is square and tidy, which stacks properly, and preserves the quality of the forage inside it well. And even when there is, it's too often dismissed as being unquantifiable."

That's all changing, says Mark, as a new generation of college-trained sons and daughters return to the

farm with a fresh focus on finances. "They're more used to quantifying the value of things, drilling down to a per bale cost, taking full account of time, diesel, labour, netwrap cost, everything that's relevant."

The same goes for contractors. "More and more are realising the merits of looking at value not just cost. A product might look cheaper on the pallet but if it takes five turns to wrap a bale instead of three, the true business cost can be far greater."

He wants more customers to ask questions about the net being used. "They should, because it makes a big difference to the job being done." Indeed, once users move to Tama products they rarely return to alternatives, he notes. "They don't want the trouble, often saying 'never again'."

It is a message Mark is keen to reinforce. "Quality pays, it brings real technical benefits – and that's a gospel we want to preach. So that people stop buying on price, and start reaping the rewards of technically superior products," he concludes. ■



with agricultural merchants, co-ops and suppliers. "For me the key has always been to spend face-to-face time with clients and farmers, and to focus on the value of what is being done" he says.

Looking after an area stretching from Lands End to Portsmouth on the south coast, up past Oxford and Drayton and into mid-Wales to finish at Aberystwyth on the Cardigan coast, he works alongside Tama colleague Warren Tatton who oversees much of the rest of the UK.

Emphasising the value of quality products is a key goal. "Too often a bale is seen as a bale. There's not enough



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## YFC Tama helps promote mental health of rural youth

A worrying rise in mental health issues amongst young people in the countryside is being tackled by the National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (NFYFC), with support from leading bale netwrap maker Tama.

Rural+ is the brainchild of Cornish farmer's daughter and NFYFC chairman Claire Worden. She has good reason to champion the issue, having nearly lost her father to an attempted suicide.

"I knew he was unhappy, however when it happened it came completely out of the blue. I feel it was a direct result of leaving farming after being affected by foot and mouth, but it lay hidden for 10 years. I can't imagine how I would have coped with it all without a network of supportive friends."

Claire's father survived, and has learnt to deal with issues before they become untenable. Now, through Rural+, Claire wants YFCs to build a generation that can talk about mental health, support each other and point to where expert help can be found.

"My experience, and it is far from unique, brought home to me just how important Young Farmers' Clubs can be, how powerful their social net-

works are and how much more we can do."

Suicide is the number one cause of death amongst under 35s, with young men 3.5 times more vulnerable than young women. Over recent months the Farming Community Network charity has noticed more young people calling its helpline. And in 2013 a mental health debate attracted one of the biggest audiences on social media channel AgriChatUK.

"Given the current climate many of our members will be concerned about their future and could be feeling the pressure to make some big life decisions," says Claire. "Perhaps they are worrying about taking over the family farm and the responsibilities this entails, or concerned about the rising costs of feed,

### Rural+ goals:

- raise awareness of rural isolation and help reduce it
- improve recognition of mental health warning signs in young people
- develop specific projects to tackle rural isolation
- collaborate with support organisations

Find out more at:

[www.nfyfc.org.uk/ruralplus](http://www.nfyfc.org.uk/ruralplus)



land or rural housing, or struggling to look after the farm whilst juggling college work whilst a parent is ill."

With support from FCN and Young-Minds, and Tama sponsorship, all 640 YFC clubs are receiving Rural+ leaflets, self-help guides and access to 'talking-head' videos. The aim is to help members discuss issues, support each other and to seek help before problems escalate. "We want to help young people feel positive about rural life," says Claire.

Tim Carr, sales manager at Tama, says: "We farm and we recognise the pressures and risks of feeling lonely and isolated that can hit farmers, farm workers and anyone in a rural community."

"Young people are particularly vulnerable, which is why we have put our weight behind Rural+. These are the farmers and farm workers of the future. They deserve the best possible support, particularly at such a vulnerable time in their lives." ■



## Film quality focus

A TREND towards thinner plastic film for wrapping big bale silage can bring significant benefits to producers. But it means film quality is now more important than ever.

"It is the future," says Warren Tatton, Regional Technical Manager for Tama. "Not only does it make it possible to put more film on the same weight of roll, potentially adding an extra 10% to a 1500m roll but it makes better use of natural resources too."

Film has traditionally been 25microns thick. But now there is a growing trend towards 22micron film, certainly for wrapping large round silage bales. In continental Europe such films are

already widely used, allowing more bales to be wrapped with a roll of the same weight.

"But you do need to check it is quality film, manufactured using the best raw materials and an extremely good manufacturing process," Mr Tatton notes. If it is not then using a thinner film specification may put bales at increased risk from film puncturing and tearing.

Significantly, the new thinner films are not pre-stretched. "Pre-stretched film can be as thin as 19 microns, but pre-stretched films have faced application problems," Mr Tatton notes.

As a pioneer in stretchfilm RaniPlast has updated its RaniWrap stretch-wrap to give enhanced protection and unique strength. UV protection has been increased to safeguard bales throughout the season and tack improved for a better bale seal.

RaniPlast's stringent quality control includes film testing during manufacturing, laboratory analysis of finished products and in-field trials.

Watch out for Tama's RaniWrap in a 22 micron format, offering more wrap length on a roll, which can significantly cut the downtime required for re-loading the wrapper.

Large square bales and round bales of haylage provide more of a technical challenge so are not yet suitable for wrapping with thinner stretchfilm, Mr Tatton adds. ■



### What's a micron?

A micron is a measurement of thickness, equivalent to one thousandth of a millimetre. Red blood cells are approximately 10 microns across and human hairs 10-100 microns across.

## Swift service pays

PROMPT, efficient service is essential to keep baling and wrapping operations on the go, which was just what Dan Gilham of Postlebury Farms near Frome in Somerset wanted last summer.

When an issue arose with the Rani stretchfilm he was using he needed answers fast. Film supplier Tama did not disappoint. "Tama couldn't do enough for me," he reflects.

"My issue was reported with the dealer (Smart Agri) and was very quickly returned with a phone call from Tama, acknowledging my issue and concern. Within a couple of days the Tama man was looking at the wrap with



me. He spent the afternoon with me as I wrapped bales and could see the problem."

Tama brought in a specialist from the film manufacturer, who was able to diagnose and rectify the issue. "It took just over a week, I think it was 10 days, for Tama to get the manufacturer of the wrap to visit with them, and the problem was dealt with and sorted."

Keeping balers and wrappers working, even when issues develop, is vital. Once again Tama's industry-leading service commitment delivered the goods when it mattered most. ■



# Do you ever consider how to stack round straw bales?

The fickle up and down value of baled forage is well-known. With trends of supply and demand of hay and silage bales following the seasons of either high yields or poor harvests.

But what of straw? The by-product of the main harvest is a nuisance to some, delaying field re-seeding if not baled immediately, to others its value is well understood, either as a feed bulking agent or quality and useful bedding. Successive wet spring seeding times, followed by equally inclement harvests have played a big part in the fortunes of straw bale contractors. This winter the value of good quality barley straw is maintaining the peak it achieved last year, at the highest ever prices per tonne. Many in the industry believe this trend will continue, as long as the threat of poor weather spring-times and an unpredictable back end to the season continues to reduce any potential high-quality straw harvest. Short of getting on bended knee to seek guidance, we are stuck with what mother-nature delivers each year. However there are things we can do to influence a better outcome, of which the storage of round bales is of particular importance.

The assurance of crop protection from a bale fully protected with edge to edge netwrap

should be well understood nowadays, though some still fail to appreciate this obvious point. As important as bale protection from the net, is the method chosen for the long-term storage of these ever more valuable bales. It is interesting to view storage trends

around the UK and compare these preferences with other parts of the world where baled straw is of similar importance. Circumstance, location and available storage space are all factors that will determine one method over another, though just how much is dictated by the feeling of "that's the way we've always done it"..!

It is easy to appreciate that bales are stored close to the point of use. So near the farm-yard, close to the cattle sheds would seem to be ideal. But is that really the best way to preserve valuable and costly, straw bales through the winter? Many farmers have discovered that stacking bales in huge pyramids create serious losses. Water-traps are created between the many touching bales, to the extent that many bales in the lower and inner part of the stack are almost wasted through spoilage from trapped rain water not being able to run off and soaking into the bale. The risk is massively increased the greater the stacks of bales gathered.

This sad fact needs to be understood in relation to the type of crop and combine that it has been through, both of which have a further impact on the long-term quality of bales stored outside. Typically, straw threshed by an axial-flow system will be in a more fragmented condition than a crop handled by 'straw-walker' combined



harvesters and, when stored in a way to 'trap' moisture, 'axial-flow' bales will often deteriorate at a much faster rate.

A solution to consider (which has long been adopted by Australian farmers and is occasionally seen in the Scottish borders), is to store bales in single rows side-by-side, aligned in a North-South direction separated from the next row by a foot or two. This prevents water traps between bales and significantly reduces spoilage. This

simple method allows both sides of the bale (which are the east and west facing sides) to obtain sunshine and so aid in drying the bale. This may seem rather fanciful but the fact is easily proved when inspecting bales aligned in an East-West direction, where the 'northerly side' of the stack, once wet from winter rains, remains wet all winter, as it never has the opportunity of sunshine.

If the trend seen in the past two years

continues (of high quality straw commanding prices in the region of £65-£68/tonne for wheat and £69-£73/tonne for barley straw bales) then good husbandry of these bales becomes a vital part of farm business management. If we accept that weather patterns are indeed changing, bringing wetter winter and spring times with hotter summers, then it follows that straw length will reduce, giving lower yields. Taking this into account, good winter storage is vitally important. ■

## Yorks farmer favours new TAMANET 4500 bale wrap

BALING all day long without stopping to sort out netwrap necking, rips and blockages is the goal for Yorkshire farmer and baling contractor Malcolm Bayes. With Tama's new Tamanet 4500 netwrap, he believes it is a dream within reach.

Last summer he tested Tama's new Tamanet 4500m alongside the previous 4200m version. "There was no difference, it worked just as well," he says. But it covered more bales, probably 375-410 4ft bales per roll, compared with 350-380 from the 4200m roll, all helping reduce downtime.

"With cheaper brands you only need a problem with necking, or the net splitting, or a blockage and you end up putting more wrap on and wasting time sorting the problems out. So at the end of the day it doesn't work out any cheaper," he comments.

Operating from his mixed farm on heavy land at Acres Farm, Lockington, Driffield Mr Bayes values efficiency. "With Tama I know I can put the net in the baler and have peace of mind that I can get on with the job. It gives you the confidence that you can use a roll without getting off the machine. That's the dream."

Tamanet goes right to the edge of the bale, so avoids the soft edges often seen with cheaper, narrower net. Malcolm adds: "Fluffy edges can create air pockets when the bale is wrapped, which can affect the quality of the stored forage. You can also get problems with uneven stacking where bales have soft shoulders."

So, the verdict is simple. Tamanet 4500m gives over 25 more bales per roll than the previous longest roll available, with equal quality. Hassle-free baling really can be a reality. ■



# Big spool enthusiast

ONE customer who has been delighted with Tama's new Big Spool bale twine is Gordon Stanley who farms in the Lincolnshire Wolds at Galley Brook Farm, Six Hills Lane, Ludford.

"Tama Big Spool runs through the baler lovely, with a huge increase in knot strength," he says. That is particularly important when making higher density bales, where the improved twine characteristics prevent 'burst' bales and lost bale



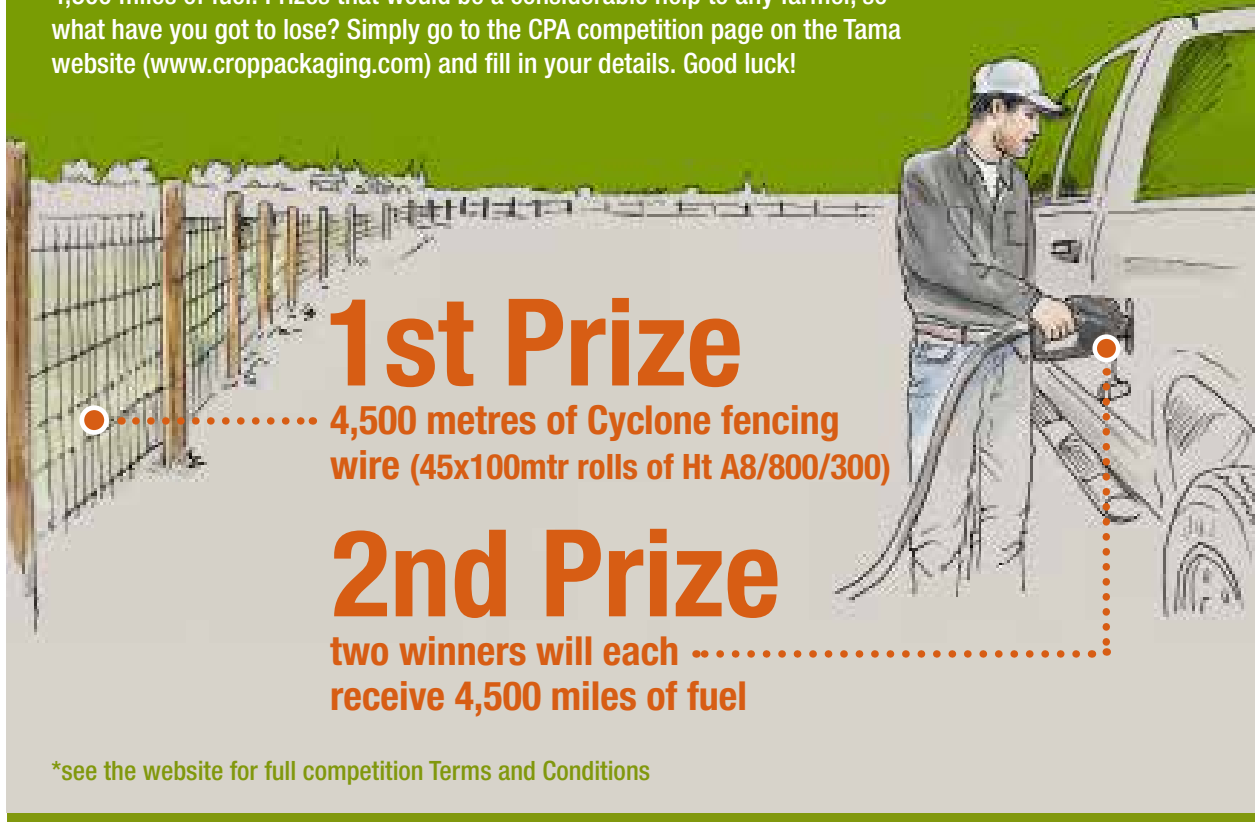
shape, and allow full advantage to be taken of higher density baling. With inferior twine, knots can slip in such situations, leaving baling operations highly vulnerable to problems.

"I don't get any knot slippage," Mr Stanley enthuses. "But the real beauty is the twine doesn't cost me that much more than standard 7200 twine. It's well worth the extra penny for the bale density and no knot slippage."

## Win 4500

Tama are offering you the chance to win one of three amazing prizes. Either 4,500m of Cyclone fencing, or 4,500 miles of fuel\*

Tama, the world leader in the manufacture of crop packaging products, is giving you the opportunity to win one of three great prizes. First prize is 4,500m of high quality Cyclone fencing. Two runners-up will each receive 4,500 miles of fuel. Prizes that would be a considerable help to any farmer, so what have you got to lose? Simply go to the CPA competition page on the Tama website ([www.croppackaging.com](http://www.croppackaging.com)) and fill in your details. Good luck!



### 1st Prize

4,500 metres of Cyclone fencing wire (45x100mtr rolls of Ht A8/800/300)

### 2nd Prize

two winners will each receive 4,500 miles of fuel

\*see the website for full competition Terms and Conditions

