



News

Crop Packaging Association News

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Season 2008

IN THIS ISSUE:

- A cheaters' market?
- Marathon launch
- Identity theft
- Baler twines receive important accreditation
- Old wives tales...
- 2008 price increases
- Rani's new image

A cheaters' market ?

We have all heard the saying 'you get what you pay for' and, broadly speaking, this is almost always the truth. So, why do many still choose to ignore it?

Many times, when buying, it is impossible to see exactly what you are getting for your money and, more often, any 'shortfall' is not appreciated until the product is used up, quite often much sooner than expected! The price paid is often a good guide, particularly where the products are generally the same, such as in a netwrap roll. Often, the unsuspecting customer is buying a product with a visual appearance and outer dimensions that seem the same as all other types of netwrap, the only difference being the packaging and the colour markings on the net. In reality, the unsuspecting customer has no real guarantee of what they are buying.

This situation is all too common and is something the Crop Packaging Association feels the need to bring to your attention, especially as the market now prefers longer length rolls. The simple question to ask is: "How many bales do you get from your chosen roll of netwrap?"

This is not such a difficult question, as only one roll of net is used at a time. This is not like asking the same question of a pack of twine in a big baler, for instance; where up to 5 packs (10 spools) can be feeding the baler at the same time, with more twine being drawn from some spools than others, making exact calculations almost impossible. So, with one roll of net, just how many bales can and do you get? This point becomes even more contentious when comparing one make of net

with another, as your regular total may be reasonably consistent, if you are using the same net. It is often not until you change to a different make of net, with the same stated length, that differences begin to show.

It will soon become apparent that the laws of 'false economy' come into play, where some makes of net with a much cheaper cost price are not actually producing as many bales as nets that may be more expensive. Clearly, this situation would create the need to buy more of the cheaper rolls throughout the season, thereby, increasing your overall spend in the year. False economy.

Be very careful when choosing your netwrap. Does the manufacturer state on the packaging that the contents are a guaranteed minimum ▶

A reputable producer is proud to guarantee its roll lengths



length? If not, why not? If the manufacturer shows that the net's stated length may vary by + or – 5%, this means the net could be up to 150m more or 150m less than it should be, a huge variation of 300m per roll! Why can the manufacturer not produce to an exact length?

Think of it this way; if the manufacturer states that his roll may be up to 150m MORE than the stated length, then this surely means it is AT LEAST the stated length – if this was so, they could then guarantee to be at least the stated length. However, by giving the tolerance of + or – 5%, one must assume that the actual length is on the minus tolerance, meaning up to 150m SHORT.

This situation is, sadly, all too common nowadays, with new names of netwrap coming from smaller producers in Eastern Europe, promising all sorts, but falling woefully short in many ways. Recently, a survey was conducted on behalf of a major international netwrap producer to try and discover the variations in quality that is currently available to the UK and Irish farmer, the results of which were startling. A total of 47 rolls were tested, and showed that 18 of these rolls were shorter than their stated length, one being over 300m short on a roll with a stated length of 3,000m – a massive 10% SHORT, think what that can do to the cost of manufacturing and think then

why some makes of net appear so much cheaper than others.

As well as roll length, the width of the nets was also checked, which, again, showed deficiencies. If the roll is not the correct width, this shortfall will contribute to the seemingly un-believable cheap price, though in reality the net will not have a chance of achieving the desired bale coverage. Just think, if you are not getting anywhere near the expected number of bales wrapped and those you do are not being covered as fully as you would hope, what appeared such a good buy at the time is quite clearly inadequate for your needs and truly 'false economy'.

Those who have experienced this know it all too well and heed the warning of cheap priced netwrap. Be careful of promises of low prices and what appear to be exceptional value rolls of net, imported from some unknown producer, without any recognisable brand nor satisfactory guarantee, they could cost you dearly. Someone is cheating somewhere!



Do you count your bales from each roll?

Crop Packaging Products

- Silage Stretch Film
- Netwrap

CLAAS



20% more perfect bales per roll

Consider carefully the value of your bales and the work involved in making them. A cheaper priced roll may not only be more expensive per bale, it will not offer the level of crop protection you are able to achieve with Pro-Tec.

Do your own calculations:

$$\frac{\text{Price per roll}}{\text{No. of bales per roll}} = \text{Cost per bale}$$

Cost per bale like this

or

Cost per bale like this

Old wives tales... or much better bales ?

With costs for baling and wrapping increasing, it is now even more important than ever to reduce wastage and maximise your annual forage yield. "Yes we know that", we hear you say and "we are doing all we can". Well, evidence from the past year shows otherwise.

The quality of the net wrap job on a silage bale is often treated with disregard simply because the bale will immediately be covered up by the stretchfilm, with many operators believing that the coverage by the net is not that important as no one will see. "This type of comment is heard at times throughout the season and could not be further from the truth" says UAT's Technical Manager Graham Robson, "air is taken into the bale when being wrapped, as those huge fluffy 'shoulders' on poorly netted bales are great air-traps, which, once enclosed in film do nothing but spoil the delicate fermentation process, a process that should be an-aerobic ... without air !" Many operators will concede this point, though not necessarily admit to doing it, but one just has to look over any hedge during May to July and see it happening.

John Deere understood the importance of making a good bale when they introduced their CoverEdge baler in 2000, which uses the exclusive Tama CoverEdge netwrap to fully contain the bale 'shoulders'. This system was originally only available on their belt baler models, often not preferred for wet silage operations. However, the company have now introduced this revolutionary system onto their popular and rugged fixed-chamber roller balers, predominantly used in silage.

As mentioned, it has long been understood that a well shaped silage bale, fully covered in net containing the 'shoulders' of the bale, wraps better, eliminating trapped air and so makes a

very high quality bale of forage, with minimal spoilage, or indeed none at all. It follows that the CoverEdge option makes, probably, the very best silage bale as the entire bale edges and corners are safely contained, thus even making the wrapping task easier as any sharp and pointed stalks protruding on the edges are contained and can not damage the film as it is being applied.



When CoverEdge was launched, back in 2000, some UK farmers and contractors dismissed the idea of net going over the bale, claiming that the portion of the net over the edge becomes trapped when trying to remove the net from the bale. It is interesting to note that CoverEdge is a huge selling net in other parts of the world, notably Australia, France, Germany and particularly the USA, so one has to ask why the UK chooses to think otherwise.

Many of these claims come from those who have never tried the product and are seemingly passing on what they have heard from others, and so reinforcing their views, but is this really the case? It is true that there may be a risk that part of the net could be trapped, if the bale is handled in such a way as to make this inevitable. But why handle the bale in this way if you are sure of the outcome? Is it so difficult to alter the method of opening bales so as to avoid this? Others around the world have managed this very easily and successfully... why can't we do that in the UK?

It would appear that the sole point in this discussion is the net will be trapped under the bale ends when feeding out, as 'that's the way

bales have always been handled', meaning, presumably, CoverEdge wrapped bales are not a good option if handled in the same way. One has to question if this is a strong enough argument against a net that will produce a perfectly wrapped bale that has a direct effect on the quality of the valuable silage that's being produced.

There are, probably, hundreds of ways to handle and open a silage bale, remove the film and net and feed it to the cattle, everyone will have their own method depending upon their farm layout, handling equipment or simply a preference. It must not be beyond the wit of man to appreciate that such problems cannot be insurmountable, if the rest of the world manages! Perhaps it is time to re-address this point and appreciate that slight alterations in how bales are handled can overcome such groundless doubts. These need not be huge changes either, possibly as simple as cutting the edges of the net and pulling it back from the end of the bale before the bale is dropped into the feeder; some end users do this and tie the net tail onto the front loader spike attachment so that when the bale is lowered into the feeder it, effectively, slides out of the netwrap, leaving the net remnants attached to the loader and free of the bale.

We all appreciate that this unique net does give benefits other nets simply cannot, unrivalled bale coverage giving the best protection to dry crop bales stored outside and silage bales for wrapping. If, at a time when we should all be looking to maximise harvest yields, obvious advantages are being overlooked because of stubbornness or old wives tales, perhaps it is really now time to open our eyes and think a little clearer. These advantages in technology are there to assist and help, others around the world have found this to be so...

A happy CoverEdge user shows one possible method of film and net removal



Bale spiked on its end and transported to feeder



Film and net cut length-ways around bale



Film and net easily removed



Bale ready for feeding

Baler Twines receive important accreditation

There are approximately 6,000 tonnes of polypropylene twine bought every year in the UK. Sit and think a while... that's quite a lot of twine. In the UK and Ireland, the use of 'Conventional' twines, such as small square 'Medium' and 'Hay' twine or 'Fine' twine for round bales, has diminished considerably and its place taken by increasing netwrap use. Of the UK's current twine market, the vast majority is for the ever increasing amounts of large rectangular or big square balers, either in the popular 7,200' 2 spool pack, or the thicker and stronger twine packaged in 6,400' packs.

Unlike the UK and Ireland, however, twine is still very popular throughout large parts of Europe and, with the expanding boundaries of Europe eastwards; many 'new' European countries are very large users and producers, of twine. As a result, many of these countries now see the UK as their potential growth market. Unfortunately, this has the effect of what seems like a 'buyers' market for twine, offered cheaper than many reputable and recognised brands, with promises of similar quality and strength and not even the slightest guarantee of length in the pack. And, let's be honest, who out there actually counts the number of bales from a pack? All big square balers often require a multiple of spools to operate, with individual spools feeding to different parts of the bale, meaning they will not run out at the same time, so keeping count of bales per pack is not only difficult, it is impossible.

And what of the quality? Strength at the knot comes from the thickness (runnage) of the twine, the raw material and, more importantly, the way it is extruded and twisted, which has a huge bearing on the twine's eventual strength and resilience on the bale. In a welcomed move, SIMA Group, who are the world leader in the manufacture of extrusion, twisting and spooling machines used in baler twine production, has brought this point to a sharp focus. Sima now offer the customer some sense of understanding of what is out there. It is fact that, throughout the world, more twine is produced on SIMA machines than any other.

The SIMA Group has recently introduced an accreditation scheme to confirm their approval of the manufacturing process and quality of the twine produced on their machines. This important and significant recognition is confirmed by the use of the SIMA Group's logo on products from those producers who have achieved a manufacturing standard and excellence approved by SIMA Group. Twines carrying the SIMA logo have the assurance that they have been manufactured to the SIMA Group's specification and under the strict quality control programme of the company.



Most of the leading European producers will have a considerable number of SIMA extruders and twisters in their factories. However, there are now more than 30 producers of twine in Europe, many of which do not have experience with production of big bale twines, hence the reason for this important independent certification process.

Hi-Yield baler twine, the popular, well known and respected brand of twine is a high quality, high performance product, suitable for all baling requirements, large or small, in any and all crops. The Hi-Yield brand is manufactured by a number of leading producers, all using SIMA Group equipment. Hi-Yield baler twine quality and performance and production methods are recognized by the SIMA Group, and confirmed with the awarding of the SIMA Group logo to the product, now shown on the packaging of all types of Hi-Yield twine.

In the very competitive and, often, confusing marketplace, where many spurious brands and makes of twine are offered, it is important to recognise and understand the quality and security that comes with a well known brand. It should be appreciated that SIMA Group approved baler twines do assure the consistency and performance required, together with the security of support in the field that comes with the Hi-Yield brand.



HI-YIELD
for Big Balers

- Fine 22,300
- Supersoft Hay 10,000
- Medium 12,000
- Big Bale 7,200





WINNER ADVANCED

3600m
Round Bale Netwrap

- Lower costs • More bales per roll
- Less waste • More efficiency
- More features



WIN!

Win a pallet of Tama Marathon™ 4.2km worth over £3500



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

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**.
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.

Crop packaging prices for 2008, set to be the highest for a number of years

It will not be a surprise to anyone that all crop packaging products will cost more in 2008. The current oil situation is firmly fixed in all our minds, but there are other reasons why we are going to see double digit % price increases this year.

The best quality Baler Twine, Netwrap and Stretchfilm are all made from virgin polymers, with no recycled raw materials used in the production of these products. Hence, the oil price and its direct relationship on the cost of raw materials has a direct and very real impact on the cost of the finished product. The illustration shows the steady increase in raw material costs over the past 12 months, a direct result of the ever increasing cost of the base product, oil. Most plastic producers are predicting that raw material prices will continue to rise through 2008 or, at 'best', level off, with no chance of reductions in the short term.

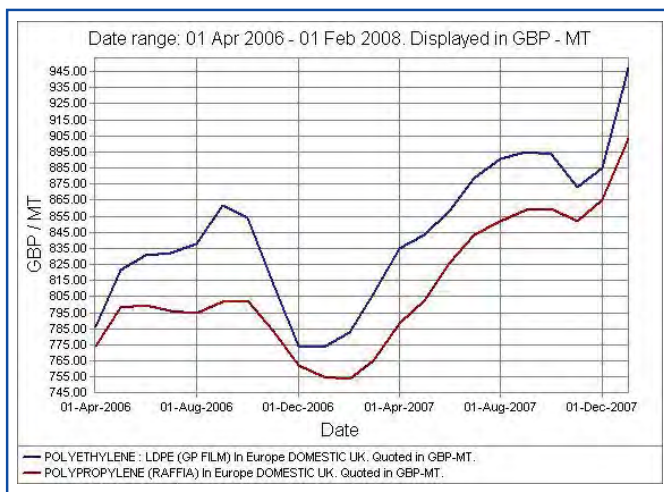
One other extremely important and very relevant consideration is the foreign currency exchange rate. The raw materials for baler twine, netwrap and film production are all priced and traded in Euros and, with this currency at an all time low against the UK pound, has a major effect on the pricing of the finished product. At the time of writing, the UK pound is worth 1.33 Euros, which compares very poorly against its 1.49 rate of this time last year, a decrease of almost 12%.

Other influencing factors must also be considered, such as transportation, where the cost of moving a pallet has risen with the steady increase in fuel prices. Likewise, the energy costs involved in the production of these products, often forgotten, must also be factored into the equation, meaning which ever way you look at it, things are costing more. What can we do about this?

Some types of net that can only give a +/- tolerance are bad enough, but some producers have been known to only give an indication of length, with no assurance of actual length.

So, buy cautiously and count the number of bales, remembering that cheap prices may be offered from producers still only able to offer the older type 3000m netwrap, and remember to compare on a like for like basis.

This method works easily with netwrap as well as stretchfilm, where roll length can easily be calculated from bale count, calculating film used per bale depending upon the number of layers applied. However, this is a little more difficult where twine is concerned. How can you calculate the numbers of bales per 2-spool pack of Big Bale twine, where most modern double-knotter balers may have up to 20 spools connected together to be able to bale. In such cases, the spools supplying the twine



The best advice the Crop Packaging Association can give you is be very careful of what you buy and from whom. Simple, yet valuable advice. If your chosen product is 'cheap' ask yourself why?

There will be a reason that something is 'out of line' with the general price in the market and, given that all manufacturers are subject to the situation outlined earlier, one should be suspicious. There are many simple ways that manufactures can 'cheat'; such as not actually giving the fully stated length in a roll of netwrap.

to the bale tops will not run out as quickly as those used for the remainder of the bale, making calculation impossible. Weighing the twine does not help either, as some manufacturers have to produce the twine 'heavy' to be able to achieve a good enough knot strength, so a 'correct' spool weight might give a short twine length in the spool. This can give reductions in manufacturing costs, so leading to a 'cheaper' price, though at the expense of the customer who now finds that more packs are required to achieve the same bale count.

The choice of professionals

Effective and Functional

Rani
RANI PLAST

Rani's new image

Raniwrap is now a very familiar name to UK and Irish farmers and wrapping contractors. In the three years since Rani increased their presence in the UK and Ireland, following the appointment of UAT as their sole agent and importer for these markets, Rani have seen their profile improve significantly.



Even though the film has been available in the UK in previous years, since UAT took over sales and distribution of Raniwrap sales have shown a sharp increase. Rani's Sales Manager Petri Hannukainen comments, "the UK and Ireland is a very important sales area for us, being one

of the main markets in Europe for silage stretchfilm. The growth we have seen over the past few years shows that Raniwrap has found a strong and loyal customer base".

Sales of green film have shown a distinct rise in the past few years, says UAT's Sales Manager Tim Carr "many contractors prefer to use green films nowadays, not necessarily to counter the summer temperature's effect on fermentation issues but more as a way to confirm the bale has been correctly wrapped, by being able to see film over-lap patterns on the bale, not possible when wrapping in black film. Poorly wrapped bales are always hidden with black film whilst green offers a visual check of over-lap and correct number of layers applied. Rani's Nature Green colour has proved very popular, with contractors preferring this slightly duller blue/green colour to some other brighter, almost white, shades of green available elsewhere".

As the film is now firmly established in the UK and Ireland, the look of RaniWrap Silage stretch film has been renewed; with the introduction of colour coded packaging that corresponds to the film colour. This makes stocking and selling the product much easier, compared with the previous packaging; where for the better, often for the worse, the boxes were the same colour. "We wanted to make better looking packaging and the change also has practical value. Now the users and customers can easily differentiate between the different coloured films, says Petri Hannukainen. The boxes continue to give the end user some benefit, in having the film un-rolling direction clearly shown on the top and bottom of the box, with circular cut-outs on each end also to make stacking on the wrapper's spare roll carrier easier.

Identity theft

OK, so this sounds a bit unlikely in a newsletter relating to crop packaging, but this is a real situation, which can and does mislead a lot of people. In crop packaging we know and are familiar with generic names for products, 'big bale twine', 'stretchwrap' and 'netwrap' are all exactly what they say they are, with this there is no dispute. However, where a name implies the product will do one thing very specifically and clearly does not, especially when this name is part of a recognised brand, and where that quality is also patented, this surely is 'identity theft'.

In 1998 netwrap producer Tama introduced to the world TamaNet Edge to Edge, a revolutionary product, which quite clearly 'bucked the trend' of what a knitted netwrap was able to do when applied to a bale; being able to cover from edge to edge, as the name implied. This unique net, unlike all other makes and brands of netwrap, which have a natural action of 'necking-in' on the bale when tension is applied when feeding through a baler, did not neck-in on the bale. This important quality, achieved through a different manufacturing process, was patented by the manufacturer and the name has since become a recognised and

respected name for this unique and patented net. Unfortunately, other producers have since tried to cash in on this niche product's domain, all claiming to be able to reach from one edge to the other edge, or abbreviating the words edge to edge with letters and numbers into a name with a 'formula', for instance. Either way, it's all identity theft.

Many customers are wise enough to understand and appreciate the differences, though some unscrupulous producers and distributors continue to try and live off the good and honest name of one to further their own interests. This, sadly, can lead to much confusion in the

market place, where the un-suspecting customer is looking to purchase a netwrap that will fulfil his requirements and finds that the cheaper alternative does not give what it so blatantly promises.

This should be seen as a real concern to all users of netwrap. With the increasing costs associated with all agricultural plastics these days, there will be those who will try and cut corners to capture business. The proof is there to be seen, when comparing the quality in bale coverage some 'spurious' nets actually give, compared to those that are truly edge to edge. Buyer beware!



An imposter that does not have the formula for edge to edge!



Same crop, same baler, same field, same day with the real Edge to Edge from Tama.

Marathon Launch

Tama's new netwrap Marathon 4.2km was publicly unveiled to the agricultural world at the Agritechnica Show at Hannover, in November.

In front of an invited audience of customers who have helped trial the net during its development programme over the past 3 years, Tama Sales Export Manager Susan Vierba welcomed everyone and explained the reason for the development of the advanced netwrap. Able to bring huge, yet affordable benefits to users of round bale netwrap as well as making a positive move to reducing farm waste from the extra long length net on each roll, by reducing the number of net rolls required to achieve the same bale count.

Technical Manager Graham Robson explained in detail the development process and how such advances have been possible, to achieve the combination of extra long length within the same roll dimensions as normal netwrap and a workable roll weight. It was also shown how

the development of the raw materials to obtain these results actually contributed in producing a netwrap that is actually the strongest available in the market, with a higher strength to weight ratio than any other net.

The new netwrap, which is an incredible 4,200m long is called Marathon 4.2km, to help show the benefits the new net brings, as described by Susan Vierba "like a marathon race, this net keeps running and running". The net is still the familiar 'Edge to Edge' black and white colour, though with a much simplified zebra pattern to more easily identify left from right on the roll and, as importantly, on the bale.

The technology developed to be able to achieve this has been named 'Bale+' and is to be incorporated into OEM brands of Tama's leading netwrap, including Claas Select Rollatex Pro 4200m and John Deere's XtraNet 4200m. The net's lengthy development programme, which included a close working relationship

with the baler manufacturers to ensure compatibility and full acceptance, also involved substantial quantities of the net used in a number of key UK and Irish locations, as well as in the German, French and Scandinavian markets in Europe and the important and testing environment of Australia and New Zealand. Such an extensive 'volume trial' showed, without question, the suitability and popularity of the new net, with over 15 million bales wrapped in the new net so far!



In front of an influential audience, Technical Manager Graham Robson details the new net's properties

Tama **Marathon™ 4.2 km** **Setting New Records!**

A stronger netwrap with 40% more length than a standard 3000m roll, and a manageable roll weight!



you save:



Time



Money



Waste



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PO Box 90, Alton, Hampshire
GU34 1XR
U.K.
Tel: +44 (0)1420 545800
Fax: +44 (0)1420 549549
Email: enquiries@croppackaging.com

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