



News

Crop Packaging Association News

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Pricing 2009

Pricing indications for 2009 cause concerns, as the current £/€ exchange rate issue continues to produce volatile pricing on crop packaging products across all three products; net, twine and stretchfilm. This frightening situation means an increase due to the devaluation of the Pound against the Euro of approx 25% alone, compared to this time in 2008, notwithstanding any raw material cost increases. As crop packaging products are mostly imported into the UK, this situation will wreak havoc across the entire product range, increases in raw material prices, energy costs and transportation will also have a further effect on price levels.

One very difficult point to predict will be actual market forces, where demand on product and, therefore, anticipated delivery times, could create difficulties. Emerging and increasing markets, such as France and Central Europe, continue to show increased pressure on netwrap production, highlighting the fact that demand could very easily outstrip supply. Therefore, it is expected that netwrap price increases will be in excess of 30%, a result of this situation combined with increases from the exchange rate and raw material increases.

This is unlike stretchfilm, where manufacturers are producing for both industrial and agricultural

supply, a downturn in sales of industrial film has created over-capacity in the entire market. So, whilst increases in film prices are expected, for all the reasons noted above, they may not be at the same level as netwrap.

One point, often over looked, is that netwrap production takes so much longer than film or twine, for the same given tonnage of plastic used. With film or twine, the manufacturing is one process; the raw materials are extruded, and rolled, or spooled in the case of twine, into the finished product in a very short time. For instance, it takes only 10 minutes to produce 1,500m of film onto a reel and the extrusion machine is actually making up to 8 rolls side by side, which means 8 full rolls of 750mm film are being made every 10 minutes. Netwrap, by comparison, is a much longer and two part process. Firstly, the film for the netwrap needs to be manufactured, in a similar way to the process for silage stretch film. Once the film

is made, it is then taken to other production lines where the film is slit and knitted into rolls of netwrap. It is this process that takes time, taking a number of hours to make a full roll of netwrap, depending upon how efficient the producer is.

It, therefore, follows that netwrap production, being much more energy and time intensive to complete has a significant effect on the costing of the finished product, and due to the time to manufacture the market requirement these factories are dedicated to one type of production the entire time, taking the entire year to manufacture sufficient netwrap for that given season, which might only have 12 – 14 weeks of actual netwrap use in the field. This is unlike film producers who have the ability to vary the types of products produced and the markets in which these varying products are placed, so spreading the cost risk.



Net goes 'greener'

In recent years the impact of packaging materials on the everyday world has become a common topic of conversation and, for most of us now, its disposal has become a 'necessary evil'. To our Crop Packaging Association subscribers, using plastic materials to bale or wrap bales is a necessity to their work and, without serious and significant changes in forage conservation methods, the practice is not going to change.



Marathon can typically save this much waste packaging

However, far from being something you cannot do anything about, there is a way to reduce the amount of plastic used on the farm, certainly as far as round baling is concerned, which will give a considerable reduction in the waste

plastic for disposal. As a result of its unique blends of higher grade polymers, Tama's new Bale+ 4,200m netwrap is a lighter construction netwrap, though because of this is actually considerably stronger than existing types of net. What this means to the end user is, not only will he not have to purchase as many actual rolls as before to do the same bale count, thereby considerably reducing the amount of waste packaging and cores to dispose of, but the reduction in actual net weight means that, for the same number of bales made, there is actually less plastic used. This will have a significant impact on reducing the end of season packaging and plastic waste.

Consider this; by using Bale+ 4,200m netwrap a contractor making 10,000 round bales annually can reduce his waste plastic output by over 300kgs in netwrap waste alone. Using Bale+ 4,200m netwrap for this bale count would mean 10 rolls LESS to purchase and the associated reduction in packaging disposal from 10 fewer rolls, not to mention a saving in time and effort carrying and loading 10 fewer rolls. For those making upwards of 40,000

bales a year, the reductions in waste plastic will be in the region of 1.2 tonnes LESS waste plastic, every year – now that is worth thinking



Reduce your waste netwrap burden with Marathon

about.

We all need to try and do our bit for the environment, this way you make a conscious saving in plastic use without any reduction in quality, in fact, for those still using 'standard' white netwrap, by using Bale+ 4,200m, you will probably see a considerable improvement in the quality of your bales from the net's built-in Edge to Edge performance.

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Shows, shows, shows.

This year we have seen the biggest ever LAMMA show, held in Newark, Notts, in early February. This annual event has grown from humble beginnings, originally held at the Lincolnshire show ground, to be the UK and Ireland's premier agricultural machinery and sundry business event, attracting exhibitors from all levels of the industry, and an unprecedented number of visitors through the gate over its two days. This year, the show's 28th annual event, showed clearly that the industry needs and makes the most of a dedicated show for agricultural business, where the trade companies can exhibit and display and meet their all important retail customers, face to face.

However, large as it is, the LAMMA show cannot stand up against the might of the French national agricultural show, SIMA, held the last week of February, just outside Paris. This event, more like the old Royal Smithfield show here in the UK, though significantly larger, was well attended by many UK and Irish visitors, judging by the accents that could be heard throughout the many display halls. The SIMA show, essentially, caters for the French 'home' market, with many names and products displayed there that we may not see here in the UK. Likewise, in the crop packaging business, there were a number of companies displaying their wares, again most of which were

unfamiliar to the UK buyer. However, it was very clear that the French market is increasing in its hunger for netwrap, to replace the traditional twine method of round baling. The French market, so long being a stronghold for fine twine, is changing at a very rapid pace, as the method and style of farming changes to suit the tightening economic situations that prevail. Where, traditionally, round baling was farmer driven, it is the larger scale contractor that is taking a foot-hold in the business, where time and efficiency become more important, so the slow and in-efficient twine method is being left behind. This change is clearly demonstrating that speed, efficiency and performance of netwrap are the most important points for the French farmer, the choice, again, is clearly premium net, which gives maximum benefits in all areas, particularly crop protection and baler output.

Premium netwrap producer Tama Plastic Industry was well represented at the show, with most of the major baler manufacturers recommending Tama's higher quality netwrap for their balers. As well as being the producer of Edge to Edge netwrap, Tama has its own, wholly owned, group of European sales companies, which includes Tama UAT here in the UK and in Ireland and, in France, A3F also known as Tama France, who also had a

large presence at the SIMA show.

The A3F stand displayed Tama's recent move to present themselves more clearly in the market, with their new name and logo Tama-France.

As this year of agricultural shows moves further on, we have the UK's major national grassland event in 2009, Grassland UK, at the Bath & West Showground on Thursday 7 May. This one day event held on 60 acres of land adjoining the showground, showcases cutting, baling and wrapping demonstrations, with trade stands, seminars and clamp demonstrations. The Crop Packaging Association will be there, as usual, with all the latest news, and advice relating to crop packaging, as well as their second-to-none technical support for all baler and wrapper users with regard to netwrap and film service and operation problems.

Finally, the year will close with Europe's largest and most impressive agricultural show, the Agritechnica event, in Hannover, Germany in November. This is a long way off, and we have to get through this season before then, but the Crop Packaging Association will be there too, so why not come and see us.



Dealer profile

It is not by accident that the UK's most popular netwrap is the familiar black and white striped Edge to Edge net from Tama. This unique net clearly offers the best value for money and greatest benefits to the end user, as demonstrated by its popularity and preference by professional contractors and baler operators, as well as the baler manufacturers. Its success and outstanding performance come from being designed and manufactured by end users... just like you.

Tama Plastic Industry are wholly owned by the Kibbutz on which the head office and main manufacturing plant is located. The kibbutz has a large, modern farm with all the equipment and needs of a large modern farm. Their animals need feed and bedding, so crops are grown and baled, so requiring netwrap, which they also manufacture – unique, eh? So, you can see, it is not by accident that their net is the most popular in the market, it is by design and know-how of what is required that achieved this goal, of the only true 'Premium' netwrap.

Occasionally, we hear of end users who, believing that all netwrap was much the same, have never tried Premium netwrap and believed there was no real reason to change. One major agricultural wholesaler in the North-West, who understand netwrap has proved this with year on year increases in their netwrap business. South West Lancs Farmers, based in Skelmersdale, saw this as a challenge to help make these differences between Premium and standard netwrap easy to understand and demonstrate with their customers. Managing Director John Parton and Sales Manager Tony Whyte took it upon themselves to set up an intense programme of visiting and educating many end users in their trading area, in conjunction with Warren Tatton, the Regional Sales specialist of the manufacturer Tama UAT, to explain these differences and bring a new perspective to their annual purchasing habits of SWLF's customers. "It is easy to read the words about differences between one net and another, but far easier to understand when seen on the bale" explains Tony; "it was quite frightening to see the amount of bale that was left un-covered by cheaper nets that are on offer". This fact is often over-looked when considering which net to buy, what seems like a good buy, cheaper at the point of sale, will end up costing more in the long-term, as it fails to cover the crop it was bought to protect. Tama UAT's Warren Tatton describes it like this "in its packaging, apart from the colour, most net look pretty much the same, though once the net begins to be used it is very easy to see why some are much cheaper, they are leaving anything up to 15% of the bale

un-covered, making wrapping difficult and a long-term problem, by putting air into the bale, caught up in the exposed edges of the silage bale". Warren has considerable experience in this area, having an agricultural background himself, he can readily appreciate the risks involved for the end user, but understands that to some it seems like yet more expense. "Many customers only think about the price of the roll, not that by buying Premium netwrap, with Edge to Edge technology, but also the much longer length of net on the roll that this offers, actually makes a big difference in the value of the bale being made. Not only the feed value to the animal, from higher nutrition silage by eliminating air from the bale, but also re-sale value at market for silage and straw bales, that are much better protected in a net that covers the entire bale".

South West Lancashire Farmers, established in 1921 as a marketing co-operative, are a farmer-owned and controlled agricultural merchant. The company has grown to be a flourishing, competitive, commercial enterprise supplying animal feeds, fertilisers, seeds and other farm requisites and also undertakes grain trading, throughout Lancashire, South Cumbria, Cheshire and Derbyshire. The message that South West Lancs Farmers and Tama UAT have been spreading over the past two seasons has taken hold, as more end users have seen the better results from the change to a Premium net. Tony is very happy with these results, "not only has it brought us more business, it has shown our customers that we try our best to bring them the best products and the best service, this exercise helped to kill the myth that price is everything, there is a lot to be said for value for money and a guarantee of quality" says Tony.

The proof is seeing the visible difference on bales throughout the north-west, easily



John Parton, Managing Director of South West Lancashire Farmers

identified by the black and white stripes, where poorly covered white bales show themselves up by comparison. Across SWLF's trading area many customers are happy to have made the choice of Premium net; as Preston contractor David Reynolds explains "I refuse to use cheap net and will have nothing else but Edge to Edge in my baler". A similar story can be heard from John Brewer of Blackburn, a long time user of TamaNet and one who well understands the point of value for money and quality, as the inventor of Quickfencer, "I once tried using the cheap imitation net for one season, and very quickly realised the mistake I'd made, the cheap net gave so many problems and my customers complained that it didn't cover the bales", whilst Wigan based Stuart Baldwin insists "I wouldn't use anything else".

In the past two years, SWLF and Tama UAT's co-operation on delivering the message of the long-term savings that can be gained from buying Premium net have shown very positive results for all concerned. By overcoming the initial price differences in roll price between it standard net, end users have quickly seen the rewards which stack up from the possible meagre cost difference of pennies per bale being able to deliver increased value bales, either in direct feed value or better quality to their farmer customers. This is further enhanced by the choice of much longer rolls, making the baler operator's work easier and more cost effective, by reducing down times. This year SWLF will be increasing their Edge to Edge range, with the new, extra long Edge to Edge Marathon net, Which at 4,200m long offers a further 20% increase on their existing 3,600m Pro-Tec Edge to Edge. This new net makes Edge to Edge now 40% longer than standard white net, all with far better covered bales – surely there should be no reason not to use it.

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Number of STRAW bales per year
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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 and/or wrapper

Please tick this box should you not wish to be kept informed about our crop packaging offers and market information

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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 – 22nd June 2009
4. The winners will be notified in last week of June 2009.
5. The winners will have the rolls delivered to their choice of address within United Kingdom by 1st week of July 2009
6. Prize deliveries will be managed by UAT.
7. Decision on winner is final – No correspondence will be entered into.

Code: CPA-14

Make your bale worth it

Yes it's that old chestnut of a subject again, fuel prices. But as we watch and suffer the up-and-down antics of fuel costs, with crude oil barrel prices at the mercy of, alternatively, stock market forecasts, the credit crunch, OPEC output or our failing currency exchange rate, it does make one realise that baling is becoming an expensive operation. With this understanding, it is all the more important to ensure that your precious and expensive time and effort is rewarded by maximising the quality of the bales you make.



If, up to now, many have been used to the everyday 'losses' associated with baling and wrapping, fuel and general cost increases should focus the mind to try and avoid these losses, and understanding exactly how and where this can be achieved. It has sometimes been a difficult equation for some to realise that the price of something is not necessarily related to the cost it incurs. In other words, just because something is cheaper than an equivalent product, it doesn't follow that the cheaper article will save money – in fact, often times this is quite the opposite. I am sure we have all heard the expression "buy cheap – buy twice".

The desire for ever heavier, denser and better formed bales naturally goes hand in hand with a requirement for higher horsepower to achieve this, which, in turn creates a thirstier tractor using more fuel. It can be argued that this increase in fuel demand is offset by the greater bale weight that it is producing, but what if

some of that effort is wasted in not achieving the best bale possible. This can be seen as the farming equivalent of 'inefficiency in the system'.

This important concern is being voiced by many who are having bales made on their behalf by someone else as well as those who actually make the bales, how can these inefficiencies be curbed? Baled and wrapped silage all looks pretty much the same, when wrapped up in plastic and stored. However, it is at feeding out time that the truth is there to be seen. Is all that time, effort and expense worth it? It does not pay to have to supplement costly silage bales with additional feed stock, when it is realised the bale's real feed value is not what it should have been. Is this point even considered, or is there a 'natural wastage' that is accepted from every bale? Do farmers really know that their bales can return them a far better value if they are not put at risk from the use of poor netwrap?

A few years ago, research by the Centre for Dairy Research (CEDAR) at the University of Reading, which clearly illustrated the amount of wasted forage from a poorly wrapped silage bale, with regard to the film application. What is often over-looked in this regard is the effect that a poor covering of netwrap has on the eventual quality of the bale, due to the effects mould spoilage from the presence of air in the bale at the time of wrapping, caused by the uncovered and fluffy edges of the bale being the perfect 'trap' for air in, what should be a totally an-aerobic environment.

How many of the actual 'customers' of round silage bales actually appreciate what the bale was like before being hidden beneath layers of film? Even though it is immediately covered in stretchfilm, it is still vitally important that the bale be fully covered in a 'premium' netwrap. This type of net, with the unique 'edge to edge' technology, is recognized by its familiar Zebra striped pattern which clearly differentiates it

from white 'standard' netwrap, is the preferred option from almost all of the major round baler manufacturers, not by accident or coincidence, but because guarantees the best bale possible from the baler. The cheap white netwraps available in the market are a poor compromise for most baling jobs, especially where high value silage which is becoming more and more expensive to produce. Bad bale covering incorporates air into the bale, compromising quality, as well as allowing the film to be punctured on the corners from rough stalks and stems poking through when being wrapped, allowing more air to penetrate the bale. If, a farmer is forced to dispose of, on average, 5% of every bale due to spoilage from air moulds, through poor bale coverage, this translates as an incredible one bale in 20 being



wasted.

However you do the calculation of annual or seasonal costings, when it is broken down, the cost of wasting one in 20 bales comes directly off the bottom line of your farming business profit margin.

Can you afford to cut these kind of corners in this global climate?

The following is food for thought ...

On average, a tractor will use half a litre of fuel to produce one 800kg silage bale = 28p

Is it really worth the expense of making a bale, if you're not making a good one?

New Bale+ netwrap and your baler

We are now seeing much evidence in the market of the new extra long netwrap from Tama, produced with the new Bale+ formulation plastic. To reach this step in its evolution, there have been many sleepless nights, much head scratching and an awful lot of research and development. Tama Plastic Industry have done more R&D than most of us could ever imagine, as to achieve this unique blend of raw material and a product that delivers 40% more length, within the same weight and dimension constraints, so it works in your baler like any other net, is a remarkable achievement.



Before the new netwrap ever reached any customers, it went through extensive development and field trials close to Tama, in their own fields, on their own crops working in their own balers, being a kibbutz owned company Tama are in the unique position of having their own farms and, therefore, knowledge and expertise with their own balers and bale making to know that an end user wants and expects. Compare this with other netwrap producers, whose products are made and marketed more as a commodity than answering any specific need of the customer.



The development has, naturally, been a longterm project for Tama, with many updates as the product evolved, remember, this is completely new ground. Speaking recently at the SIMA agricultural show, in Paris, Tama Sales Director Aviv Linn commented "a major part of Tama's strategy is technical innovation, where we have lead the market since we stepped into this business 20 years ago. One result of new innovation, however, is moving into unknown areas, which naturally brings an element of risk and the only way this has been overcome is working hand in hand with our loyal customers, and only after it is in regular commercial use can the final fine-tuning of the product be achieved". This has been the case, with Tama taking on board one or two minor points during last season, where a number of customers worked closely with Tama's R&D team to reach a better knowledge of what was needed, and in the 'closed season' here in Europe, the Australian and New Zealand market have worked almost entirely with Bale+ net, which has incorporated those final changes implemented by the R&D tests in Europe last summer. One very important point that Tama gained from this extensive field development work is the condition and set up of

many balers. As Bale+ is an extremely strong plastic formulation, with the highest strength-to-weight ratio of any netwrap ever produced,

Tama advise that it is important that the netwrap tension and cutting system of the baler is correctly adjusted. This comes from their considerable experience with all makes and models of baler, where many netting systems seen in the field, especially over the past three years or so of the Bale+ development programme, required minor adjustments to achieve the optimum performance from the machine, this applied not only to Bale+ net but to the customer's existing net as well. It is obvious that in order to achieve the best output from the baler, it needs to be set up correctly. Tama recommend that a careful study of the netwrap feed, spreading and tension system on your baler should be carried out before the start of this coming season, with particular attention paid to the tension system, which ultimately, has a large influence on the spreading of the net and the ability of the baler to cut the net cleanly and uniformly, both important for good bale production.



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A duty of care to your baler

Following on well from the information and advice on the new Bale+ netwrap in your baler, it is, perhaps, important to spend a little time looking into one very typical problem with netwrap feeding, which will affect any and all makes of net sometime.



Where the baler has feeding rollers, inspect closely and ensure they are making close contact uniformly across their entire width, netwrap may be very strong, but it is thin and rather flimsy and can easily be distorted

to not spread or feed evenly if the rollers are mal-adjusted. Similarly, consider the system to tension the net roll in the baler, which is used to keep the netwrap tight to ensure a clean cut at the end of the wrapping cycle. Netwrap is manufactured under very controlled conditions, which produce a correctly tensioned and uniformly wound roll of net. On some balers, where the roll is free turning in the netwrap system, the tension of the net can change considerably from the diameter and weight of the roll both reducing as the net roll is being used. Often this can be seen on the net roll in the box, where the outer layers of net on the roll are loose, causing the net edges to come in some way from their original place on the edge of the roll. Contrary to some comments, this situation is not a result of poor net winding during production and everything to do with allowing the net roll tension to become too slack. Once there is a slackness in the outer

layers of the net, this will continue to worsen as the roll reduces, leading to very poor net coverage of the bale.



It may often be easy to blame the net for poor coverage or problems arising from a poor net cut, but in reality, this is often not the case at all. As with all makes and models of baler, there are adjustments and settings to achieve and maintain the correct net tension, it is here that you should begin your investigations into what's going wrong and why.



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