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# Recycling scheme launch

By Charles Abel

**Farmers and contractors now have a dedicated scheme to help them recycle bale stretch-film, net-wrap, twine and other non-packaging agricultural plastics.**

A new nationwide collection scheme launched on 1st December 2019 aims to transform the recycling of agri-plastics after their useful life on-farm ends. Agriculture, Plastic and Environment UK, known as APE UK, aims to fully control the life cycle of agri-plastics as part of a more sustainable agriculture. Its ambitious target is for 80% of such waste to be recycled within five years, rather than being sent for landfill or incineration.

“Tama takes its responsibilities very seriously” states Warren Tatton, UK Commercial Manager for Tama. “We have been working closely with other producers to bring the APE scheme in the UK to a position that really deals with the presence of used netwrap, twine and film on the farm. The key is support from all quarters of Agriculture, from central government, to recyclers, to farmers. Seeing many schemes already up and running in many countries, Tama and other producers have made the UK a top priority to deal with used farm plastic. Tama’s world leading innovations over the years of reducing the amount of plastic on each bale, whilst maintaining strength and performance, is just one part of the producer’s responsibility. Another is dealing with the end of product life in a way that is cost effective, non-legislative and that provides a service which will result in a better environment for future generations of farmers.”

## Mounting pressure

The scheme is designed to tackle head-on the mounting pressure for much more to be done about plastics waste recycling. It is a responsible environmental commitment which the industry can be proud of – as it turns its back on landfill and burning.

As Carlo Banchemo, Project Manager of APE UK, says, the plastics-in-the-environment debate isn’t a war on plastics, it’s a war on plastic waste. “Plastics are absolutely essential to the productivity and efficiency of UK farming and account for just 3.5% of total UK plastics use. It would be a tremendously retrograde step for them to be banned or become uneconomic.”

## No alternative

Currently, only 25% of non-packaging farmers plastic goes to recycling. “Most farmers just don’t have the option to do the right thing,” says Mr Banchemo. “APE UK fixes that.”

The scheme will help farmers and contractors meet their environmental obligations and deliver a valuable feedstock for recycling, as part of the circular economy, all for less than the cost of a pint of milk per roll of stretch-film.

Similar schemes are already working well across Europe. Ireland’s national collection scheme, IFFPG, started in 2001 and collects 71% of such waste, admittedly with legislative support. Similar numbers are being achieved through voluntary schemes in France and Germany, and schemes are underway in Spain and several other European countries.

**“Most farmers just don’t have the option to do the right thing. APE UK fixes that.”**

**Carlo Banchemo, APE UK Project Manager**

## December 1 launch

The UK scheme, launched on 1st December 2019, gives farmers and contractors a truly viable alternative to landfill or incineration. “We’re putting the talk into action, which is why we have the support of the NFU, DEFRA and the Environment Agency,” says Mr Banchemo.

## Voluntary process

In September 2019 the EU Circular Plastics Alliance committed to ensure that 10 million tonnes of used plastic will be voluntarily recycled across Europe by 2022, with a significant proportion incorporated into the producers’ own manufacturing processes, as already happens with

some plastic sheet, mulch and twine. Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP, has reinforced the UK's commitment to a voluntary approach based on extended producer responsibility, rather than legislation. Funding will be via a levy, equivalent to £20/t.

### Supply chain

The entire supply chain, including manufacturers, distributors, farmers, co-ops and contractors will be equally involved, with APE UK run by a board representing all those sectors. Manufacturers accounting for 80% of the UK market have signed up.

APE UK will ensure collection firms extend their services to the entire UK, so no farm is outside the scheme. Economies of scale should mean collection costs fall from the current £120-200/t. The target is for 80% of the UK's 44,000t of non-packaging agri-plastics to be collected for recycling within five years. The ambitious "but entirely achievable" year one goal is 20,000t. Very high levels of contamination mean agricultural plastic waste currently has very little commercial value, only competing with other feedstocks after thorough washing. Facilities are being established to

do this but farmers and contractors also need to play their part, by segregating and storing plastic waste correctly.

### Quality waste

"You'd be amazed at what gets thrown in – plastic toilet seats, Wellington boots, anything remotely connected to plastics," Mr Banchero comments "but it's often the wrong type of plastic. For recycling to work we have to improve the quality of waste collected." Significantly, the scheme does not apply to plastics used in the packaging for bought-in inputs, such as chemical cans and fertiliser sacks.

To improve the efficiency of recycling APE Europe is undertaking significant research, including better ways of cleaning mulch film, which can carry up to 4t of soil contamination per 1t of mulch film.

UK farmers and contractors are finally getting the practical, technical, educational and financial help they deserve to improve agri-plastics waste collection and recycling. It's a truly on-trend initiative – and one you'd be well advised to engage with.

■ The plastics APE UK tackles are listed in the panel below.

#### APE UK aims

- Provide farmers with an environmental alternative to landfill or incineration
- Collect 80% of UK's 44,000t agri-plastics in five years
- Apply to all non-packaging agri-plastic products
- Whole supply chain involved – farmers, distributors, manufacturers
- Cost-effective access to collection services
- Full UK coverage

#### Plastics for recycling

- Bale stretch film
- Bale net-wrap
- Silage sheet
- Mulch film
- Bale twine
- Greenhouse film
- Small poly-tunnels
- Irrigation pipe (late 2020)
- Crop fleece (later)

## Lamma Tama winner

### Shropshire farmer picks up free pallet of Tama twine

A free pallet of Tama HD Extra twine was a welcome surprise for Shropshire farmer Kevin Meddins this year.

Kevin had forgotten he had even entered the prize draw at the Lamma show in Birmingham at the start of the year – but had a nice surprise in May when he was told that he had won the prize.

He said: "One of the reps on the stand said, 'Put your name on that and you might win a pallet of string or some net-wrap!' So I did and never thought any more about it until I was told I'd got a whole pallet."

And, once he had gone through that, he was back again to buy some LSB Power ready for next season.



Kevin Meddins, TEG Meddins and Co, Whettleton Farms, Shropshire, with Jonathan Coleclough of Tama

"I've never really used Tama before but the first lot went well so I thought it was a good chance to try some other Tama twine as well."

Kevin has run TEG Meddins and Co on Whettleton Farms with his brother David since 1986. "I think we're the third generation." The business is a 480-acre mixed arable, beef and sheep farm, with arable accounting for around 250 acres. "It's about half arable and the rest is beef and sheep – we've got 80 suckler cows and 150 breeding ewes," said

Kevin. "Years ago we used to have a lot more ewes but that seems to have dwindled a bit."

Kevin handles all the baling on his Claas 2200 Advantage Quadrant Baler. "We did about 6,000 bales this season – it typically averages between 5,000 and 8,000, depending on the season. But we also do contract, as well as a bit of grain haulage to mix things up a bit, which is important given all the current uncertainty! You can't just change things at will in farming, so you need to be able to diversify a bit."

During the season, Mr Heading was able to call upon Tama Assist. This specialist service is offered exclusively to customers of Tama Netwrap, Baler Twine and Stretchfilm where Tama can offer guidance, advice and troubleshooting free of charge from a team of baler specialists located up and down the country. Years of experience and understanding of balers and wrappers means Tama can support customers with advice over the phone and when needed, will visit a customer in the field to ensure the very best trouble-free baling and customer satisfaction. Initially, Mr Heading, was concerned that he was not getting the best from the Tama Netwrap, but a quick call to the Tama Assist Team helped Mr Heading quickly identify and resolve a baler setup problem over the phone. Later in the season, a second issue arose, this time with the feeding mechanism. Through the use of Tama Assist and a visit to his farm, a member of the Tama assist team was able to diagnose and rectify his baler issue in the field. Mr Heading said 'This is something that is extremely valuable to me. Relying on the support of the Netwrap producer to assist me with baler setup was something that I had never considered before. Now that I am aware of the service they provide I am confident in my purchases to ensure I get the best from my baler.'

## A Burning Success

### Mr Charles Heading was the lucky winner of 10 rolls of TamaNet+ Edge to Edge 4,500m offered in the pre-season Crop Packaging Association competition.

Mr Heading entered the competition in February during an excellent open day at the Pinchbeck branch of G & J Peck Limited's in Lincolnshire. The Heading family has been farming the 500-acre slice of Thorney near Peterborough since 1919 growing a mixture of Wheat, Barley, Peas and Sugar Beet. The farm is further supported by an appreciation of classic tractors and their restoration. Three years ago, as part of a government funded scheme, a Biomass Burner was installed to heat the workshop, paint shop and surrounding buildings. The burner and its 5ft round chamber are what drove the Headings to invest in a new Krone Comprima V150 round baler from G & J Peck Limited. The Burner has an annual consumption of roughly 600 straw bales and this baler is well matched to producing the required 4ft 6in bales required to keep the workshop heated. Since the arrival of the baler, further opportunities have arisen with the current season resulting in over 3,000 bales being made. The current baled crops are a mixture of Wheat, Barley & Rape Straw, Haylage and a wild flower mix from underneath the 16 nearby wind turbines.

With the primary need being bales for the Biomass Boiler, there were some issues being caused by the standard Netwrap being used. Fluffy edges presented problems when loading bales into the Burner as well as drawing unwanted moisture into the bales while sitting in the stack. The TamaNet+ Edge to Edge Netwrap was able to improve in both areas. The patented Edge to Edge Technology means that every bale is completely covered meaning no more fluffy edges catching on the way into Burner chamber. The complete Edge to Edge covering of the bales also means they are well protected from the weather, preventing excess moisture from entering the bales which can cause real problems in a Biomass Boiler. The superior length of the TamaNet+ Edge to Edge 4,500m rolls means that it is possible to bale the entire year's fuel using just 2 rolls of Netwrap.



Jonathan Coleclough of Tama with competition winner Charles Heading and Richard Clay from G & J Peck

# Competition time Win some machinery with Tama!



**Tama have teamed up with machinery manufacturer Grizzly Bespoke Fabrications to give you a chance to win one of two purpose built machines to help you with your baling!**

These machines allow multiple quantities of netwrap or twine to be taken out into the field, minimising downtime during the most crucial time of the year! Running throughout the winter and spring, you can enter online, or at any of the numerous tradeshow the CPA will be attending, including Lamma and Grassland & Muck. Two machines are available to be won, a netwrap model and twine model.

You can enter online at:

[www.tama-uat.co.uk](http://www.tama-uat.co.uk), or come and speak to one of the Tama team when you see us at a show and we will have a competition card all ready for you to fill in. The winners will be drawn after Grassland & Muck and delivery very shortly after that, to make sure you can use it for the harvest.

## Netwrap Machine Prize –

**Grizzly Wrap Master** with 6 foot crop press roller for faster baling eliminating crop build-up under the tractor. Fitted with the advanced Marker light package including indicators, twin protected strobe lights and built in LED work lights. Equipped with Twin Netwrap holders and capacity for 18 rolls of Stretchfilm which can be tipped over hydraulically for easy loading.

## Twine Machine Prize –

**Grizzly Crop Growler** with 5 foot crop press roller and adjustable bale nudge bar. Fitted with Marker lights, Twin strobe lights and a capacity for 6 spools of Tama Big Bale Twine.

*Good luck!*



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

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