

waste – you can handle it

New rules on agricultural waste

Stop tipping, stop burning

This guide is to help farmers manage their waste under the new rules. It aims to provide a basic introduction to the new rules and the changes you need to make.

What is a farm tip/dump? What is waste burning?

- Farm tips/dumps and burning waste such as plastic on your farm will be things of the past when new rules come into force in early 2006.
- A farm dump or tip is any area on your farm where you've got rid of waste, like dumping your waste in an old quarry/hole in the ground or even dumping old tyres in woodland.
- Waste burning is when you dispose of waste by incinerating it or burning it out in the open.

What has changed?

- From early 2006 you won't legally be able to operate your farm tip/dump without a permit. These permits are expensive to get and maintain.
- From early 2006 you also won't be able to burn some wastes, such as plastics, in incinerators or in open fires. You'll be able to burn cleaned plastic pesticide containers in a drum incinerator for a year after the new controls start, but after this, you have to stop burning them.
- If you bury waste without permission or cause pollution by burning waste, you'll be breaking the law and could face serious legal and financial penalties.
- These changes bring farmers in line with the laws that have applied to other businesses for many years.

What to do next

The new controls mean that you'll have waste that you can't burn or bury anymore. You'll have to decide what to do with that waste (you can store your own waste on your farm for 12 months).

Getting rid of waste costs money. It's far better, for both your pocket and the environment, if you don't produce it in the first place. We've produced a leaflet to help you reduce the amount of waste you produce and save money. It's available free by visiting www.environment-agency.gov.uk/agriculturalwaste or calling our National Customer Contact Centre on **0845 603 3113**.

You will still have waste even if you reduce the amount you produce. You can do things on your farm with this waste to save you disposal costs. Some of these things include:

- Using waste paper as animal bedding.
- Using tyres on a silage clamp.
- Chipping logs and branches from cutting down trees and hedges, and shredding plant material.
- Clearing mud and debris (dredgings) from water-courses such as streams and ditches and depositing it along their banks.
- Using a compactor bin to crush waste. Baling waste plastic silage wrap, shredding paper packaging, crushing empty containers, and cleaning pesticide containers.
- Burning logs and branches from fallen or chopped down trees. Burning untreated timber from fence mending. Burning hedge trimmings, leaves, bark and any other naturally occurring plant matter.
- Letting spoiled crops rot down at the farm where they are produced, for example rotten potatoes (when you spread your own plant material on your own farm for agricultural benefit we don't consider it to be waste).

Usually the new controls would mean that you would need a waste management licence to do these activities but they have been made exempt (they are therefore known as exemptions). If you carry out an exempt activity you won't need a waste management licence but you will need to register it.

There are other exemptions available but we think that the ones listed above are the main ones you need. If you want more information on the other exemptions, visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk/waste-exemptions or call us on **0845 603 3113**.

Exemptions are free for agricultural waste: all you have to do is register.

If you want to do any of these activities you'll need to register an exemption **but don't worry you have a year to do this**. If you are interested in registering any of these exemptions you can do it online at the defra website (available in early 2006) or by calling us on **0845 603 3113**. We can't register you yet but if you give us your name and address we will send you an exemptions pack when the new controls start. Don't worry, this will give you plenty of time to register.

Sometimes you'll find that you still have waste that you need to send off your farm. The Recycling Directory (www.wasterecycling.org.uk) is designed to help you find sites that can take your waste. All you have to do is put in your postcode and the wastes you are interested in getting rid of and the website will search for your nearest waste management site. Don't worry if you are not online, just phone **0845 603 3113** with your postcode and the list of waste you need to get rid of and we'll do the search for you.

Before buying a so-called 'exempt incinerator' please seek advice from our National Customer Contact Centre on **0845 603 3113**. This could help you avoid costly problems.

What to remember

- You **must** stop using your farm tip/dump in early 2006 without a permit. Keep an eye on the farming press, the exact date will be advertised.
- You could apply to us to keep your farm tip legal, but you'd need to meet strict landfill operating standards, which is a very expensive and time-consuming option.
- You **must** stop burning farm wastes such as plastic in early 2006 (except for cleaned plastic containers in a drum incinerator – which you can do for a further year after the start date of the new controls).
- You can still burn untreated timber, wood, bark, other natural plant tissue and crop residues in the open, but you'll need to register an exemption with the Environment Agency by early 2007. Again, the exact date will be advertised.
- If you keep using your tip or burn waste illegally you'll be breaking the law and could face serious penalties.
- You have a year to register your exemptions.

Where to find out more

This guide is one in a series of ‘changing practice’ information sheets we have produced to help you understand the new rules.

You can get more information from the Agricultural Waste Stakeholders’ Forum by going to:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/agforum/>

or by contacting our National Customer Contact Centre on **0845 603 3113**, or logon to

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/agriculturalwaste

For a copy of our waste minimisation leaflet “Agricultural waste – Opportunities to Save Money (version 2)” contact our National Customer Contact Centre on **0845 603 3113**.

This information is also available bilingually at

<http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/epages/eapublications.storefront>

Please note – the information in this guide represents our current understanding. Our position may be subject to change in the light of regulatory or case law changes, future Government guidance or experience of regulating this type of waste.

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