

An environment success story thanks to farmer engagement



Farmers have shown that they are keen to farm sustainably, while improving farm safety and water quality

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The Farm Hazardous Waste (FHW) collection scheme has been operating on a pilot basis since 2013 led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in collaboration with Teagasc, the Department of Communications Climate Action and Environment (DCCA), the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM), and local authorities.

- Some facts and figures:
- 46 collection days.
 - 9,000 farmers safely disposed of nearly 1,000t of hazardous wastes including old-legacy chemicals DDT, cyanide, strychnine and other nasty persistent organic chemicals (POPs).
 - Also included in the 1,000t were, waste oils and oil filters, pesticides, animal remedies, batteries and electricals, paint and other wastes (empty contaminated plastic containers).
- The average weight of per farmer was 84kg of FHW and 63kg of waste electricals and batteries.

Why do farmers use the waste collection centres?

- Health and safety.
- Tidy their yards.
- Compliance with DAFM and Bord Bia Audits, inspections.
- Protecting the environment.

Quantities and types of hazardous waste collected 2013-2017

- The main hazardous waste types were:
- 359t of waste engine and hydraulic oils.
 - 70t of pesticides (which includes 1,1700 kg of POPs).

- 54t of paint (water, lead and solvent base).
- 52t of vet medicines and needles.
- 46t of contaminated empty containers.
- 28t of oil filters.
- 7t of corrosives such as acids and bases.
- 226t* of WEEE and batteries.
- 12t of other hazardous wastes (biocides, aerosols, adhesives, coolant, grease cartridges, household chemicals and medicines, waste petrol/diesel, creosote, expanding fillers, solid tar and silicone).

*2017 WEEE and battery figures were not available at the time of publication

What do farmers think of the FHW collections?

- Pdraig Forde, Galway: “The collection centres are a ‘gift’ to clean up stuff lying around.”
- Robert Coughran, Galway: “Great service.”
- Pat Cormican, Galway: “Delighted to come here, wanted to get rid of the waste, but where do you bring it to?”
- Brian Curran, Galway: “Third collection centre I have been to, very happy. My main aim is to clear out the shed and get the proper paperwork.”
- Charlie Russell, Kildare: “Good to get this stuff off the farm, it’s been there for years.”
- Tom Dillon, Kildare: “Mighty! Wish these centres were run more often and it would become something you do every year, like the IFFPG collections. They are well run, but could be a bit cheaper.”

The future for such schemes

This pilot scheme has confirmed the necessity and feasibility of a scheme for the collection and safe disposal of



Farm Hazardous Waste

COLLECTION CENTRES & LOCATIONS OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2017



Low cost disposal of your hazardous waste is in the follow counties...

Mayo/Sligo
Mayo/Sligo Co-Op, Ballina
Friday, 17th November

Galway
Athenry Mart
Friday, 24th November

North Tipperary
Nenagh Mart
Wednesday, 25th October

South Tipperary
Cahir Mart
Tuesday, 14th November

Kerry
North Kerry - Listowel Mart
Saturday, 4th November

Cork
Bandon Recycling Centre
Wednesday, 18th October



For further information...

LoCall: 1890 33 55 99
www.epa.ie

Meath
Kells Recycling Centre
Tuesday, 28th November

Offaly
Tullamore Mart
Tuesday, 21st November

Kilkenny
Kilkenny Mart, Cillin Hill
Wednesday, 8th November

Wexford
WFC Enniscorthy Mart
Friday, 27th October

A big thank you to all the farmers, site owners, local authorities, waste contractors and other local groups who supported the campaign between 2013 and 2017

FHW. The challenge of dealing with FHW has two distinct components:

- Wastes routinely generated through agricultural activity which will continue to arise at some rate into the future.

- 'Legacy' waste consisting of substances stockpiled in farmyards, often for decades, which require urgent removal from the rural environment.

The pilot programme has demonstrated that it is logistically possible to operate such schemes and some additional insights are listed below:

- Significant quantities of legacy agricultural chemicals such as DDT, gamma HCH, Cyanide, Agent Orange and Strychnine were presented for disposal at the centres. The poor condition of the containers holding these highly toxic substances is a particular concern.

- 46t of contaminated empty containers were collected over the four-year period which indicates that farmers are not engaging with triple-rinsing of containers on farms and deposit at IFFPG bring events for empty triple-rinsed containers. All organisations and farmers need to promote the wise use of farm chemicals and the triple-rinsing of empty containers.

- The inter-agency and cross-department collaborative model has worked well and should continue, assisted by all relevant stakeholders including those already involved such as the farm organisations and Bord Bia. The extensive range of agri-businesses across the country should be engaged in future collaborative approaches.

- The FHW collections underpin many national legislative priorities and policy ambitions relating to the agricultural industry and environmental protection (such as Origin

Green; Food Wise 2025, the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan; National Implementation Plan on POPs and the Water Framework Directive).

- The current estimate for hazardous waste stockpiled on farms across Ireland is 7,378t. Often these substances are highly toxic (with many now banned) and are stored in deteriorating containers. There is an urgent need to tackle this issue – both for environmental and farm-safety reasons.
- Approximately 50t of waste pesticide and 24t of veterinary medicine waste is generated annually. This figure includes waste packaging, which is significant particularly for biocides and veterinary medicine waste.
- Over 80% of the farmers surveyed would use a FHW collection centre on an annual basis, if made available, with 83% willing to travel up to 40km one-way to such a collection point.

Success

The pilot scheme has been a great success due in large part the active engagement of the farmers and their desire to ensure that these wastes are stored safely, removed from farms and disposed of in a safe and environmentally sound manner.

Farmers have demonstrated that they are keen to farm sustainably, while improving farm safety and water quality. The initiative also demonstrated how effective the pooling of resources, collaboration and collective expertise can be in achieving real environmental protection. Removing FHW from farms makes the farming environment a safer place for human and animal health and also potentially improves water quality.

Recommendations for future collections

- A long-term and affordable national scheme for the collection of FHW should be established. Various models of operation should be considered including the campaign approach trialled in this pilot; permanent bring-centres; or direct collection from farms.
- Leadership on this issue is required at Government level and there is an urgent need for one government department to assume primary responsibility for FHW.
- A working group made up of the current project partners with other relevant organisations should be established without delay to develop and implement a national scheme.
- To assist in the establishment and ongoing operation of a national scheme, an advisory and monitoring group made up of current project partners, local government, farming organisations and relevant industry representatives should be established to provide expertise and advice.
- The farming community has contributed significantly to operating costs and has shown a willingness to pay for such a scheme. While the amounts charged at collections were at a subsidised rate, records show that farmers nonetheless paid €500,000 towards disposal of these wastes over the four years.