

This resolution was NOT ADOPTED at national level. No action can be directed to the federal level. This resolution has a provincial component that can be acted on as a private citizen; you may state you are a CWL member but you cannot state you are writing on behalf of a CWL council, nor can you write to government using League letterhead.

## Education and Health

### Keewatin-The Pas/Our Lady of the Sacred Heart – The Pas

#### **Resolution 2016.03      Environmentally responsible solutions for the collection and disposal of grain bags and agricultural plastic waste products**

- Whereas,** The funding of recycling programs for plastic grain bags and similar agricultural plastic waste products is essential and disposal options are limited; and
- Whereas,** Convenient and accessible recycling options and the availability of grain bag rollers at municipal collection sites could improve the responsible handling of agricultural plastic waste products; and
- Whereas,** Most grain bags and agricultural plastic waste products are currently disposed of in landfills or through burning thereby presenting environmental and health concerns; therefore be it
- Resolved,** That Manitoba Provincial Council, through the national council of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada, urge the federal government to continue funding convenient and accessible recycling programs for plastic grain bags and to develop a comprehensive stewardship program to recycle agricultural plastic waste products; and be it further
- Resolved,** That Manitoba Provincial Council of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada, urge the Manitoba provincial government to:
- continue funding the provincial program to recycle grain bags and agricultural plastic waste products
  - develop a funding program to aid municipalities in expanding the number of municipal collection sites which accept agricultural plastic waste products and the purchase of grain bag rollers, and be it further
- Resolved,** That Manitoba Provincial Council of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada, urge the Association of Manitoba Municipalities to encourage the expansion of the number of municipal collection sites in agricultural areas to accept agricultural plastic waste products and provide grain bag rollers on site for loan to farmers; and be it further
- Resolved,** That this resolution be forwarded to the national council, of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada, for consideration at the 2016 annual national convention.

#### **BRIEF      Environmentally responsible solutions for the collection and disposal of grain bags and agricultural plastic waste products**

Currently the federal government has provided funding for grain bag recycling programs. The federal and Saskatchewan government have committed \$200,000 to the continuation of the Grain Bag Recycling Pilot Project in 2015. (Government of Canada Agriculture and Agri-Food Council)

CleanFARMS is conducting recycling pilots with funding received from Green Manitoba [a special operating agency of the government in Manitoba] and has a mandate to provide programs to reduce plastic waste. (GrainNews)

Agricultural plastic waste products consists of film (greenhouse, mulch, silage), bale wrap/bags, plastic twine, net wrap, grain bags, poly feed and seed bags and sandbags. (CleanFarms MB) "... many grain farmers are looking to plastic bags for low-cost grain storage." (Govt of SK) "Recycled plastic grain bags are a very versatile plastic. ...." "It's recycled into things like household garbage bags and plastic lumber." (GrainNews)

"The grain-bag recycling experience in western provinces suggests the recycling option has to be convenient, accessible and affordable." (Rance) Grain bag rollers are available to assist producers in rolling the grain bags into a compact form more suitable for shipping." (Cruise) " In Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers can access 14 collection sites across the province. (Govt of Canada) Currently in Manitoba there are six collection sites which are mainly situated in the western part of the province. (Stevenson) "The Saskatchewan program is the largest and most extensive on the Prairies. The long term vision continues to be the establishment of a permanent industry-led recycling program." (Saskatoon Homepage.ca) "Municipalities don't want large volumes of discarded agricultural plastic taking up space in landfills." (Stevenson) A 2011 study into agricultural waste by CleanFarms Inc. estimated there are 6,000 tonnes of plastic waste generated on Manitoba farms annually that could be eligible for recycling. Less than 20 per cent of plastic waste, most of it packaging, was taken to landfills. Up to two-thirds was disposed of on the farm through burning. (CleanFarms MB)

"The chemical reactions that occur during the burning of plastics, ...produce an array of toxic substances that are detrimental to both human health and our environment. The residue ...releases highly toxic materials into the atmosphere and potentially [affecting]...water and soil quality." (Govt of SK) "Burning 10,000 pounds of agricultural plastic has the potential to contaminate 75,000 kg of soil from exposure to dioxins, based on Canadian Soil Quality Guidelines." (CleanFarms ON)

"Dioxins and furans are a health concern even in very small quantities, being associated with endocrine disruption, heart disease, cognitive and motor disabilities, as well as being a known human carcinogen. Humans can be exposed to dioxins through plants, or through meat, as they concentrate in animal fat. This suggests that the burning of agricultural plastics, and associated dioxin generation, is particularly troubling, as the practice occurs on or near active agricultural land. Further, if the majority of dioxin intake to humans comes from food sources, dioxin emissions from the burning of agricultural plastics has the potential to impact a wide population when they land on feed crops and are concentrated in the bodies of farm animals." (ibid)

"Based on the current disposal practices used for agricultural plastics, and the potential pollution and resource conservation impacts associated with improper disposal practices such as burning, there is a strong national need to develop a comprehensive stewardship program for waste agricultural plastics to address the lack of adequate management systems for these waste products." (CleanFarmsON)

The federal government is urged to continue funding convenient and accessible recycling programs for plastic grain bags, and to similarly fund recycling programs for other agricultural plastic waste products. "Disposal of agricultural plastics through either burning or landfilling represents a significant loss of resources, as this material is essentially wasted." (CleanFarms ON) The Manitoba government is urged to continue funding recycling programs for agricultural plastic waste products and aid municipalities in expanding the number of municipal collection sites that accept said waste and purchase of grain bag rollers. The Association of Manitoba Municipalities is urged to expand the number of municipal collection sites in agricultural areas that accept agricultural plastic waste products and provide grain bag rollers on site for loan to farmers. Recycling programs will benefit the environment; eliminate unnecessary burning of products and reduce health risks.



**WORKS CITED      Environmentally responsible solutions for the collection and disposal of grain  
Bags and agricultural plastic waste products**

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**ACTION PLAN      Environmentally responsible solutions for the collection and disposal of grain bags and agricultural plastic waste products**

1. Write letters to the prime minister and the ministers of finance, agriculture and agri-food, environment and climate change and minister of health with copies to your local member of parliament urging the federal government to continue funding convenient and accessible recycling programs for plastic grain bags and to develop a comprehensive stewardship program for agricultural plastic waste products.
2. Write letters to the premier and the ministers of agriculture, finance, health, seniors and active living and minister of sustainable development with copies to your local MLA urging the provincial government to:
  - continue funding the provincial program to recycle grain bags and agricultural plastic waste products
  - develop a funding program to aid municipalities in expanding the number of municipal collection sites which accept agricultural plastic waste products and the purchase of grain bag rollers
3. Write to your local municipality to request the establishment of additional municipal collection sites which accept agricultural plastic waste products and to make grain bag rollers available on site for loan to farmers.
4. Hold a speaker presentation on the detrimental effects of agricultural plastic waste products on the environment and our health.
5. Monitor the federal and provincial government's response to the request contained in the resolution.