



REPORT

To: Solid Waste Committee

Report Number: ENV-SWC-023

From: Paulo Eichelberger, General Manager of Environmental Services Date: November 5, 2020

Subject: **Agricultural Plastics Pilot in Partnership with Cleanfarms**

RECOMMENDATION #1:

That the Solid Waste Committee recommend to the Regional Board to partner with Cleanfarms to fund an Agricultural Plastics Waste Characterization Study currently underway, at a cost of up to \$5,000.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

That the Solid Waste Committee recommend to the Regional Board to partner with Cleanfarms to develop and deliver a pilot agricultural plastics program, with each party paying 50% of the costs.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Cleanfarms is a non-profit environmental stewardship organization that helps to create programs that offer a tangible way to address agricultural waste management¹.

Recently, Cleanfarms has expanded their work in agricultural stewardship by developing agricultural plastics (ag-plastics) pilot programs in Alberta and Manitoba. Cleanfarms has received a grant from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada under the Canadian Agriculture Strategic Priorities Program (CASPP) to conduct a three year pilot programs across the country for the collection and recycling of agricultural plastics that are not currently being collected through existing Cleanfarms programs. Since there are no existing ag-plastics programs established by Cleanfarms in British Columbia, Cleanfarms reached out to staff about a partnership in developing and delivering such a pilot in the Peace River Regional District (PRRD).

Prior to a pilot program being developed, an Agricultural Plastics Waste Characterization Study must be completed, which provides the basis for estimated quantities to establish a collection program.

The waste characterization will look at the following materials:

- Bale wrap
- Silage plastic/bunker covers
- Twine
- Grain bags

The study is being performed by a third party organization who is interacting with area producers to understand what is being purchased and used in farming operations in the region.

¹ Current program is the collection of empty pesticide containers and livestock/equine medications, which is offered all over Canada.

At this time the pilot program is intended to be offered at three rural transfer stations, focused on collecting grain bags and twine. There is an opportunity to expand to other materials such as silage and bale wrap at a later date, pending the results of the waste characterization study.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Solid Waste Committee provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- ☒ Responsive Service Delivery

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

Estimated costs provided by Cleanfarms for developing and running an ag-plastics program at three PRRD sites that focuses on grain bags and twine are shown below (Table 1). All program costs would be shared between Cleanfarms and the PRRD with a 50/50 Split, as the CASPP funding requires 50% cost sharing on all projects.

Table 1.

| | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Ag-Waste Characterization Study | \$10,000.00 | | | | |
| Communication | | \$7,500.00 | \$2,000.00 | \$2,000.00 | |
| Collection | | \$35,020.00 | \$37,900.00 | \$43,280.00 | |
| Administration | | \$8,755.00 | \$9,475.00 | \$10,820.00 | Total |
| Estimated Expense Total | \$10,000.00 | \$51,275.00 | \$49,375.00 | \$56,100.00 | \$166,750.00 |
| PRRD Costs (50%) | \$5,000.00 | \$25,637.50 | \$24,687.50 | \$28,050.00 | \$83,375.00 |
| Total Estimated Revenue from the Sale of Twine and Grain Bags | | \$13,000.00 | \$15,500.00 | \$18,000.00 | \$46,500.00 |
| PRRD Revenue | | \$6,500.00 | \$7,750.00 | \$9,000.00 | \$23,250.00 |

The initial estimate from Cleanfarms to operate the pilot at three PRRD Transfer Stations is approximately \$26,150 annually. Combined with an estimate of \$10,500 for renting bins to collect the material, the total annual estimated cost to the PRRD for the pilot \$36,650 or \$12,216 per site.

Once the waste characterization study is complete, more detailed program costs can be calculated to reflect estimated tonnage in the PRRD and materials that would be targeted. There are several factors that could affect program costs such as access to balers, hauling, and market costs.

The cost of the 2020 Waste Characterization study totaling \$5,000 can be split operationally between the three sites that will receive the pilot. At this time the proposed locations are Cecil Lake TS, Prespatou TS, and Rolla TS due to the predominantly agricultural nature of the surrounding areas.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

A communications plan will be developed as part of developing the collection program to provide outreach to the public.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

Cleanfarms is working with the neighbouring regional districts of Fraser Fort George and Bulkley-Nechako, which may present opportunities for partnership and further reduction of costs.