

## WASTE IS STILL A HEADACHE FOR SCOTLAND'S FARMERS

### *New online learning tool can clear up confusion*

**29 January 2010:** Research released today suggests that Scotland's farmers need more help with managing their agricultural waste.

The SME-nvironment report by environmental guidance website NetRegs.gov.uk reveals that it is recognition of specific waste regulations, rather than compliance, which is the problem. The Special Waste and Duty of Care regulations were both found to be misunderstood by Scottish farmers; many had not heard of these regulations when read from a list (Special Waste 23%, Duty of Care 39%)<sup>1</sup>, meaning that they aren't taking advantage of specific support available to help them meet these rules.

The research also reveals that while nearly half of farmers store agricultural waste on site, many do not recognise the important legislation which determines what can be stored, for how long and where permits are required.

This research points to a need for clearer communication and support for farmers in recognising and so managing waste regulations. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency's (SEPA's) NetRegs website is now seeking to clear up the confusion with its relaunched *Learning about Agricultural Waste* tool ([www.netregs.gov.uk/farmwaste](http://www.netregs.gov.uk/farmwaste)).

The tool provides the farming community with seven simple subjects for battling waste – including guidance on Special Waste, Duty of Care and on-site storage and transport.

The good news for farmers is that NetRegs' report reveals many in the agricultural community are already seeing the financial rewards of more effective waste management, through reduced operating costs and a more motivated workforce.

Claudette Hudes, Programme Manager for NetRegs.gov.uk in Scotland, explains: "Farmers' resources are stretched, particularly in the current climate – but we know that investing in environmental compliance can save rather than cost money. We talked to farmers on the ground to find out what they would find helpful and our Waste Tool has been developed based on their

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<sup>1</sup> Q: 'Have you heard of the following?' A: Special Waste Regulations 23%; Duty of Care Regulations 39%.

feedback. The result is a single online access point to all the necessary information on waste legislation and we hope it's going to really help farmers."

NetRegs' SME-environment study, which is delivered through a partnership between the Environment Agency, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, shows that many Scottish farmers are already trying to reduce their business waste, with 40% now recycling. Although this lags some way behind the UK average of 84% it points to a sector keen to improve its waste management practices, given the right support.

NetRegs' *Learning About Agricultural Waste* Tool is now available on the NetRegs website and can be accessed at [www.netregs.gov.uk/farmwaste](http://www.netregs.gov.uk/farmwaste)

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**Notes to editors**

- NetRegs was launched in 2004 to provide SMEs in the UK with free guidance on complying with environmental legislation without the need to register.
- NetRegs - [www.netregs.gov.uk](http://www.netregs.gov.uk) - is a partnership between the Environment Agency in England and Wales (EA and EAW), the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA, formerly the Environment and Heritage Service).
- The website currently offers specific guidelines for over 110 business types in the UK.
- Businesses can opt to receive free email alerts from NetRegs to keep up-to-date on forthcoming legislation or any changes to current environmental regulations. Visit [www.netregs.gov.uk](http://www.netregs.gov.uk)
- The new NetRegs Learning about Agricultural Waste Tool (LAWT) has been specifically designed to help farmers manage agricultural waste. The tool can be found at [www.netregs.gov.uk/farmwaste](http://www.netregs.gov.uk/farmwaste)

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