

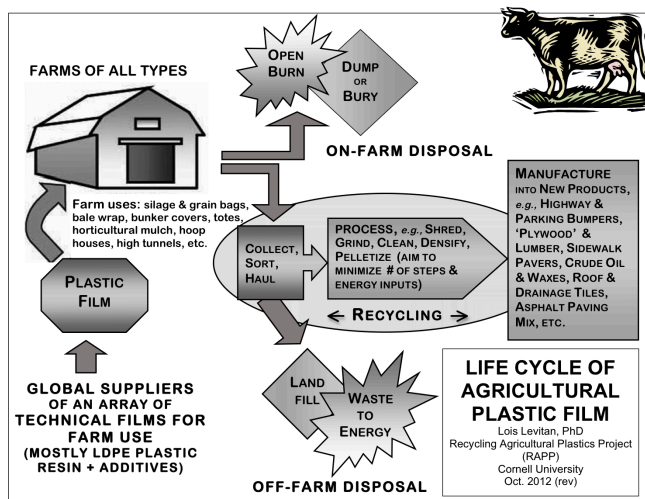
## HOW NYS AG PLASTICS RECYCLING WORKS

The NYS Recycling Agricultural Plastics Project (RAPP) relies on close collaborations with County Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations (CCE), Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), solid waste and recycling agencies and businesses, and others to help spread the recycling message; train farmers in best management protocols; and carry out local collections of used plastics.

Thus far, most of the film plastic collected for recycling has been baled using one of RAPP's mobile BigFoot plastics balers. With farm staff loading the baler and RAPP staff or partners operating it, 1000 pounds of film can be compacted into a dense, square, stackable bale in about 30 minutes. With experience and additional training, farm staff and others can be approved to operate the balers. Finished bales are accumulated locally until container loads are ready to move to market. Alternative collection models are being explored and piloted in some parts of NYS.

*Since 2009, RAPP has coordinated the collection of more than a million pounds of used plastic that would otherwise go into landfills, be burned in open fires on-farms, or get left behind in the fields. Agricultural plastics recycled from NYS farms are now being made into sidewalk pavers, plastic lumber, oil and other products!*

RAPP strives to close the loop by recycling old products into new within our geographic region. To help sustain this and other recycling programs, RAPP encourages everyone to **Buy Recycled!**



File: RAPPUpdateNYSFarmers2013Aug4

Major funding for RAPP is currently from the NYS Environmental Protection Fund administered by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). Funding has also come from the NY Farm Viability Institute, Cornell Cooperative Extension Administration, US EPA Region II, USDA Rural Development, and Cornell Department of Communication, with invaluable in-kind contributions from RAPP partners.

## NY POLICY on BURNING AGRICULTURAL PLASTICS

IT IS AGAINST THE LAW TO BURN WASTE PLASTIC IN OPEN FIRES ON FARMS OR ELSEWHERE IN NEW YORK STATE.

Regulations prohibiting open burning of household and agricultural trash went into effect October 2009.

Since then, plastics used in agriculture—e.g., horticultural mulch film, drip tape, dairy bunk silo covers, pesticide containers, packaging, etc.—may not be discarded by burning in barrels or open fires.

Farmers are still permitted to burn brush and other organic wastes if the material is generated on-site, can be fully burned within 24 hours, and if the fire is located on at least five acres of agricultural land.

But farmers may not burn construction debris, old fencing, packaging materials, or other trash.



Source: NYS DEC Air Resource Regs, Ch. III, Part 215  
[www.dec.ny.gov/regs/4261.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/regs/4261.html);  
 Factsheet: [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/58519.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/58519.html)

### Why?

Trash fires are the primary cause of wildfires. They generate harmful emissions: highly toxic dioxins and particulates that lodge in the lungs.

The "open burning" regulations protect health, the food supply, and air quality.

### Questions:

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Factsheet details the open burning regulations ([www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/58519.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/58519.html)).

Report violations with a call to the 24-hour TIPP hotline (1-800-TIPP DEC), email to the TIPP Dispatcher <r5dsptch@gw.dec.state.ny.us>, or by contacting a DEC Environmental Conservation Officer (ECO).

Find your local EOC by calling the DEC Dispatch Center at 1-877-457-5680 or linking to local EOC contact information on the DEC website: [www.dec.ny.gov/about/621.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/about/621.html).

RECYCLING IS A GOOD ALTERNATIVE TO ILLEGAL BURNING, MESSY DUMPING, AND EXPENSIVE LANDFILL TIPPING FEES.