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Farmers Invited to Learn about New 6-County Agricultural Plastics Recycling Initiative August 11-13 in Seneca Falls

Seneca Falls, NY – Farmers in Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne and Yates counties are invited to visit the Cornell University Recycling Agricultural Plastics Program (RAPP) booth at the August 11-13, 2015 Empire Farm Days at Rodman Lott and Son Farms in Seneca Falls to learn about a proposed six-county farm plastics recycling initiative.

A partnership of Ontario County, Casella Resource Solutions, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County is looking to divert farm plastic waste material away from the regional landfill in Ontario County to recycling opportunities. Recycling plastics can save farm and business owners landfill and dumpster fees of $70 or more per ton and removing farm plastics from the waste stream extends the life of landfill space.

Ontario County is developing a new waste management plan that includes the recycling of agricultural plastics. A survey to gauge the interest of area farmers in recycling their used plastics has had a high rate of response. Area farmers are asked to fill out a survey expressing their interest and sharing the types and quantities of plastics they use.

Manufacturers in New York State, and elsewhere in the U.S., are turning plastics once used on farms into sheets of plastic ‘plywood,’ plastic sidewalk pavers, consumer and industrial-size garbage bags, diesel fuel, and new agricultural plastic containers and twine. Virtually all kinds of used plastic, especially bale wrap, bunker covers and greenhouse film, are now being processed into new products.

Farmers interested to learn best management practices for collecting, handling, storing and compacting farm plastics for recycling can visit with Cornell University Recycling Agricultural Plastics Program educators who will have an ag plastics baler and examples of recycled-plastic products made from plastics from NY farms on exhibit at Empire Farm Days. The baler can compact a 1,000-lb, four-foot cube in about 30 minutes.

“We especially hope that farmers from Ontario and its neighboring counties will stop by the RAPP exhibit at Empire Farm Days to learn about the proposed Western Finger Lakes farm plastics recycling initiative and to let us know their interest in it,” says Recycling Agricultural Plastics Program Field Coordinator Nate Leonard.
RAPP is largely funded through the NYS Environmental Protection Fund administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Empire Farm Days is the largest outdoor agricultural trade show in the northeastern U.S. with 300 acres of exhibits, seminars, activities and demonstrations for all sectors of farming and rural life. Parking is $10 per vehicle. Find details and daily schedules at www.empirefarmdays.com.

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PHOTO:
Cornell University Recycling Agricultural Plastics Program Field Coordinator Nate Leonard holds one of the sidewalk pavers made from recycling used farm plastics from NY farms. Photo: Brian P. Whattam