

# The Balewrapper

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Outstanding in our field

Celebrating  
20 years of  
bale wrapping  
success



## Lloyd's legacy.

**This year bpi.agri enjoys quite a cause for celebration. 2006 marks our 20th anniversary of commercial bale wrap sales and the end of an impressive two decades of supplying high-performance products backed by superior standards of service.**

However, no matter how extensive our track record in producing bale wrap, we wouldn't have enjoyed 20 years in this sector if it hadn't been for the innovation of one man 'the father of bale wrapping' Lloyd Forster. In this commemorative edition of *The Balewrapper*, we pay tribute to the man widely acknowledged as bale wrapping's first advocate and pioneer.

Lloyd, originally a hill farmer in Northumberland, first came up with the concept of using plastic bags to conserve round bales of wilted grass back in 1978. That year, following a long spell of very unsettled weather, Lloyd began thinking about how he could conserve his good grass for the months ahead. He considered the matter for a while and then thought: What about plastic bags? Following a search for bags big enough to contain a bale, Lloyd ordered 80 and proceeded to bag the bales he had created using a neighbour's baler.

Lloyd also contacted ADAS to tell them what he was doing and shortly afterwards was visited by the mechanisation officer who observed the bagged system. Following this visit, word got around the UK trade magazines who reported the story nationwide and shortly afterwards Lloyd was contacted by interested parties from all over the world.

Later that year, when Lloyd came to use his bagged bales, he was delighted with the results. The end-product enjoyed the appearance of traditional silage but had a very pleasant sweet-smelling aroma. Best of all, the cattle agreed and ate it willingly.

The following summer Lloyd developed his system, contacting Visqueen (now a division of bpi.agri) to source quality polythene film for his silage bags. The system was working well - the animals were satisfied - a new concept in grass conservation and silage



production was born.

Lloyd's fresh approach was quick to catch on. In 1979, around 20,000 tonnes of silage were conserved using his methods. In 1980, the tonnage rose dramatically as more and more people became aware of the impressive advantages. In the same year, ADAS also decided to conduct trial work into all aspects of Lloyd's new means of bagging. They were quite amazed at the results and the demand for information from farmers grew further.

Lloyd then spent the next few years travelling the world, conducting meetings, demonstrations and open days to promote his techniques. In 1984, he visited Australia and Tasmania to talk on the subject. Whilst there he was approached by a company that was building a machine to stretch-wrap round bales and they asked him if there was a market for such a machine in the UK. Agreeing that indeed there was, Lloyd

worked with the manufacturer for the next year, helping them to develop the first generation of bale wrappers.

And the rest, as they say, is history. With the advent of mechanical bale wrappers and the introduction of specific bale wrapping film such as Silotite back in 1986, the future of baled silage was assured. It has now grown to a £multi-million business and Lloyd is proud to have been so instrumental in this.

In recognition of his efforts, he has been honoured with a number of awards including being made a Fellow of RASE and the Massey Ferguson Award for Service to Agriculture. Nonetheless, Lloyd sees his biggest reward as something far more simple. Namely, the privilege of being of able to have met such a wide cross section of the agricultural community both in the UK and abroad – and all whilst bringing the benefits of baled silage to the world's attention.

**SILOTITE**

**VISQUEEN**  
POLIWRAP

**polybale**



## bpi.agri keeps customers up-to-speed

**In-line with our commitment to providing customers with the highest levels of after-sales service, bpi.agri recently held a bale wrapping seminar for farmers and contractors in the Scottish borders. The event, which took place at Templehall Hotel in Morebattle, Kelso, was staged in conjunction with bpi.agri distributor Jock Bryce and Son who have been serving the local farming community since 1973.**

The day began with a presentation from bpi.agri Area Sales Manager, Lloyd Dawson, who covered the correct application of bale wrap as well as common bale wrapping troubleshooting techniques. He was then followed by Lance Harmer, Site Director from bpi.recycled products, who spoke to delegates about the imminent changes in farm waste legislation.

In particular, Lance focused on the implications of the new laws for farmers and contractors, before finishing with an overview of the bpi.recycled products farm waste recycling operation located in Dumfries.

The event was then rounded off with a

practical wrapping demonstration using the latest McHale wrappers which are known throughout the world for their durability, reliability, technical innovation and value for money. These wrappers were provided specifically for the seminar by McHale Engineering who were also in attendance on the day.

Every delegate was also entered into a free prize draw which saw £1000 worth of prizes including rolls of black 750mm Silotite, handy contractor packs and bpi.agri merchandise being given away.

Speaking of the seminar, Jock Bryce, proprietor of Jock Bryce & Sons, commented: "Despite the fact that bale wrapping has been evident in the UK for 20 years, I think it would be fair to say that everyone from the large number of farmers and contractors who attended went home feeling they had learnt something new and worthwhile."

His views were echoed by Lloyd Dawson: "When bale wrapping was first introduced in the mid-1980s it changed the face of silage production, enabling farmers to produce high quality feed without the level of waste found

with clamp silage. In order for farmers to continue enjoying the best results, it is crucial they understand and adhere to the latest bale wrapping techniques and that they know how to correctly maintain their machinery. By covering these and other issues, our seminars ultimately help customers to get the best from their silage making equipment, enabling them to optimise the quality of their silage."

Summing up, John Lancaster, Commercial Director of bpi.agri said: "We are committed to holding events like this to keep farmers and contractors abreast of the latest bale wrapping practices thus enabling them to produce good quality silage. Seminars like this also enable bpi.agri to maintain close relationships with our distributors for the benefit of the end user. This seminar was a great success and we look forward to continuing them throughout the season."

**For further information on future bpi.agri bale wrapping clinics, please email [sales@bpiagri.com](mailto:sales@bpiagri.com)**



# Preparation, preparation, preparation...

**Like decorating or cooking, one of the most important factors in successful bale wrapping is preparation. Recognising this, bpi.agri has been holding bale wrapping clinics around the country to ensure farmers and contractors are fully prepared for the approaching season. These clinics cover a wide range of pertinent issues – including the pre- and in-season preparation and maintenance of bale wrapping machinery.**

Lloyd Dawson, a bpi.agri sales manager who has been running these clinics in his territories of Northern Ireland and Scotland, said of the events: "Most problems with bale wrapping can be avoided if the wrapper is properly maintained and prepared for the season's work. If you'd left your car out in the cold for six months of the year without starting it, you'd make sure it worked properly before setting out on a long journey. Many people forget that even the most robust machines need looking after and we show people the easy way to check all is well at the beginning and during the season."

Amongst the topics covered in the clinics are these seven pre-season checkpoints –

1. Ensure all moving parts are free moving - pay particular attention to the Pre-stretch Unit (PSU) which can seize or stiffen up during periods of non use.
2. Check all belts for wear and tear. Replace all belts even if only one is damaged as badly aligned or worn belts will affect film overlap.
3. Check PSU and turntable gearing for wear and tear.
4. Check PSU rollers for any damage and thoroughly clean down with de-greaser.
5. Check PSU springs and replace if necessary. Worn springs, dirty or worn out rollers will cause aquaplaning, film tearing and uneven film application.
6. Check for film overlap and correct stretch by wrapping a straw bale before the wrapping season starts.

- I. Align film dispenser with centre of bale to achieve 50% overlap.
  - II. Measure film neck down on bale (750mm should be between 580mm - 610mm on bale, 500mm should be between 380mm - 410mm).
  - III. Measure correct % stretch by placing two vertical marks 10 cm apart on roll of film, apply to bale and measure distance apart. For 55% stretch it should measure 15.5cm and 17cm for 70% stretch.
  - IV. Calculate how many rotations are required to apply the recommended minimum number of film layers, by counting the number of turns to completely cover the bale, then add 1 turn and double this number of turns for a min of 4 layers.
7. Ensure your equipment is maintained and serviced regularly in line with the manufacturer's guidelines.

*Note: As bales vary in both size and shape, extra turns may be necessary to achieve correct film application.*

If farmers and contractors carry out the above checks, bale wrapping should run smoothly. That said it is also important to continue the good work throughout the season to prevent any problems occurring midway. bpi.agri recommends the following four in-season checks:

1. Regularly clean down PSU rollers with a de-greaser or white spirits.
2. Regularly check for correct overlap of film and correct stretch and neck down.
3. Routinely check the number of turns required to achieve correct film application especially if different balers are being used. This is because sizes can and do vary and in many cases not enough turns are applied.
4. Follow the film manufacturer's instructions.

**If you'd like more handy hints and tips like these, why not attend your local bpi.agri bale wrapping clinic? To request further information, simply email us at [sales@bpiagri.com](mailto:sales@bpiagri.com).**





# What's in a colour?

**Look around the UK's countryside and one thing's for certain - the vast majority of wrapped bales you'll see will all tend to be black. But whilst this may be a popular choice on our shores, it isn't the only colour option afforded to you by bpi.agri. We also offer most of our bale wrapping films in green and white. The question is: what difference do these colours make and which is best suited to your needs? Read on and all will be revealed...**

In the UK, there's a good reason behind the impressive popularity of black film. Namely, that in most cases, it is the best choice for our climate and the unique demands of our

market. Specifically, black film seals far more quickly than paler colours due to the fact that it absorbs more heat. As such, it makes it easier to produce an air-tight, well wrapped bale which in turn will produce better quality silage.

This high rate of heat absorption however also makes black film less than ideal for use in hotter countries. If a bale attracts and retains too much heat, organisms which spoil the silage will flourish. Likewise, in very high temperatures, the oxygen permeability of black film will be higher than that of other colours. For these reasons, white and green film are the best option in countries with warmer climates such as Australia and South Africa.

That said green and white film is still sold in the UK and Ireland. In most cases this is used for wrapping haylage bales, especially where users want to differentiate this product from silage. In addition, the much higher dry matter levels of haylage make it more prone to spoilage. As a result, it can benefit from being wrapped in green or white film which help to keep bales at a lower and more constant temperature.

Irrespective of whether you're wrapping silage or haylage however there is another important consideration which needs to be born in mind. Research has shown that the best end results can be achieved by providing an improved oxygen barrier around the bale. To ensure this is the case, haylage has for some years been wrapped with between 6 and 12 layers of film. With conventional silage, it makes more sense to invest the small extra cost of applying two extra layers of black film, rather than changing to a different and more expensive green or white alternative.

John Lancaster, Commercial Director at bpi.agri comments "bpi.agri appreciate that all three colours have benefits in different situations so we like to offer customers a choice. Having supplied bale wrap for over 20 years we still find that demand for black film in the UK is far greater than for the other colours, which we put down to a combination of factors including climate, landscape aesthetics and tradition."



# Pastures new for Stewart Douglas

**The 29th of May 2006 marks the end of an era for bpi.agri and one of its most popular area sales managers, Stewart Douglas. After 36 years of serving the Scottish farming community, Stewart - a figure who is both well known and respected by customers and colleagues alike - is set to retire.**

He began his sales career back in 1970 with the Belfast Rope Works Company which later became part of Irish Ropes. This company was then acquired by British Polythene Industries in 1998 and although twine and ropes are no longer part of our business, Stewart will always be known by many as 'The Bluebell Twine' man.

During his time at bpi.agri, he has sold countless rolls of polythene film to contractors and farmers across Scotland and has seen the industry grow and develop into what it is today.

Speaking of these changes and his retirement, Stewart said: "The farming industry has changed significantly over the last 30 years especially in the area of silage production thanks to the advent of multi-layered film and

new state-of-the-art bale-wrapping machinery.

"Throughout this time, it has been a real privilege to have worked with Scottish farmers and contractors and I want to thank them and bpi.agri for a very fulfilling career. All good things come to an end however and I now look forward to spending a lot more time improving my handicap on the fairways at Erskine Golf Club!"

Upon his retirement, responsibility for Stewart's Scottish territory will pass to Lloyd Dawson who currently looks after sales in Northern Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. From a farming background, Lloyd completed a three year National Diploma in Agriculture at Greenmount Agriculture College in 1991 and brings with him a wealth of industry experience having worked for bpi.agri for 12 years.

When asked about his new post, Lloyd commented: "Looking after Scotland is a challenge which I relish and it has so many similarities to my home territory of Northern Ireland. The solid platform already built by Stewart combined with the positive responses I am receiving from customers makes me



confident that bpi.agri's business will grow from strength to strength in this region over the coming years."

Summing up, John Lancaster, bpi.agri's Commercial Director said: "We wish Stewart all the best for the future; he has been an integral member of our team for many years. Lloyd's pro-active, innovative approach coupled with his extensive market knowledge makes him the perfect replacement. He has already met the majority of our customers and is looking forward to taking over in May."

Good luck Stewart. You'll be sorely missed!