

# They Turn Ag Plastic Into Sidewalks

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

Plastic bale wrap, silage bags, bunker covers, row plastic, high tunnels, row hoop covers, plastic twine, netting, mesh, and seed bags.

More and more plastic is being used on farms and it's starting to pile up. That prompted a California company to come up with a new method to make plastic sidewalks out of all types of ag plastic.

Lindsay Smith is CEO and Founder of TERRECON, Inc., based in Fountain Valley, Calif. With 30,000 lbs. of ag film, her company can make 24,000 sq. ft. of TERREWALKS®. The company has spent over two years working with plastic recyclers to overcome the challenges of processing plastic film. Plastic is collected at no charge and shipped to plants in either Indiana or Missouri.

It's a win/win option for farmers, says Bill Findley, who, along with friend Ken Grigsby, spearheaded a system that collects plastic from farmers in nine counties in Ohio: Carroll, Columbiana, Harrison, Jefferson, Tuscarawas, Ashland, Holmes, Stark and Wayne.

With a grant to make brochures and get the word out to five counties, they set up a system, which continually evolved to make it more efficient — and they expanded into four more counties.

Big 50 cu. ft. sacks that were previously used to transport grain or seed are distributed to farms, one for each different type of plastic. Farmers pick them up at designated businesses. On the farm they build frames to hold them open so they can be easily filled.

The main thing is to keep all the same color plastic in each sack. The all-white plastic wrap is used for TERREWALKS sidewalks and must be separated in one bag, Smith says.

The other important thing is to pack the bags so they have at least 400 lbs. in them to make it economically feasible to transport them by semi-trailer to Indiana or Missouri for processing.

The process to manufacture TERREWALKS doesn't require the plastic to be perfectly clean, but it needs to be fairly clean and dry, Findley says. Instead of leaving the plastic whole, farmers who store silage in plastic tubes cut off sections as they remove silage, let it dry, shake off excess dirt, and throw it in a supersack.

"We've had very good participation," Findley says. Carroll County farmers filled 70 bags for a load this spring and have been given more bags to fill. "We now have another of the original five counties, Tuscarawas, ready to ship the second semi trailer load, over 100 super sacks. Having a couple of committed businesses in each of the counties that have loading docks and can store the bags has been crucial to the success of the project in Ohio," Findley says.

Other states such as Wisconsin and Indiana have set up systems that fit their regions, Smith adds.

"There are so many farmers and groups who want to be involved in this," she says. "Our goal is to make it easy for them and solve a problem for them."

To make transportation less expensive



Big tote bags are provided to store and ship waste plastic. Each kind of plastic goes into its own bag. TERREWALK sidewalks (right) are made from all-white plastic. They last longer than concrete and will never break or crack, says company CEO Lindsay Smith.



and more efficient she recommends setting up a collection point in conjunction with a facility that has a horizontal baler, whenever possible. Instead of baling individual pieces of plastic, the sacks are compressed and baled, which is much faster and cleaner. They are also easier to take apart when it's time for processing.

Smith suggests contacting Soil and Water Conservation Districts, state Agriculture Departments and universities, farm organizations and other groups for grants and assistance to start a local program.

TERREWALK walkways last longer than concrete and never break or crack. Beginning in July, the black and white plastic will also

be processed into pelletized resin for use in other LDPE plastic products.

For details on how to collect ag plastic in your area, contact Smith.

As this issue went to press, TERRECON announced a new partnership with DCO Environmental & Recycling LLC to collect waste plastics from dairy farms across the country for processing at DCO facilities nationwide.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Lindsay Smith, TERRECON, Inc., 10061 Talbert Ave. 200, Fountain Valley, Calif. 92708 (ph 714 964-1400; www.terrecon.com; lindsay@terrecon.com).

## Got A Job For These Totes And Pails?

Looking for low cost storage of feed, grain and other materials? Sky Group closeout wholesalers has it with 33-cu. ft. tubs and 3 1/2-gal. airtight pails. The tubs are recycled from use with food-grade powders, making them suitable for nearly any use. They're available in minimum orders of four if shipped or one at the company. The pails are brand new and available in minimum orders of 50.

"The tubs are heavy-duty, 1/2-in. thick plastic with covers," says Tim Keehn, Sky Group, Inc. "The plastic is pvc, very rigid with very little flex. Farmers tell us they are more durable than wooden crates."

Tubs measure 45 in. high and 45 by 36 in. and with lids, weigh 100 lbs. Keehn says tubs can be stacked three to four high when filled. Two spaces for lift forks run front to back at the base of each tub.

The tubs sell for \$500 when new. Sky Group is selling the 5 to 7-year old tubs for \$100 each.

The 26-ga. steel pails have locking lids at below wholesale price. They were designed to store dry powder, are 10 in. high and 12 in. in dia. and weigh 3 lbs. each. A lever lock fits over the lid for airtight storage.

"The pails are high quality carbon steel with tin plating," says Keehn. "They retail



Sky Group closeout wholesalers offers 3 1/2-gal., airtight steel pails (left) and heavy-duty, 33 cu. ft. plastic tubs.



for \$29.99, but we are selling these for \$5 each plus shipping."

Keehn says Sky Group has 2,500 pails available.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Sky Group, Inc., 2645 26th Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55406 (ph 612 722-1200; www.skygroupcloseouts.com).

## Heavy Duty Dump Trailers Cheaper Than Trucks

"Dump trailers are a lot cheaper to own and use than dump trucks," says Bill Berkelmans, president of Berkelmans Welding and Manufacturing in Ontario, Canada. Bill's company has been making specialized trailers for 27 years. "We build many different sizes and types of trailers for farm and industrial applications and sell them direct to customers throughout Canada and the U.S."

Berkelmans farm trailers range in size from 2 to 20 tons for dirt, rock, shavings, silage, manure, etc. The trailers have all-metal frames and are built on tandem-axle walking beams that match the payload requirement. All seams and posts are 100 percent welded. All metal is sandblasted, primed and painted in Deere green, International red or Kubota orange.

Dump mechanisms vary by trailer type and size. The boxes are lifted by either underbody or telescopic cylinders. Hydraulic cylinders vary in size and are matched to the trailer. Hydraulic hookups fit standard 2,500 psi tractor couplings. One-piece endgates open and close with hydraulic cylinders.

The popular 8-ton farm trailer measures 10 ft. long, 90 in. wide and 61 in. from the ground to the top of the box (170 cubic feet

capacity). The trailer has a 50-degree dump angle and 5,000-lb. per spindle load rating on a tandem axle walking beam suspension. Pockets inside the box allow for side extensions. The hydraulic tailgate lifts 3 ft. above the box.

Berkelmans says their larger trailers can also be used for grain. For that setup, an end gate with a built-in grain chute is installed. Tail lights are also added for extra safety on rural roads. The company also makes tilt and load trailers, roll off systems, truck bodies and does custom manufacturing. Its unique side dump float trailers are a combination flatbed trailer on the back and a 6-ft. wide by 8-ft. long by 20-in. deep side dump trailer in the front.

Berkelmans dump trailers are marketed direct to customers rather than through dealers or distributors. They can be shipped throughout Canada and the U.S. including Alaska. Videos of various models and complete specifications are shown on the company's website.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Berkelmans Welding and Mfg., RR 7, Aylmer, Ontario, Canada N5H 2R6 (ph 519 765-4230; www.berkelmanswelding.on.ca).



Berkelmans trailers are custom-built with heavy-duty hydraulic hoists and powered tailgates. "Dump trailers are a lot cheaper to own and use than dump trucks," says Bill Berkelmans.