Waste Management

in

REEL Programmes

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Waste Management

Agricultural activities generate different categories of waste, some of which can be hazardous if not managed appropriately. The following are the most common types of hazardous waste in cotton production systems:

- **Chemicals:** Pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides), biocides, and other agrochemicals.
- **Unused and Expired Chemicals:** Unused stocks or expired products that require safe disposal.
- **Packaging Materials:** Contaminated packaging from pesticides, fertilisers, and other agrochemicals.
- **Other Hazardous Materials:** Used oil, lubricants, batteries, and similar farm inputs.
- **Biomedical Waste:** Animal waste and carcasses that, if not managed properly, may cause environmental and health risks.

The REEL Programme emphasizes responsible waste management as an integral part of sustainable farming and ginning practices. Waste management contributes to reducing environmental impact, improving resource efficiency, and ensuring healthier communities. The REEL and REEL Regenerative Standards require farmers to establish waste monitoring and management practices that ensure safety, compliance with national regulations, and protection of the environment and human health.

Standard Requirements (REEL and REEL Regenerative)

7.1.1 The cotton farmer shall demonstrate that the farm and associated premises are free from hazardous waste, and that appropriate disposal techniques are in place for any identified waste.

- 7.1.1.1 The cotton farmer shall identify all hazardous waste present on the farm, household premises, and sheds.
- 7.1.1.2 Farm premises and fields shall be free of inorganic and improperly disposed waste.
- 7.1.1.3 Appropriate disposal techniques shall be employed that do not harm the environment or human health.

In order to address these requirements, the following strategies are adopted:

1. Waste Monitoring and Management

- As part of the annual need assessment status of waste management is assessed and any major related issues are spotted a Waste Monitoring and Management should be developed for the specific producer group level to regularly track the generation, storage, and disposal of waste.

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- The plan should include identifying waste hotspots and devising targeted strategies for reduction and safe disposal.
- Periodic reviews are conducted to ensure progress and update mitigation measures.

2. Waste Sorting and Segregation

- Waste must be sorted at source into biodegradable, recyclable, and hazardous categories.
- Biodegradable waste (crop residues, FYM, compostable material) should be returned to the soil where it is safe. Preparation of biochar is promoted.
- Recyclable materials (plastics, packaging, metal scrap) should be collected separately for recycling
- Hazardous waste (chemical containers, expired agrochemicals, oil, e-waste) should be handled strictly in line with national regulations.

3. Waste Disposal – Best Practices

- Adopt safe disposal practices such as triple rinsing and puncturing of pesticide containers before handing over to certified collection points.
- Avoid open burning or indiscriminate dumping of waste.
- Encourage reuse and circular solutions where feasible
- Partner with local agencies, recyclers, or government schemes for safe treatment and disposal.

4. Continuous Improvement

- Conduct training and awareness for farmers, workers, and local communities on safe waste handling.
- Monitor progress through programme audits and incorporate corrective measures where gaps are identified.
- Share best practices across Producer Groups to strengthen collective impact.

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