

## Initiative ERDE Promotes Circular Economy for Agricultural Plastics



ERDE is Germany's national collection and recycling system for agricultural plastics. Founded in 2013 under the umbrella of IK Industrievereinigung Kunststoffverpackungen in cooperation with RIGK GmbH, it has grown from four initial film manufacturers to 26 members across 10 collection categories. The collection and recycling of agricultural plastics is crucial for achieving a circular economy, as it prevents valuable materials from being incinerated or lost to the environment and enables their transformation into new products. Through controlled-loop recycling, collected agricultural plastics can be processed into high-quality recyclates that are suitable for manufacturing new agricultural films, thereby conserving resources and reducing the carbon footprint of the agricultural sector.

### Service for farmers

ERDE provides farmers with a comprehensive collection network comprising around 700 fixed locations and 3,400 mobile collection points. The system accepts a wide range of agricultural plastics including silage and stretch films, bale nets and baler twines, agricultural fleeces, perforated films, asparagus and mulch films, greenhouse films, and drip tapes. This service offers farmers significant cost savings, with disposal fees averaging 30-50% less than traditional incineration methods. In 2019, Initiative ERDE established a voluntary commitment alongside key agricultural associations – the German Raiffeisen Association e.V., the Federal Association of Agricultural Trade, the Federal Association of Agricultural Contractors, the Network of Asparagus and Berry Associations e.V. and the Federal Association of Producer Organizations for Fruit and Vegetables e.V. This commitment, officially recognized by the Federal Ministry for the Environment and renewed in 2024, sets ambitious targets: among the specific objectives are to collect and recycle over 60% of marketed asparagus films by 2026 and achieve a 75% collection rate for silage and stretch films by 2027.

### Promoting Circular Economy

A total of 40,000 tonnes of agricultural plastics were collected and recycled in 2024, highlighting successful cooperation between farmers, manufacturers and retailers while delivering substantial climate protection benefits. Silage and stretch film dominates the ERDE recycling program. Nearly 37,000 tonnes of these product groups were collected in 2024. This represents a 4% increase over 2023 figures. The recycling rate for this material fraction has reached 71%. The initiative continues to expand its scope, with plans to incorporate additional agricultural plastic products into the recycling system in coming years.

### Climate Protection through Recycling

Through the collection and material recycling of these quantities, 37,258 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents were saved. This saving is equivalent to approximately 324 million car kilometers, 3,500 hectares of forest, or the carbon sequestration capacity of over 2.6 million trees.

**2024:** 39,940 tons of recycled agricultural plastics



### Our Policy Priorities:

#### 1. Harmonized National Collection Schemes

ERDE advocates for the development of harmonized National Collection Schemes within Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) frameworks, promoting shared stakeholder responsibility and industry-led governance.

#### 2. Free Movement of Recyclables

We advocate for an unrestricted EU internal market for recycling materials to optimize resource efficiency and maximize environmental benefits across borders.

#### 3. Strategic Approach to Biodegradables

We promote the thoughtful and targeted application of biodegradable plastics where they provide clear environmental advantages.

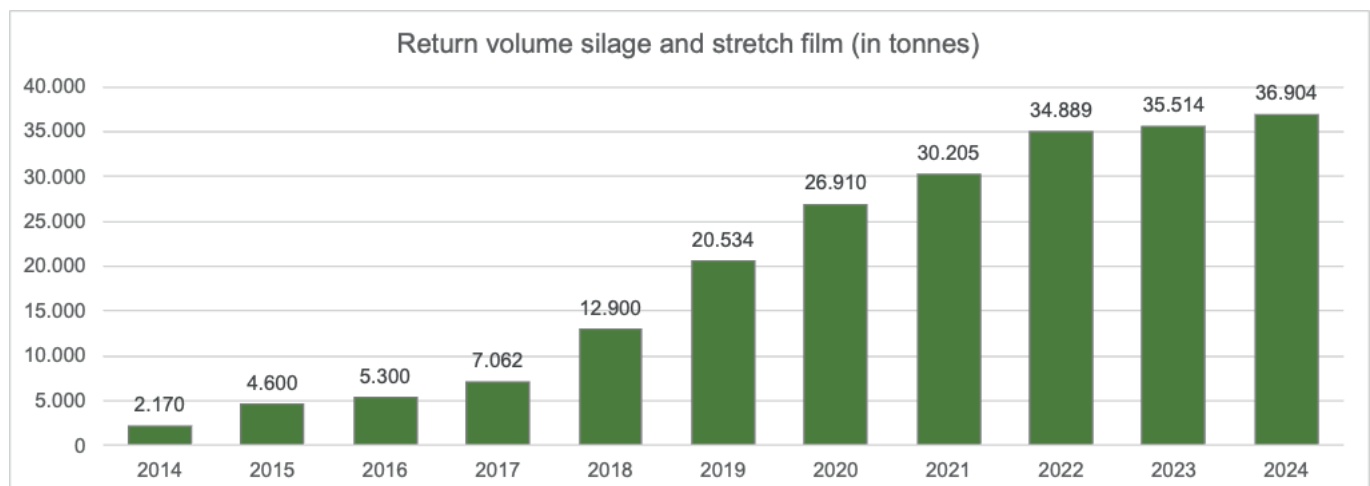
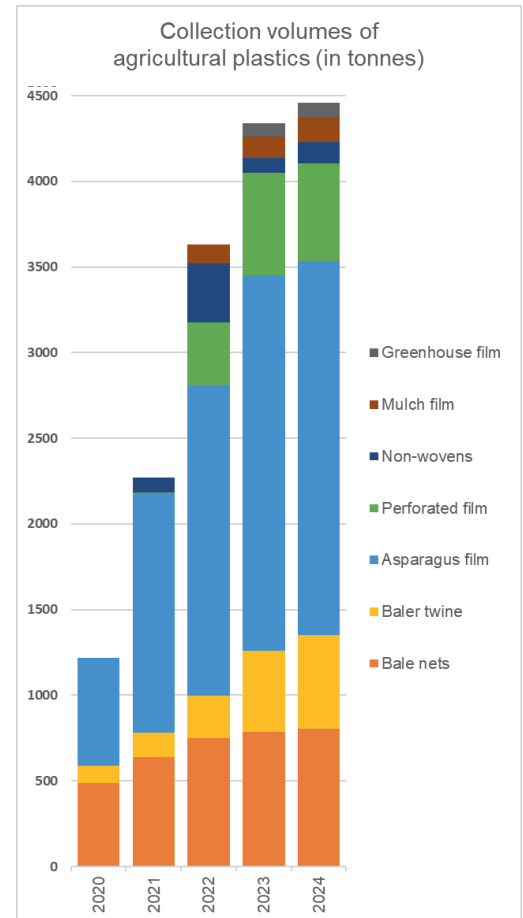
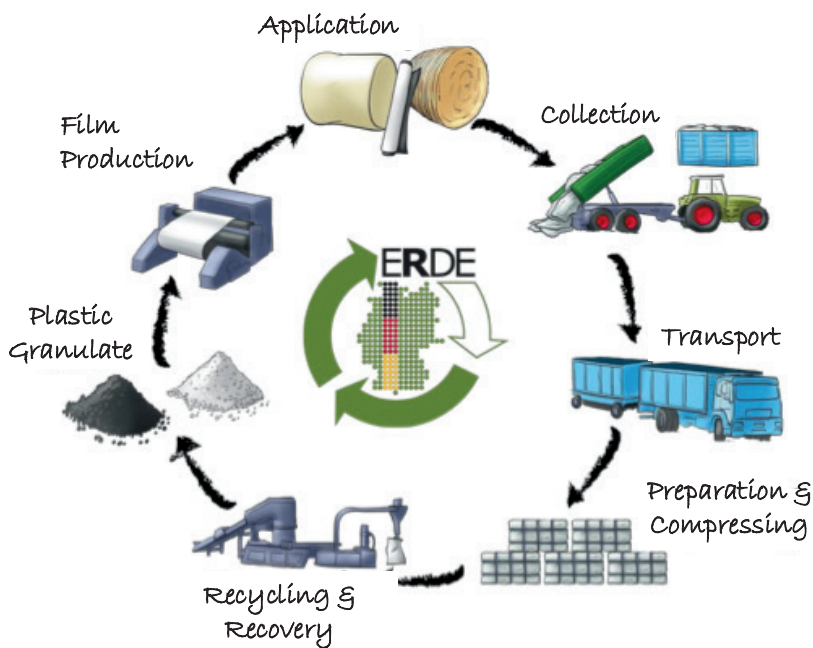
## Our contribution to the UN Sustainability Goal:

2.4: By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices

12.5: By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.



ERDE collection points are operated by various partners including waste management companies, machinery rings, rural organizations, private agricultural traders and agricultural cooperatives. All collected agricultural plastics are recycled exclusively in Germany and other European countries.



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