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Container recycling program chalking up twenty million drums

The national chemical container recycling program drumMUSTER will collect its twenty-millionth drum some time over the next few months.



Credit: drumMUSTER

To date, the waste reduction initiative to recycle non-returnable plastic and metal containers for agricultural and veterinary chemicals has collected and recycled 19.7 million containers since it began in 1999.

Organisers say this has prevented 24,735 tonnes of material from ending up in landfill. The drumMUSTER now includes 60 new recycling facilities and new community groups, including Landcare associations, charities and local sporting clubs that have joined the program over the past year.

Ten new chemical manufacturers have signed an agreement to participate in the program with Agstewardship Australia, which is responsible for overseeing the program.

There are now more than 760 collection sites across the country, run by more than 450 councils.

drumMUSTER's Allan McGann said the program has come a long way since its first collection in early 1999.

'It took us eight years to collect our first 10 million drums. In little under five years we will have collected a further 10 million.

'This goes to show the growing support drumMUSTER has garnered over the past 13 years.'

Once collected, the plastic containers are shredded or granulated and transformed into items such as plastic cable covers and wheelie bins.

The drumMUSTER program began in late 1998 when the National Farmers Federation, Avcare Limited, the Veterinary Manufacturers and Distributors Association and the Australian Local Government Association entered into an industry waste reduction scheme agreement.

drumMUSTER is funded via a levy on the purchase price of crop protection and animal health chemical products sold in eligible non-returnable, rigid plastic and steel containers over 1kg or 1 litre in size.

Source: drumMUSTER

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