

W. CROWDER & SONS LTD.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

2. CORPORATE CONTEXT

- 2.1 Mission Statement**
- 2.2 Environmental Statement**
- 2.3 Corporate Objectives**
- 2.4 Planning Process**

3. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

- 3.1 Peat**
- 3.2 Water**
- 3.3 Pesticides & Herbicides**
- 3.4 Recycling**
- 3.5 Waste Disposal**
- 3.6 Fertilisers**
- 3.7 Energy**
- 3.8 Native Seeds**
- 3.9 Pollution Safeguards**

4. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY - ACTION REVIEW

- 4.1 Peat**
- 4.2 Water**
- 4.3 Pesticides & Herbicides**
- 4.4 Recycling**
- 4.5 Waste disposal**
- 4.6 Fertilisers**
- 4.7 Energy**
- 4.8 Native seed**
- 4.9 Pollution safeguards**

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ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

1. Introduction

The environmental policy of the company is a significant and integral component of the corporate policy.

The following notes are extracted from the company plan and demonstrate the commitment to environmental issues and develop specific examples of how this commitment is implemented.

2. Corporate context

2.1. Mission statement

Within the mission statement the Company Ethos reads : “Growing through caring for.....Plants, Customers, Staff, Community, Environment.”

2.2. Environmental statement

The company will strive to be a responsible member of the community and demonstrate this by taking a lead in caring for the environment. The company mission is to be a “leader” within its industry and this will also be reflected in its environmental stance. In particular it will focus on year on year improvement in the following areas:-

- Peat
- Water
- Pesticides & herbicides
- Recycling
- Waste disposal
- Fertiliser
- Energy (including transport)
- Native Seed
- Pollution Safeguards

2.3. Corporate objectives

The financial objectives of continual cost reduction and operating margin improvements are to be considered alongside the company’s environmental responsibility. In many cases the two objectives are entirely compatible and it is a challenge for management to pursue innovative solutions that satisfy these requirements.

2.4. Planning

Within the annual planning process managers will address the Environmental Policy statement. They will include a report on how their departments will further improve, over a three year period, to meet the Corporate and Environmental objectives.

3. Environmental Policy

3.1. Peat

The company recognises that the world's peat bogs are a finite resource. It also knows that commercial horticulture is only responsible for 3% of the peat consumption (peat cut for fuel is the largest consumer) and that, to date, no commercially acceptable substitute has been found. However there are steps that can be taken to reduce peat use until acceptable substitutes are made available in commercial volumes. The company will reduce its peat usage, as a proportion of total compost volume, by 20% over a three-year period. At the same time it will continue to appraise all commercially available peat substitutes. It will also ensure that all peat and peat products purchased by the company originate from non SSSI locations.

3.2. Water

The company requires water as a vital input in the production of plants. It has long been a careful user of water, for instance by the use of capillary and trickle irrigation systems as against the overhead systems more widely used by the industry. Further significant savings have been achieved by the implementation of a water recycling scheme. Although the capital costs were high there are annual revenue savings in reduced water consumption.

3.3. Pesticides & herbicides

The company needs to continue using chemical products to be able to produce plants in commercial volumes and to the exacting quality standards demanded by customers. However with careful planning and the diligent use of alternative cultural techniques the company will reduce the use of chemicals and convert to less toxic and environmentally harmful products. The company will abide by The Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 (FEPA), The Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 (COPR), The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1994 (COSHH 1994), Ground Water Regulations 1998 and Local Environmental Risk Assessments for Pesticides (LERAP 1999).

3.4. Recycling

In addition to water there are other products that the company can reuse. Over the next three years the company will develop techniques to recycle plastic pots, pallets and packaging, and

waste compost. There are plant health risks associated with reusing pots and compost and these will have to be weighed against the environmental gains (financial & environmental objectives to be compatible).

3.5. Waste disposal

There is significant legislation in the area of waste disposal, together with associated costs. The company has been working to new guidelines for some time and is fully aware of its responsibilities. Much of the company's waste product is organic and, where possible, will be shredded and/or composted and reused. Some of the waste, for instance large trees, is too bulky for this treatment and must be burnt. However the company will minimise this and be aware of the impact on the immediate community.

3.6. Fertilisers

Fertiliser is an essential input in the production process of the company. However steps will be taken to improve the accuracy and timing of applications, use more controlled release products, and convert to organic products where possible. The combined effect will be a more efficient use of fertilisers and a reduction in the use of inorganic products. Nutrient levels in nursery run-off will be kept to a minimum.

3.7. Energy (including transport)

The company is not a major consumer of energy, but, in its own small way, will take a responsible approach to consumption and seek efficiency in use of energy. In particular it will complete an energy audit to include:-

- Review of current fuel usage
- Heat distribution system design
- Maintenance of plant & machinery
- Insulation of plant & machinery
- Transport

Transport - The company operates in central Lincolnshire and delivers its products throughout the United Kingdom and into Europe. Transport is not only an environmental issue it is also a major cost. The company will develop a strategy to increase efficiency in distribution and thereby reduce transport cost as a percentage of output

3.8. Native seed

There is much debate amongst environmental groups about the use of "local origins" in new tree planting schemes. Unfortunately much of this debate is misguided due to a lack of

understanding of the difference between “provenance” and “origin”. Much of the present day UK landscape is “planted” and of unknown origin. Despite this the company recognises the demand for native plants and will actively seek to increase production levels of true native origins.

3.9. Pollution Safeguards

Fuel, acid, pesticide and concentrated nutrient stock will be stored in accordance with current best practice. The company will also adhere to the MAFF Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water, Soil and Air. Disposal of surplus product and old containers will also be handled according to FEPA, COPR, and COSHH 1994 regulations.

4. Environmental Policy - Action Review

The company’s Environmental Policy statement makes claims about improvements in certain practices, and in some instances sets specific targets. The company will review its achievements annually and quantify its results against the stated objectives. This review forms part of the annual planning process.

4.1. Peat

Objective: To reduce the proportion of peat used in compost by 20%. To continue appraisal of peat substitutes.

Action: Increased compost additives such as bark, coir and other recycled products. Maintained active contact with producers and participated in commercial trialling and development of substitute products.

Result: Peat usage reduced by approximately 20%

4.2. Water

Objective: To achieve significant savings in water consumption

Action: Implemented capillary bed and trickle irrigation systems. Used wetting agents to aid absorption and water retaining gels to aid retention. Implemented rain water collection from tunnel house roofs.

Result: A saving in “new” water consumption of 15%.

4.3. Pesticides & herbicides

Objective: Reduction in overall use of chemicals and conversion to less harmful products.

Action: Purchased inter-row cultivators and other machines to increase mechanical weeding. Use of “stale seed bed” techniques to reduce weed germination. Control of organic manure to reduce import of weed seeds. Review of all chemicals used to seek less toxic alternatives, even if control may be less effective. Adoption of “when required” as opposed to “preventive” applications. Trained and certificated operators to FEPA Regulations. Subscribe to “The Pesticides Register”, a monthly publication that provides information on new products and changing regulations.

Result: A reduction in the use of chemicals by 17%. A further conversion to less harmful products of 20%.

4.4. Recycling

Objective: To develop techniques to recycle plastic pots, packaging, and waste compost.

Action: Initiated a collection scheme of plastic pots from customers premises. Reused the pots with products least susceptible to disease etc. Arranged a programme for the collection and reuse of pallets and containers. Changed the process of disposing of waste container plants to separate the compost and reuse as organic manure in field production.

Result: Purchased 10% fewer new plastic pots. Collected and reused 60% of pallets and containers. Reused 80% of waste compost.

4.5. Waste disposal (see also 4.9 Pollution Safeguards)

Objective: Continue responsible approach. Make use of opportunities for recycling in house. Be mindful of the local community.

Action: Compost reused (see **4.4 Recycling**). Bulky trees stored on site until 5th November when local Lions Club allowed to host charity Bonfire party on our premises.

Result: Bulky trees burnt on one occasion in year and at the same time local community delighted and charity benefits.

4.6. Fertilisers

Objective: More efficient use of fertilisers and conversion to organic.

Action: Conversion of spreading machine to an inter-row placer of fertiliser. Use of micro controlled release fertilisers in seed beds. Increased use of organic farm

yard manure as a soil treatment pre-planting. Initiated more frequent soil analysis to achieve more accurate application rates.

Result: Reduction in inorganic fertiliser usage of 25%.

4.7. Energy

Objective: To take a responsible approach to consumption and seek efficiency in use of energy.

Action: House condensers from cold store inside packing shed so that waste heat can be used. Establish propagation methods, for certain plants, that do not require the use of "bottom" heat. Full energy audit still requires completion.

Result: Small savings in energy consumption.

Energy - transport

Objective: Develop a strategy to increase efficiency in distribution and reduce transport costs.

Action: Ceased distribution direct to Garden Centres nation-wide. Concentrated on supplying Garden Centres directly in East Midlands area only. Others supplied through wholesalers. Imposed delivery charges on landscape customers. Contracted out 95% of haulage - commercial haulier able to achieve return loads.

Result: Dramatic reduction in distribution costs to Retail accounts. Unexpected secondary benefit from Landscape customers who reduced the frequency of delivery demands to avoid excessive charges - orders combined for more effective distribution. A reduction in transport costs from 6.5% of sales value to 6% during a period when diesel costs have risen by 30%. Haulier's return loads improve road use.

4.8. Native seed

- Objective: To actively seek to increase production levels of “true” native origins.
- Action: Divided seed purchasing into lots to encompass origins from different regions. Established a contract with Leicestershire County Council to produce plants from seed collected by themselves. Increased own collections.
- Result: There are now plants for sale from a wider range of origins. Reduced purchase of imported seed by 20%.

4.9. Pollution Safeguards

- Objective: Storage and disposal of fuel, acid, pesticide and concentrated nutrient stock will be in accordance with regulations in force (FEPA, COPR, COSHH, LERAP).
- Action: Investment in secure storage facilities for all chemicals. Limited key holders all trained to FEPA standards. Continued high standards of storage and disposal as specified in the regulations.
- Result: Reduced risk of pollution.

Signed..... Date.....
S.C. ELLIS
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Comment [AU1]: