

QUALITY MATTERS CASE STUDY: MOISTURE

Scottish community recycling enterprise **Waste Watchers** have devised a successful method for cutting the moisture levels in deliveries of aluminium UBCs. Operations Manager John Rose explains:

“From kerbside to bale our cans are wide open to the elements, so whilst we knew that our deliveries to Novelis were prone to moisture we were still sceptical of the moisture testing results we were getting. If it were true, then a typical 20 pallet load would contain at least a couple of tonnes of water; yet there were no visible signs of this when a wagon was being loaded.

Firstly we broke open a seemingly dry bale from a pallet which had been stacked for a while, and sure enough there was water trapped inside. We then took a few bales fresh from production and weighed them at 24 hour intervals. The result was that bales lost 1.5% weight in the first 24 hours, a further 1.0% in the second 24 hours and 0.5% in the third.

As a result we decided to let bales dry out before palleting and now operate a rule that bales are not to be palletted until they are at least three days old, and more if possible.

We had always stacked bales at an angle on the floor to aid drainage, but to improve the process we constructed some ‘stackers’ which were made from unusable pallets.



Bales are stacked for at least 3 days to allow moisture to drain.



Drain for top layer of bales made from old roofing

Bales are now stacked in two layers – with a piece of roofing providing a facility for the moisture from the top layer to run off.

Since starting the new stacking system in March 2009 we have had no further deductions for moisture.