



Essity's UK manufacturing breakthrough turns paper waste into animal bedding

Essity, the global hygiene and health company behind household brands including Cushelle and Bodyform, has launched a recycling partnership with Veolia and Arden Wood Shavings to transform toilet paper and paper towels into sustainable bedding for livestock.

This initiative marks the first time in British manufacturing that hygiene paper waste has been repurposed in this way, giving paper products a new life on farms instead of ending up in landfill or incineration.

Together, they have transformed a major waste stream from Essity's Stubbins and Prudhoe Mills into kiln-dried animal bedding products. Marketed as Agribed and Agrisoft, these products are now widely used across the livestock sector, predominantly in the dairy and poultry industries.

British paper mills generate significant quantities of surplus non-hazardous solids. These fibres are discarded during the pulping process and until now have been treated as a waste by-product. The material, known as paper crumb, created during the recovered fibre papermaking process, has now been awarded full Product Status, meaning it is officially recognised as a usable, marketable product rather than waste.

The initiative now operates exclusively between Stubbins Mill and Veolia's processing facility, with additional paper crumb sourced from Essity's Prudhoe mill. Since May 2024, collections from Stubbins alone have totalled 20,700 tonnes, all of which have been processed and converted into bedding products Agribed or Agrisoft.

High-intensity kiln drying reduces the moisture content to between 10 - 8% from an average of 45% in the paper crumb, creating a biosecure, absorbent bedding used mainly in poultry farming.

Mark Jackson, operations manager at Essity, said: "This is a big step forward for us and for the way the broader industry thinks about resources. None of this waste stream goes to landfill – instead, we've found a way to give it a useful second life. That means lower emissions and a smaller impact on the environment. It's a great example of how practical changes in our processes can make a real difference, not just for the planet but for the communities and industries we work with every day."

At one broiler farm in North Yorkshire housing 260,000 poultry, the paper crumb bedding "absorbs more moisture but releases it efficiently, making it easier to manage," resulting in fewer top-up bales and savings in both time and money. Elsewhere, a Somerset farm with 180,000 chickens reported halving its use of top-up bales, removing the need for extra labour and improving bird welfare.

With demand rising, Veolia plans to expand distribution, targeting the commercial poultry meat market and exploring further opportunities.

The success at Stubbins is attracting interest from other manufacturers looking to cut waste and create value from by-products, showing how practical innovation can deliver both environmental and commercial benefits.

Stephanie Kerr, Business Development Manager at Veolia, said:

"Through our advanced drying technology and resource recovery expertise, we've transformed what was once a waste material into a high-performing, biosecure bedding product. This is a powerful example of how Veolia's sustainable solutions can help partners like Essity reduce their environmental impact, support animal welfare, and set a new benchmark for responsible manufacturing."

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