Northeast Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) Commodity Values Report

Period Covered
January 1 – March 31, 2026

Contents

Disclaimer

This data is not intended to be used as a price guide for MRF contracts. NERC's database represents single and dual stream MRFs, states with and without beverage container deposits, a wide variety in markets and geographic access to markets, and variety of materials collected for processing at the participating facilities. As a result, it represents the diversity of operating conditions in these locations and should not be used as a price guideline for a specific program.

Background

The Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) supports recycling market development and opportunities for improvements in its 11-state region: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

This is the 28th quarterly report in NERC's series of reports on the market value of commodities from MRFs in the Northeast. The report includes information from twelve states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia.

The first report covered the period April – June 2019 and focused on NERC's 11-state region. The scope of the participating states expanded in the first quarter of 2020 with the receipt of a grant from EPA Region 3. This report reflects information received from 19 MRFs in twelve states. Among respondents are single stream, dual stream, and source separated MRFs. The survey is conducted quarterly.

In 2018, in partnership with the Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association (NEWMOA), we formed a *Regional Recycling Markets Development Committee*. The Committee determined that having information about the value of commodities processed by the region's Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs)[1] would be helpful for assessing regional market trends and to serve as an educational tool for promoting improved residential recycling and participation. The results have been invaluable to recyclers, MRFs, and also municipalities and state agencies.

These survey results reflect the differing laws and collection options in the participating states. Four of the states included in this report have beverage container deposit laws. As a result, fewer glass bottles, PET bottles and aluminum cans are processed in MRFs in those states. Those MRFs are also likely to have less revenue from those recyclables. In addition, the report reflects a mix of single stream, dual stream, and source separation to collect recyclables with single stream being the most common approach. The type of collection used will have an impact on MRF design and operation. Thus, the data from this report reflects the unique blend of facilities and statewide laws in the reporting states.

A special thank you to Robert (Max) Babits, RRS for providing technical support.

At no time will any individual company information be shared with anyone outside of NERC staff. No participating facilities will be identified, and no state-specific data will be released.

[1] Material Recovery Facility (MRF) is a facility that receives, separates, and prepares recyclable materials from the public for marketing to processors and end-user manufacturers.

Average Percentage of Outbound Tons Marketed per Commodity

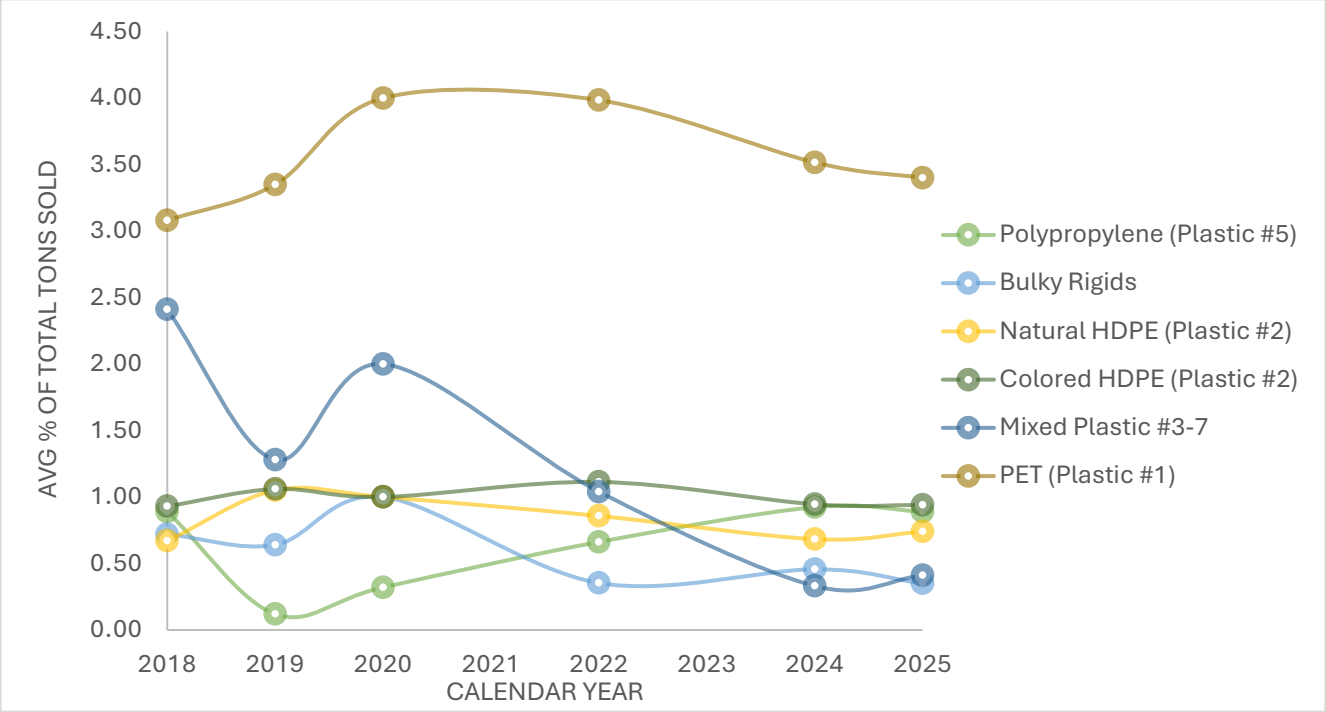
Eighteen MRFs representing twelve states reported the total tonnages of outbound commodities marketed for calendar year 2025 which was used to calculate the average percent composition of a ton. The ton includes residue for which a disposal fee is paid. These percentages are used to then calculate the average commodity value of a ton of material.

Of the 18 MRFs surveyed on total tonnages of outbound commodities marketed for calendar year 2025, 12 MRFs were single stream and six were dual stream/source separated.

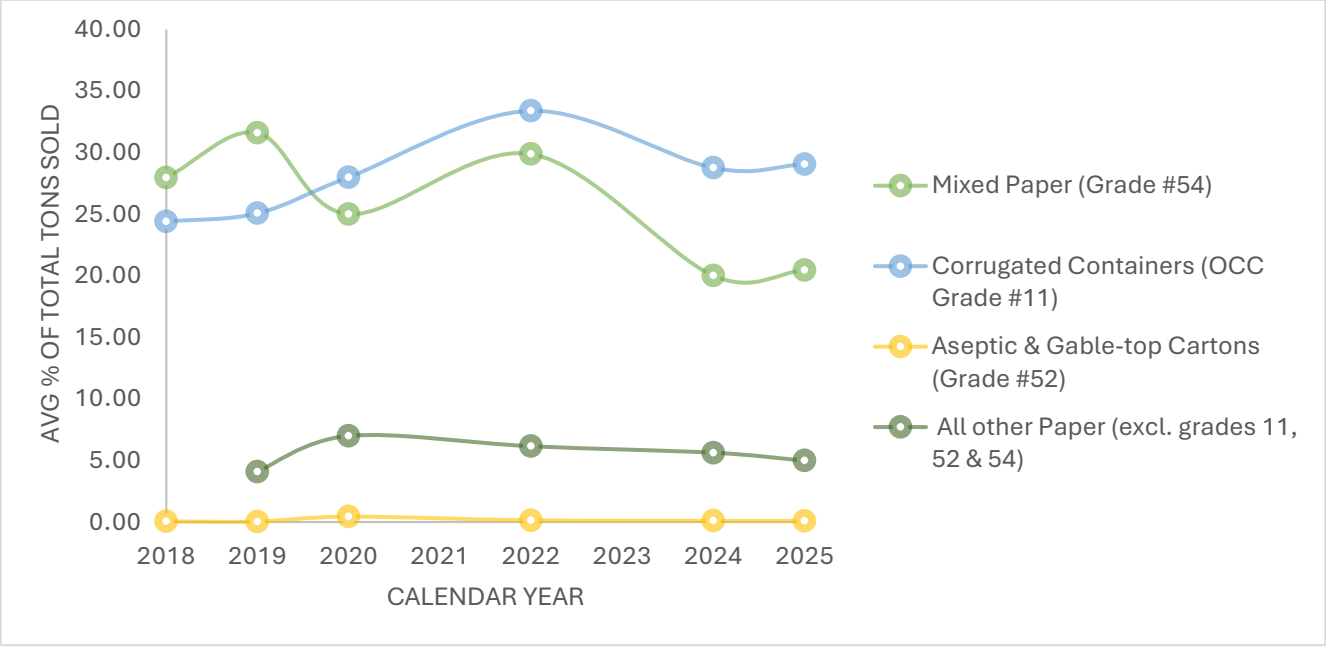
Commodity	**2025 Avg. Percent Composition per Ton (n=18)**	**% Change from 2024 Percent Composition per Ton**
Mixed Paper: Grade #54	20.454%	↑ 2%
Corrugated Containers (OCC): Grade #11	29.058%	↑ 1%
Aseptic and Gable-top Cartons: Grade #52	0.078%	↓ 19%
All Other Paper (Excluding Grades 11, 52 & 54)	4.993%	↓ 11%
Aluminum Cans (UBC)	1.014%	↑ 14%
Steel Cans	1.594%	↑ 2%
Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET): Plastic #1	3.399%	↓ 3%
Natural High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE): Plastic #2	0.736%	↑ 8%
Colored High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE): Plastic #2	0.944%	↓ 1%
Mixed Plastic: Plastic #3-7	0.406%	↑ 24%
Bulky Rigids	0.354%	↓ 23%
Polypropylene (PP): Plastic #5	0.888%	↓ 4%
Clear Glass Containers	1.354%	↑ 25%
Green Glass Containers	1.380%	↓ 9%
Brown Glass Containers	0.875%	↓ 5%
3 Mix Glass Containers	15.649%	No Change
Residue	16.825%	↓ 3%

Average Percentage of Outbound Tons Trends: 2018 – 2025

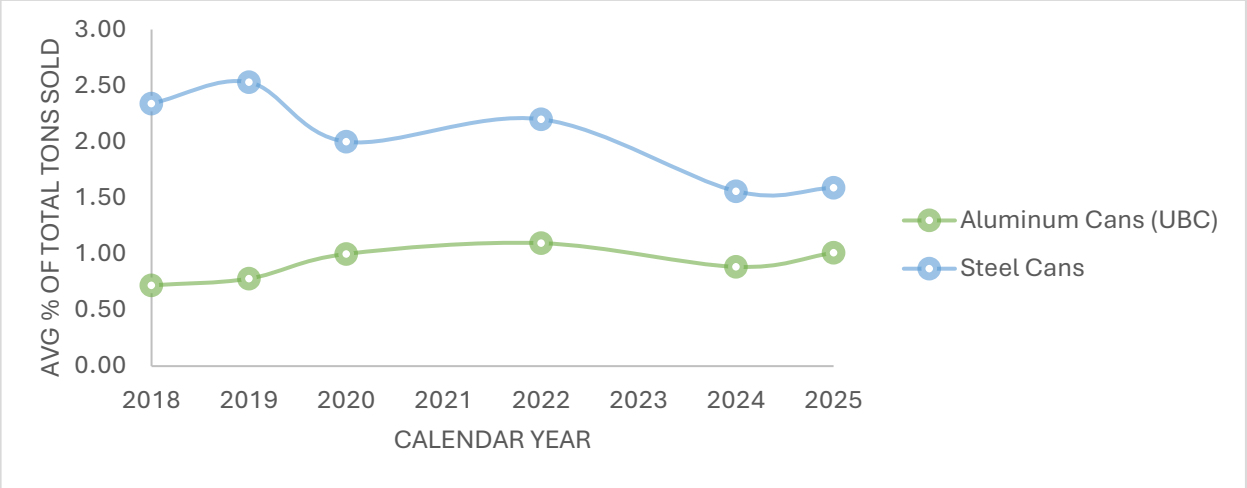
Average Percentage of Plastics



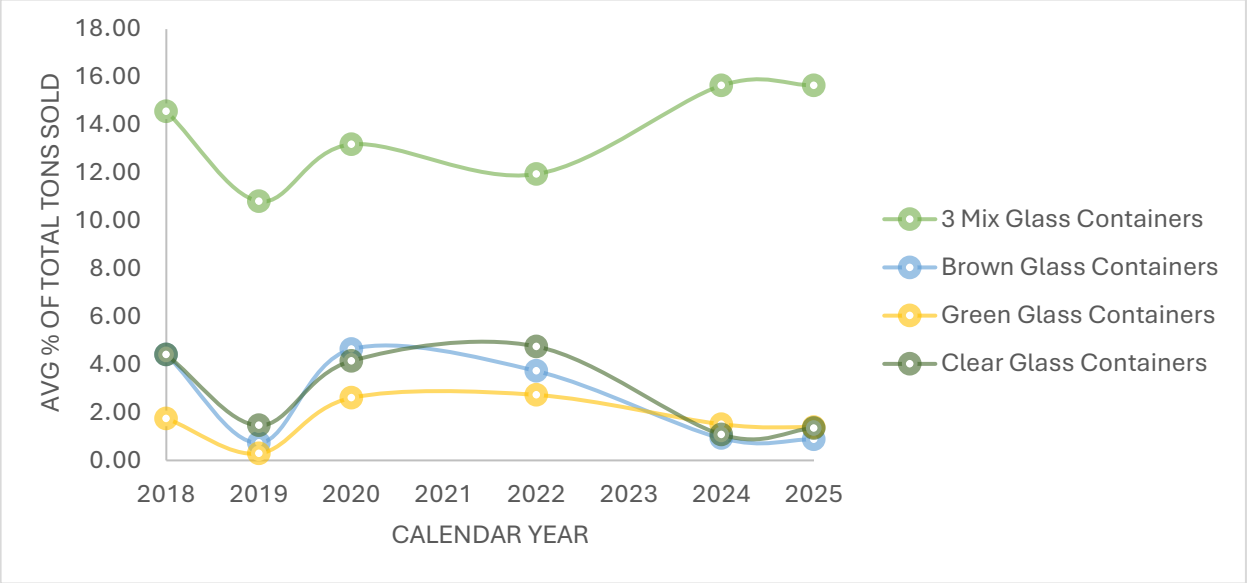
Average Percentage of Paper



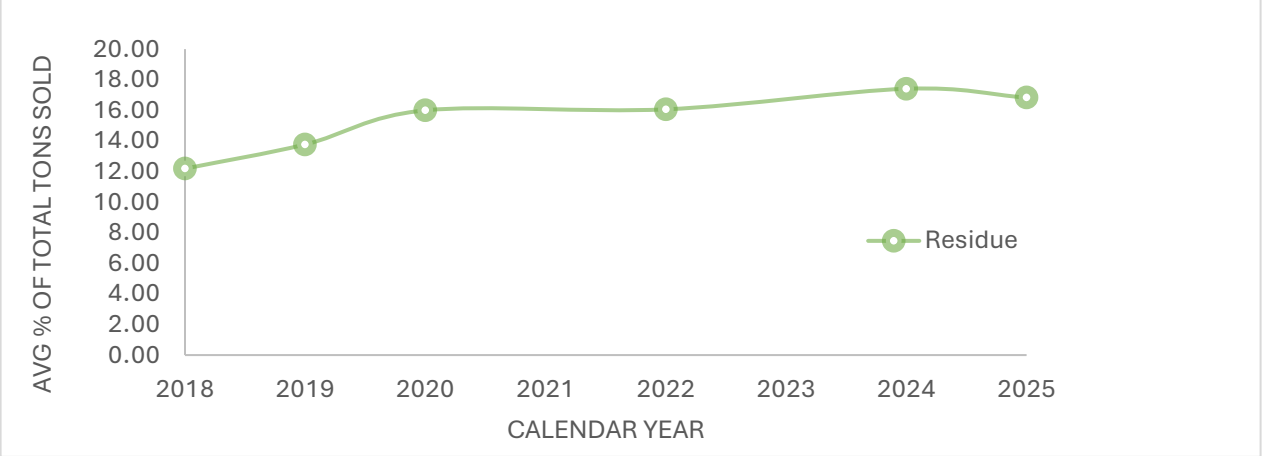
Average Percentage of Metal



Average Percentage of Glass



Average Percentage of Residue



Average Individual Commodity Prices for Q1 2026

The average price for commodities across nineteen surveyed MRFs for Q1 (January 1 – March 31) 2026 are reflected in the second column below. The percentage in the column indicates the percent change in value from the previous quarter. The third and fourth columns show the lowest and highest prices, respectively. Of the 19 surveyed MRFs, 13 MRFs were single stream and six were dual stream/source separated.

Commodity	Price/Ton *Average*	Price/Ton *Low*	Price/Ton *High*
Mixed Paper: Grade #54	$47.80 ↑ 16%	$(10.00)	$165.00
Corrugated Containers (OCC): Grade #11	$84.56 ↑ 7%	$65.00	$113.45
Aseptic and Gable-top Cartons: Grade #52	$5.00	N/A	N/A
All Other Paper (Excl. Grades 11, 52 & 54)	$65.27 ↓ 21%	$40.00	$90.54
Aluminum Cans (UBC)	$2,067.93 ↑ 20%	$1,300.00	$2,365.07
Steel Cans	$212.71 ↑ 16%	$138.00	$254.00
Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET): Plastic #1	$102.86 ↓ 8%	$41.87	$208.42
Natural HDPE: Plastic #2	$1,337.73 ↑ 30%	$1,158.18	$1,780.00
Colored HDPE: Plastic #2	$132.53 ↑ 57%	$95.00	$350.00
Mixed Plastic: Plastic #3-7	$134.27 ↑ 55%	$11.23	$280.00
Bulky Rigids	$40.71 ↑ 65%	$30.00	$60.00
Polypropylene (PP): Plastic #5	$200.66 ↑ 39%	$96.93	$271.13
Clear Glass Containers	$30.67 ↑ 8%	$20.00	$37.00
Green Glass Containers	$15.00 ↑ 50%	$10.00	$20.00
Brown Glass Containers	$12.50 ↓ 24%	$5.00	$20.00
3 Mix Glass Containers	($33.33) ↑ 25%	$(92.50)	$25.00
Residue	($92.79) ↓ 13%	$(303.10)	$(9.40)

Average Commodity Value per Ton of Marketed Materials

Nineteen survey respondents reported the average value received/paid for common commodities from residential recycling during the period January – March 2026 as listed above. These values were then combined into a weighted average to reflect the blended value per ton for recyclables marketed in the region.

Note: Two MRFs were excluded from the average blended value for Q1 2026, because they did not market enough commodities within Q1 to provide a representative comparison with other MRFs.

Of the 17 MRFs included in the average blended commodity value, 13 MRFs were single stream and four were dual stream/source separated.

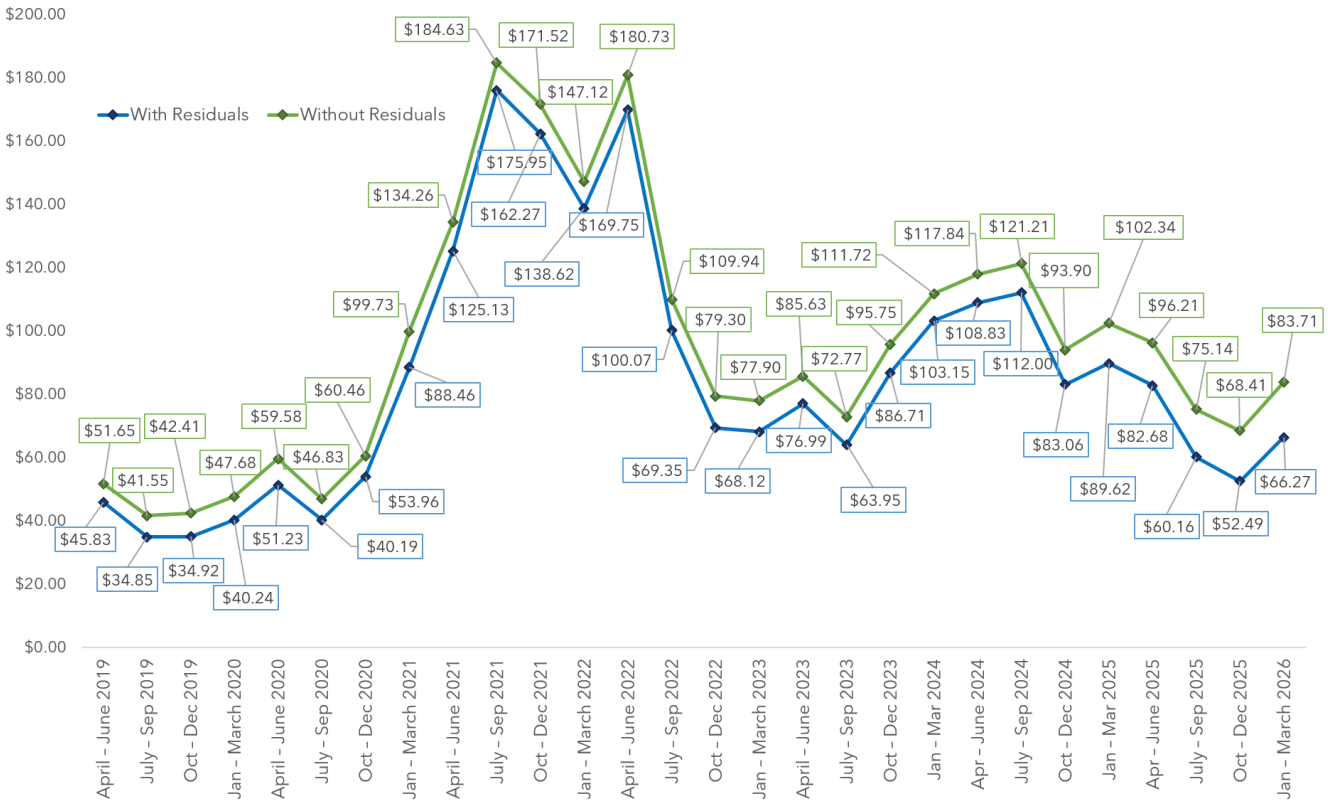
Residuals refers to the incoming material that cannot be marketed and goes to disposal. The value without residuals reflects the value of a ton of marketed material without the expense of handling residuals, while the value with residuals reflects the value of each ton processed with the costs of managing residuals taken into account.

The increase in this quarter can be attributed to national and regional trends.

Average Blended Commodity Value: January – March 2026

	All MRFs	Dual Stream/ Source Separated	Single Stream
Blended Value			
Without Residuals	$83.71	$91.31	$81.28
With Residuals	$66.27	$63.60	$67.11
% Change from previous quarter			
Without Residuals	22.37%	23.83%	21.01%
With Residuals	26.25%	15.97%	28.71%

Average Blended Commodity Value Per Ton: Q2 2019 – Q1 2026



Recent Values Zoomed In