

After
Spraying

Pesticide Disposal



Why Pesticide Disposal Matters?

Using pesticides according to the label and following best practice will ensure their impact on the environment is minimised. However there is clear evidence that **poor practice when handling and mixing pesticides, cleaning up and disposing of wastes after spraying pollutes surface and groundwater.**

More legal controls are being introduced to protect the environment. Since 1999 any disposal to land of surplus spray and washings that does not take place "in the crop" has required a "Groundwater Authorisation" from the local office of the environment agency. New farm waste regulations* introduced in May 2006 prohibit the burning or burial of pesticide containers in England and Wales. Different arrangements apply in Northern Ireland and Scotland. (*The Waste Management (England and Wales) Regulations)

The statutory Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection Products remains an important source of advice on this topic; in addition, all users should use a "Crop Protection Management Plan" to review their operations and to ensure that they comply with the law and follow best practice when disposing of pesticide wastes.

Keep Water Clean

- ♦ **Never** let pesticides enter streams and watercourses;
- ♦ **Never** pour pesticide in any form (including pack washings) into soakaways, sewers, drains, ditches or rivers etc.

Minimise Waste Production

To reduce difficulties with disposal the best approach is to minimise waste production.

- ♦ Order enough product to do the job in hand and no more;
- ♦ Buy products in the largest practical container sizes;
- ♦ Store products in good order;
- ♦ Use internal sprayer tank cleaning units and container rinsing devices;
- ♦ Choose products which minimise or eliminate contaminated packaging waste;
- ♦ Keep careful records of the movement of stock in and out of the agrochemical store; rotate stock on the "first-in, first-out" principle;
- ♦ Carefully calculate required quantities needed and mix just enough to complete a task, no more;
- ♦ Avoid being caught out by changes in the weather.

Users may generate four types of waste: **Surplus Spray and Washings, Empty Containers, Waste from Spills and Unwanted Pesticides.** This Guide gives basic advice on the disposal of these wastes. Seek further advice from your agronomist or your local environment agency office.

Disposal of Surplus Spray and Washings

There are four recognised solutions which are discussed in more detail in the CPA's Best Practice Guide on Pesticide Handling Areas:

- 1 **In the Crop** - Groundwater Authorisation **Not** Required
Empty the sprayer out in the field being treated by spraying out on to a relatively weed or pest free part of the field left unsprayed or under-dosed for the purpose. Do not exceed the maximum dose approved for the crop.
- 2 **Grass Area** - Groundwater Authorisation Required*
Spray washings out on to an uncropped grassed area (not fallow or stubble) of minimal wildlife value. Ensure this is well away from waterways, ditches and ponds, drains and environmentally sensitive areas and that it is not liable to surface run-off or leaching.
- 3 **Lined Biobed** - need to be registered with the local environment agency office but require a Groundwater Authorisation.
Spray washings can be drained to a drive-over or indirect Lined Biobed.
- 4 **Fully Contained Washdown Area** - Groundwater Authorisation **Not** Required
Spray washings are drained to tank and then sent for professional disposal.
- 5 **Fully Contained Washdown Area with a Sentinel Treatment Facility** - Consult local environment agency
Spray washings are drained to a tank and then treated using a Sentinel treatment plant prior to disposal. A Groundwater Authorisation is not generally required but the local environment agency needs to be consulted.

* Such sites require an Authorisation under the Groundwater Regulations and may only be used following approval by the local environment agency. Authorisation will only be granted if the local environment agency are satisfied there is no risk of surface or groundwater contamination.

Best Practice Guide

♦ Disposal of Empty Containers

Container Cleaning - Essential for recycling or economic disposal

- ♦ Always empty and clean containers before disposal;
- ♦ Do not rinse containers that have held sodium cyanide or aluminium, magnesium or zinc phosphides. Fill these containers with dry earth, sand or other inert material instead of rinsing;
- ♦ Clean all containers and foil seals thoroughly and drain the washings into the spray tank;
- ♦ Use pressure rinsing devices or triple rinsing with water to reduce any pesticide residues in the container to insignificant levels;
- ♦ Store empty containers upright with lids in place awaiting disposal in a dedicated secure compound;
- ♦ Read the CPA Guide on "Container Cleaning" for more detailed advice.

New Farm Waste Regulations

New farm waste regulations were introduced in England and Wales in May 2006. These mean that unlicensed burning (including the drum incinerator) of waste on farm and use of farm tips is illegal. Waste disposal on farm has to be licensed and for pesticide wastes such as cleaned containers or unwanted products this is unlikely to be a practical, economic or acceptable. Similar changes to farm waste legislation have taken place in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Check with relevant environment agency and see the CPA Guide on Pesticide Container Disposal

Pesticide Container Disposal

- ♦ Waste disposal and recycling contractors will take cleaned containers and there will be a charge for this service. The charges will depend on the cleanliness of the containers and the range and nature of service offered. A website www.wasterecycling.org.uk provides details of possible waste and recycling contractors serving the agricultural and horticultural sectors
- ♦ Licensed disposal sites will generally accept cleaned and punctured or crushed containers, subject to the site's conditions allowing acceptance of such waste.
- ♦ For more information see the CPA Guide on Pesticide Container Disposal

♦ Disposal of Spillage Wastes

- ♦ Spillages should be cleaned up thoroughly with absorbent material (eg sand, cat litter). All contaminated wastes should be treated as unwanted pesticide and sent for professional disposal via a reputable waste disposal contractor.

♦ Disposal of Unwanted or Obsolete Pesticides

- ♦ Check agrochemical stores at least once a year, if not more often. Look for containers that are losing their labels, products which are no longer needed because of cropping changes, part-filled or deteriorating containers and products that are no longer approved.
- ♦ Your local distributor may consider taking back sound unopened containers with complete and up-to-date label instructions. Alternatively, a neighbouring farm may be willing to take such products if it is still growing crops for which the products are approved.

In most situations unwanted or obsolete pesticides will be treated as hazardous or special waste see adjacent box

- ♦ Contact details on the pesticide disposal contractors who participated in the Obsolete Pesticide Disposal Campaign in the winter of 2003/4 can be found on the Voluntary Initiative website: www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk
- ♦ Alternatively, contact a registered waste disposal contractor. These can be found in Yellow Pages.

Hazardous/Special Waste

New rules for hazardous waste in England and Wales applied from May 2007. These mean that if you produce hazardous waste you must:

- ♦ Know what it is
- ♦ Give it to someone that is authorised to handle it
- ♦ Make sure it is disposed of at a properly authorised site;
- ♦ Use a consignment note every time.
- ♦ Keep the consignment note for at least 3 years

There are a wide range of waste materials that are classed as hazardous. This includes waste batteries, oil, asbestos, poorly cleaned pesticide packaging, unapproved/unwanted pesticide concentrate aerosols and old PPE.

If the farm produces more than 500kgs/litres/year of hazardous waste per annum it must also be registered with the Environment Agency (EA).

In Scotland slightly different arrangements apply. SEPA requires completion of a standard consignment note for which there is a charge. Consignment notes can be obtained from the local SEPA office. SEPA must also be given 72 hours prior notice of where the waste is to be moved to, and by whom, before the waste is moved off-site for all special waste disposals



The advice in this Guide has been prepared after consultation with the Pesticide Safety Directorate, HSE and the UK environment agencies.

This Guide was produced by the Crop Protection Association and supports the work of The Voluntary Initiative.

The Voluntary Initiative is a programme of measures agreed by Government to minimise the environmental impact of pesticides.

www.cropprotection.org.uk

www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk

