

Pesticide Education Program

Spray Equipment Washwater Disposal

State and federal regulations on the storage and disposal of pesticide containers and spray equipment washwater are now very stringent. During the next few years, regulatory officials will adopt additional regulations governing pesticides. These regulations will cover all phases of pesticide storage and application as well as spray equipment washwater and container disposal.

Laws in all states require farmers to comply with all pesticide label requirements. Information on the pesticide container label pertaining to application procedures, container disposal and spray equipment washwater disposal must be carefully adhered to. Farmers will be held liable for any soil or water contamination resulting from disposal of leftover spray mixes and spray equipment washwater.

Farmers who store leftover pesticide mixes or spray equipment washwater for treatment or later disposal do not know what future laws will be implemented nor what it will cost to comply with these laws.

Farmers can simplify problems associated with complying with ever-changing state and federal regulations by adopting a few commonsense practices in the storage and application of pesticides.

The big first step involves knowing the size of the spray tank as well as the size of each field that requires a pesticide application. Once the spray tank and field sizes are known and the sprayer accurately calibrated, the farmer can mix the exact amount of pesticide for each job.

After mixing the exact amount of material for each pest control job, the second step is to use an accurately calibrated sprayer so 100% of the spray mix is applied to

the target area. The spray tank should be empty after completion of each spray job! In addition to reducing pesticide cost, this practice will eliminate problems associated with the disposal of leftover spray mixes.

Several Louisiana farmers take this procedure one step further. They have modified the outlet on the spray tank to reduce the volume of pesticide mix that cannot be pumped from the tank and spray system.

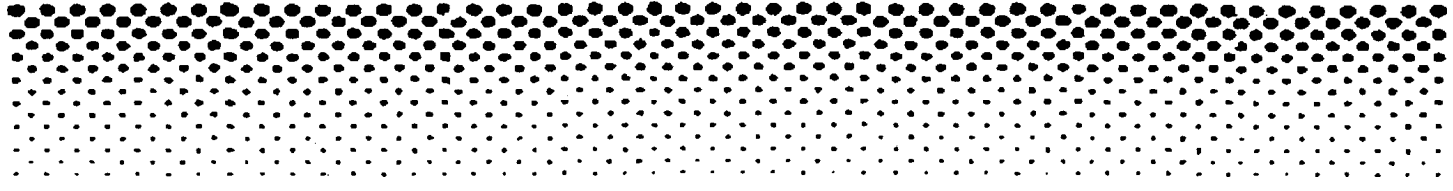
After the spray job, the equipment must be cleaned before storage or the next spray job. Washing the inside of the spray tank with 15 to 20 gallons of clean water and then spraying this washwater over the previously treated area is a simple way to accomplish this task. This process should be repeated as many times as required to clean the spray system thoroughly.

A small quantity of pesticide left in a spray tank can damage a susceptible crop. Good tank cleaning practices must be used!

This process is not as bad as it first sounds if a little planning and a few simple tricks are used. For example, the sprayer can be equipped with quick change nozzle bodies. You can then switch to a larger nozzle tip after the initial batch of washwater has been applied. This will reduce the time required to spray the washwater over the treated area.

Farmers can also install a tank washing nozzle inside the spray tank. A hose can then be connected to a fitting outside the spray tank. This will allow farmers to wash the inside of the spray tank quickly and safely.

The exterior of the sprayer, spray boom and tractor should be washed before leaving the field.



Another commonsense practice involves scheduling spray jobs to reduce the number of times the equipment must be cleaned. Pesticides are often labeled for several crops. By carefully planning the day's schedule, it may be possible to apply a second and perhaps a third pesticide without washing the sprayer. Before adopting this practice, however, check the label of each pesticide carefully to avoid label violations and possible crop damage.

The commonsense practice of using 100% of the pesticide on each job and then washing the sprayer over the treated area has a lot of merit. In addition to reducing pesticide cost, it eliminates the possibility of soil and groundwater contamination caused by dumping leftover pesticide mixes and washwater in one central area. Most important, the farmer avoids the cost and regulatory problems associated with the storage and treatment of pesticide spray equipment washwater.

Institutions which lend money for the buying or refinancing of farmland are concerned about anything that could reduce the value of their collateral. Potential environmental problems from the improper use of pesticides or improper container disposal are a major consideration in the approval of a loan. Poor container disposal or spray equipment washwater disposal practices could jeopardize the sale of farmland or refinancing of farmland.

Landlords should consider the modification of lease agreements. They should specify how pesticides are to be stored and applied as well as how containers and spray equipment washwater will be disposed of. The lease should specify who will pay legal fees and court costs if one party enters suit against the other party concerning the improper use of pesticides.

Landowners should inspect the entire property periodically to be certain pesticides are used properly. The landowner will ultimately be held accountable for the cleanup of old pesticides, pesticide containers and contaminated areas. This could be expensive if the renter doesn't properly dispose of pesticide containers, unused pesticides and spray equipment washwater.

Renters should carefully inspect all property for potential environmental problems before signing a lease. In certain situations, it may be wise to have a qualified firm conduct an environmental site survey before accepting the land. Any potential environmental problems should be noted on the lease. This will reduce the possibility of the landowner's holding the renter liable for pre-existing conditions such as old pesticides, contaminated sites and old pesticide containers.



Darryl Rester, Specialist (Engineering)

Visit our website: www.agctr.lsu.edu

Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, William B. Richardson, Chancellor
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, Jack L. Bagent, Vice Chancellor and Director

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