

Agricultural Pesticide Collection In Madison Co.

by

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Part of NYRWA's agricultural pesticide collection initiative is promoting a program that uses "on-site" or "milk run" collection methods. In our interviews with farmers and at a focus group with ag folks held at Syracuse University, under the direction of Kim Farrell of their Public Management Finance Program, it was

indicated that farmers preferred this method. Milk run collections are the most convenient since they don't require special exemptions from the Department of Transportation in order to haul hazardous material on the highways and they don't require any specialized farmer training for hazardous waste hauling. They were also deemed to be safer since registered hazardous waste haulers would be handling the product. Importantly they don't take time out of a farmer's busy day, as the material is picked up at their location. Another point made by the farm community was that they provide a little privacy that they might lose by bringing this product to a site usually located in the "city", a valuable public relations tool with the farmer we like to reach. We wanted to try a model "milk run" program to compare participation rates and costs, but most past collection programs had been single day events where the farmer brought the product to a specific site. (The one exception seemed to be Cayuga County).



1) The Hazardous Waste Hauling Truck Arrives At A Madison County Farm.

Around that time, (March 2002) the New York State Conservation Committee offered a small (\$15,000) pesticide collection grant for local Water Quality Coordinating Committees.

We informed the Madison County Solid Waste Department of these grants

and asked that they consider applying for one to use for the development of a model "milk run" collection program. They, in turn, approached their Water Quality Committee (who were already aware of the grant), their planning department, their Soil & Water Conservation District, and the local Cornell Cooperative Extension Office. Those folks, along with representatives from the local Farm Bureau, met and decided to proceed with the grant application. Upon notification of the project's approval by the NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee, they proceeded to have further meetings regarding procedures and contracting with a certified hazardous waste

hauler. They were lucky in this regard, since the county already had a contract with Environmental Products and Services, Inc to collect household hazardous waste and they simply had to amend that contract to include the pick up and disposal of farm pesticides. The original plan was to schedule collection for the Spring/Summer of 2003, but monies from the state didn't arrive as expected.

Once the grant did arrive, meetings were held in December 2003, to develop a pre-registration brochure and poster. Madison County's planning department and Cornell Cooperative Extension prepared mailing lists. The Solid Waste Department's public



relations officer and CCE wrote publicity pieces for newsletters targeting the farm community. In late January 2004, direct mail publicizing the collection was sent to Madison County Farmers. Since funding was limited, they emphasized that, while collection was free of charge, (for collections up to 1000 pounds) participation would be on a first come-first served basis. The farmer was asked initially to simply sign up. By mid March, a list of participating farmers had been developed. At that point, staff from Cornell Cooperative Extension visited the selected farms and helped them develop an inventory of the old pesticides that they wanted disposed. They listed the name of the products (whenever possible), the quantities, and the condition of the containers. Once this was complete, the list was given to the hazardous waste hauler.

And in just one week in June 2004, the hazardous waste hauler visited 15 farms in Madison County. Material was categorized, safely packaged, and transported to an approved hazardous waste disposal site. The contracted hauler indicated that the collection went very smoothly. They didn't come upon any surprises (like leaking containers they weren't expecting or much more product than had been reported). The reaction from a few of the farms that I was able to visit at the time of the collections, was very positive. Those owners were grateful that a way was found to get rid of this old waste safely and cost free. One of them told me that some of the product collected had been at his place since he bought the farm 20 years ago. He was happy to get it out of his yard so that it couldn't damage his property and potentially hurt his kids or pets. Another stated that he had recently retired from active farming and was looking for a way to get rid of this old stuff. He said that this program was extremely useful to him.

2) An Old Pesticide Storage Area



*3) Categorizing Old
“Off Label” Pesticides*

As I write this, the final report as to quantities and final costs has yet to be determined. But every indication is that the project came in under budget. If the county has money left over, they have indicated they will run an additional collection in the near future.

Obviously, we would have liked to see a little higher participation rate but low turnout was not unexpected. All of the studies we have done indicate that some kind of ongoing program is essential to increased participation rates. It takes farmer telling farmer of the advantages of these collections and builds trust within the farmcommunity.

This model did nothing to discourage us from promoting “milk run” pesticide collection on New York farms. We will continue to analyze results from this project and support these kinds of projects.



*4) Safely Packaging Old
Pesticides For Shipment
To An Approved Disposal Site*