

MEDIA STATEMENT

DISPOSING OF OBSOLETE PESTICIDES AND EMPTY PESTICIDE CONTAINERS RESPONSIBLY

16 JULY 2014

STARTS

Whilst we wait for the approval of the industry waste management plan from the authorities AVCASA would like to guide farmers on the environmentally responsible disposal of obsolete pesticides and empty plastic pesticide containers with the support of registered hazardous waste management companies and recommended plastic recyclers.

Farmers need safe and responsible technology and methodology to dispose of obsolete pesticides and empty plastic pesticide containers, especially those farmers that produce fruit and vegetables for export markets as certification agencies demand responsible management of obsolete pesticides and empty containers. These old pesticides and empty pesticide containers pose a threat to human health and the environment, and may also jeopardise farmers' export certification if not managed and disposed of responsibly.

AVCASA recently negotiated with registered hazardous waste management companies to dispose of obsolete pesticides, as well as a number of plastic recyclers to offer their services for the disposal of empty plastic pesticide containers.

Recycling empty plastic pesticide containers

There should be no reason for farmers to be burdened with empty plastic pesticide containers. Containers must be triple rinsed with clean water and rinse water must be decanted into spray tanks. This leaves plastic pesticide containers suitable for recycling. Farmers may store such containers on their farms and call one of the recommended recyclers to dispose of the containers. Some recyclers collect containers on the farms whereas others prefer to have the containers delivered at their recycling plants.

The list of AVCASA recommended recyclers together with guidelines on the handling and disposal of triple rinsed empty containers is available on **www.avcasa.co.za**. Farmers are advised to make use of the AVCASA recommended recyclers as they have been vetted for compliance and good service.

Empty plastic pesticide containers may not be disposed of in landfill sites, burial pits or anywhere else. Containers may not be incinerated on the farm due to insufficient thermal energy generated in normal fires and noxious fumes being produced by such attempts. They may also not be donated or sold to people to be used as containers for food, potable liquids or drinking water. It is a life threatening practice to use such empty containers for food or drinking water.

Disposing of obsolete pesticides

Obsolete pesticides can be disposed of at cost by three of South Africa's largest hazardous waste management companies. AVCASA engaged all three companies listed on the website www.avcasa.co.za to negotiate terms for the disposal of obsolete pesticides. These companies have good track records, have the required human resources, skills, equipment and infrastructure to dispose of highly hazardous waste like obsolete pesticides.

Farmers who have obsolete pesticides that need to be disposed of should contact one of the recommended companies for quotations. It is required of the owners of such obsolete pesticides to provide an inventory with the trade names, active ingredients, types and conditions of containers, left over weights or volumes and material safety data sheets to obtain quotes.

Obsolete pesticides may not be buried on the farm as it poses a very serious risk of poisoning ground water. Do not attempt to burn such products as highly toxic vapours will poison the atmosphere on the farm with dire consequences for people, livestock and the environment.

AVCASA can assure farmers who make use of the recommended recyclers and waste disposal companies that they will enjoy professional service.

AVCASA is not in a position to accredit or certify any plastic recycler or waste management company; it can only recommend their service and endorse their operations. We reserve the right to recommend only those recyclers and waste management companies that meet the industry's requirements due to the sensitive nature of these operations.

Recyclers or waste management companies that would like to offer their services may contact Dr Verdoorn for further instructions on the contact details provided below. AVCASA will conduct a thorough evaluation of the applicant's profile to ensure that all statutory requirements are met and that the applicant can offer effective and professional service to the agricultural sector.

For further information please contact:

Mr Tom Mabesa, AVCASA Executive Director on 011 805 2000

or

AVCASA consultant Dr Gerhard Verdoorn on 082 446 8946.

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