

Pesticide recycling program is effective

Written by Gothenburg Times
Thursday, 02 May 2013 13:51 -

AREA SITES

The City of North Platte Transfer Station is open year-round Monday through Saturday 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.
All Points Cooperative in Lexington accepts drums and other containers May through August from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

LINCOLN—More than 2 million pounds of plastic pesticide containers have disappeared and no longer pose a threat to Nebraska's environment and landscape.

"To be more exact, 2.1 million pounds....which is well over 1,000 tons," said University of Nebraska-Lincoln pesticide safety educator Clyde Ogg.

That's the amount of empty, plastic pesticide containers UNL Extension's plastic pesticide container recycling program has helped collect and recycle from across Nebraska over the past 21 years.

As it has since the beginning, the UNL program helps recycle 1- and 2.5-gallon plastic pesticide containers and 15-, 30- and 55-gallon plastic crop protection chemical drums.

"These are farm and ranch pesticide containers that could otherwise end up stored in barns or sheds or be improperly disposed of by casting them aside on creek banks or burning them," Ogg said.

"The program's primary message has always been that it benefits everyone to find simple, cost-effective and cooperative ways to help properly dispose of these containers and keep them out of the environment and that message has been widely embraced.

"If responsibly and properly disposed of, such as through this program, the containers pose no future environmental risk."

Plastic from collected containers is turned into industrial and consumer products like shipping pallets, drain tile, dimension lumber and parking lot tire bumpers.

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Last year, about 35 tons of containers were collected.

“Teamwork and cooperation has kept this program viable and successful. That and the commitment of a lot of people that increasingly understand that this is a simple and effective way to care for our environment,” Ogg said, citing cooperation from UNL extension educators and collection site managers statewide.

“Most of the (collection) sites are at agricultural chemical dealerships or community recycling centers, which volunteer to take on this additional responsibility,” he said.

The program accepts pressure-rinsed or triple-rinsed 1- and 2.5-gallon plastic pesticide containers. They must be clean and drained, inside and out.

Caps, labels, booklets and slipcover plastic labels must be removed since they cannot be recycled as part of the program. Those items should be disposed of as normal, solid waste.

Glued-on paper labels can be left on the container. Rinsate should be returned to the spray tank.

Of the 38 sites involved in the program, 21 accept 15-, 30- and 55-gallon plastic crop protection chemical, crop oil and adjuvant drums.

Drums must be thoroughly rinsed before delivery to collection sites and should not be cut or opened in any way. Mini-bulk, saddle tanks and nurse tanks, which can be made of fiberglass or plastics not compatible with the recycling program, are not accepted.

Program funding is by a national coalition of agri-chemical manufacturers through the Agricultural Container Recycling Council, Washington, D.C.

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