

Clean Farms



It used to be that much of the waste generated on farms across Canada was simply burned. Today, very few farmers would even dream of getting rid of their waste that way, but that leaves some producers scratching their heads about what, exactly, their options are. Fortunately, at least some of the waste can be disposed of by tapping into CleanFARMS™ programs for obsolete pesticides and empty pesticide containers.

“CleanFARMS™ offers farmers across the country access to world-renowned programs that cost the farmer absolutely nothing to participate in,” says Barry Friesen, General Manager of CleanFARMS™.

One such initiative is the empty pesticide container recycling program that encourages farmers, horticultural operations and golf courses to return their empty pesticide containers to one of about 1,000 designated sites across Canada.

CleanFARMS™ picks up the containers, shreds them and transports the material to recyclers where the plastic is made into products that can be used back on the farm such as drainage tile. In 2009 alone, approximately 1.7 million kilograms of plastic from empty pesticide containers was recycled. A second CleanFARMS™ program is the obsolete pesticide collection campaign which was launched in 1998.

This program provides farmers, and other users of commercial grade pesticides, with a safe way to dispose of obsolete or unwanted products at no cost. A national initiative, the program is committed to being in each province every three years. Collection sites are set-up at a location in a province for a specific campaign period. Since the program began, more than 1.4 million kilograms of obsolete pesticides have been collected and safely disposed.

As part of its mission to find new ways to help farmers dispose of farm-specific wastes, CleanFARMS™ also offers a service to collect empty pesticide paper bags in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In 2009, approximately 28,000 empty pesticide paper bags were returned and sent to a waste to energy facility, which burns the waste and turns the resulting energy into power.

To that end, CleanFARMS™ recently started a first-of-its-kind study to discover the types and quantities of inorganic waste found on farms across Ontario, such as mulch film, bale wrap, twine and other packaging. The study will also determine the best option to safely and responsibly dispose of such waste.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has committed \$140,000 to this project for two years through the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem. The Canadian Animal Health Institute and industry have pledged additional cash and in-kind contributions.

The findings of this study will be released in 2012 and will provide valuable insight into what types of industry stewardship programs should be developed in the future to expand outside of the plant science industry. Given that empty pesticide containers make up only a small percentage of all agricultural plastics, there's a significant opportunity to do so.

Further information is available at: www.cleanfarms.ca

Did you know...

- VQA Sales have increased 10.1% by volume over the previous 12 months as of September 30, 2010.
- VQA Sales at the LCBO have increased 15.0% and at Winery Retail Stores by 8.1%.

SOURCE: LCBO Scorecard Report—September 30, 2010