DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Decommissioning Agricultural Chemical Facilities Fact Sheet

This fact sheet is prepared by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Pesticide & Fertilizer Management Division (PFMD) Incident Response Unit (IRU) for operators/owners of agricultural chemical facilities who may cease operations. While this document is not comprehensive, it provides decommissioning guidance to address environmental liability, safety concerns and potential reuse of an agricultural chemical facility.

Environmental Liability

The MDA has discovered abandoned and unsecured agricultural chemical facilities in Minnesota. These facilities may have fertilizer inside bins and walls or rinsate left in pesticide dikes. This can lead to ongoing incidents where agricultural chemicals are released into the environment.

Change of building ownership does not necessarily transfer responsibility of past incidents to a new owner. State and federal laws state that a former operator can be held liable for agricultural chemical contamination years after the facility has closed

Prior to construction or decommission, site operators should refer to the MDA webpage What's in My Neighborhood Agricultural Interactive Mapping or contact PFMD-IRU to learn if a site is on the MDA Priority List of contaminated sites. If a facility is on the priority list, an environmental assessment is recommended. This is accomplished by entering your site into the MDA Agricultural Voluntary Investigation & Cleanup (AgVIC) program.

As needed, MDA staff can review environmental cleanup work. When work is complete, the MDA can issue liability assurance letters to document that state requirements have been met for agricultural chemicals.

Up to 80 percent of cleanup costs ($350,000 cap) may be eligible for reimbursement through the Agricultural Chemical Response & Reimbursement Account (ACCRA). Costs tor site structure removal may not be reimbursable.

Notify MDA Staff

Contact an MDA Agricultural Chemical Investigator (ACI) at least (30) thirty days in advance. Please refer to the area map or call 651/201-6696.

Prior to decommissioning a site, contact the PFMD Facility Management Unit-Permitting Program (651/201-6274) to discuss issues including deactivation of any site storage permits. Also, operators should contact the PFMD Facility Management Unit-Anhydrous Ammonia (NH3) Program (651/201-6275) to discuss decommissioning NH3 storage tanks and equipment. Owner/operators should provide a list to the MDA of those who purchase NH3 or storage tanks.

Each facility is unique with specific challenges. Follow MDA Guidelines and use the checklist provided at the end of this fact sheet.

Remove Agricultural Chemicals

When a facility is taken out of service, current owner/operators are responsible for agricultural chemicals left in those buildings. Refer to product labels and applicable federal/state/local requirements to properly dispose of:

- Pesticides and fertilizer
- Rinsate and wash water
- Accumulations in dikes/floor sumps
- Storage tanks and equipment

See the MDA Precipitation Management fact sheet to learn how to manage water pumped from fertilizer dikes. See the Pesticide Rinsate Management fact sheet to learn how to manage pesticide contaminated rinsate, wash water and water pumped from pesticide dikes.

Liquids can be land applied with MDA approval. Pesticide/fertilizer waste and rinsate may not be dumped into a floor drain or through public/private sewage systems.

Triple rinse pesticide containers and refer to the MDA Disposal of Old Pesticide Containers guidance (document 4) for details.

Pesticide containers include small package containers, mini-bulks, bags and application equipment (including hand sprayers, back sprayers and pull behind or all-terrain vehicle mounted sprayers). Learn more at the MDA Empty Pesticide Container webpage.

Please note that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) regulates non-agricultural chemicals and should be notified if petroleum, industrial chemicals, asbestos or other non-agricultural chemicals are present.

Cleaning and Decommissioning

Remove loose fertilizer from floors, rafters and walls. Please refer to the MDA Dry Fertilizer Building Maintenance & Abandonment fact sheet for details.

In addition to cleaning fertilizer bins, all sludge or residue must be removed from storage dikes and bulk tanks. All dikes and tanks need dismantling so they cannot hold water. Clean residue from sumps and drains and follow MDA disposal instructions. After cleaning, cap or seal floor drains to prevent contamination. Also, seal floor cracks in fertilizer buildings to prevent seepage.

See MDA guidelines for residue and sludge disposal instructions. Contact the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) about sealing unused water wells on sites that will be taken out of service.

Vacating or Destroying Buildings

Please notify local government agencies when an intact building is being vacated. This will prevent hazardous risk and promote public safety.

Prior to destruction, buildings must be completely cleaned of all agricultural chemicals. Asbestos and other hazardous materials need to be properly managed prior to building demolition.

Also, contact state and local authorities to discuss needed permits prior to building destruction, as well as disposal of demolition debris and hazardous materials.

Fact Sheets and Guidance Documents

Visit the following websites for these fact sheets:

- Concrete Containment: Crack Repair & Maintenance
  http://www.mda.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/inline-files/concrete%20containment.pdf
- Dry Fertilizer Building Maintenance & Abandonment
  http://www.mda.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/inline-files/Dry%20Fert.%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf
- Pesticide Facility Requirements
  http://www.mda.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/inline-files/Pesticide%20facility%20requirements.pdf
- Precipitation Management
  http://www.mda.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/inline-files/precipitation%20mgmt.pdf
- Pesticide Rinsate Management
  http://www.mda.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/inline-files/rinsate%20mgmt_0.pdf

Visit http://www.mda.state.mn.us/pesticide-fertilizer/guidance-documents for these guidance documents:

- Disposal of Old Pesticide Containers guidance (document 4)
- Introduction to the Agricultural Voluntary Investigation & Cleanup (AgVIC) Program guidance (document 5)

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Decommissioning Checklist

Prior to Abandoning a Building, Site, Structure or Facility

- ✓ Determine the end use of the site. Consider potential environmental liability issues due to the presence of agricultural chemicals.
- ✓ Contact your area ACI to discuss options and decommissioning strategies. Obtain copies of pertinent MDA guidance documents and fact sheets.
- ✓ Contact the MDA Incident Response Unit (651/201-6681) to determine if the site is on the MDA Priority List or consider entering the AgVIC Program to obtain a closure letter.
- ✓ Contact the PFMD Facility Management Unit-Permitting Program (651/201-6274) to discuss permits.
- ✓ Contact the PFMD Facility Management Unit-Anhydrous Ammonia Program (651/201-6280) to discuss decommissioning anhydrous ammonia (NH3) equipment.
- ✓ Contact the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (800/657-3864) to discuss removal of any non-agricultural hazardous materials, such as asbestos.
- ✓ Contact the Minnesota Department of Health (888/345-0823) if water wells are on site.

Decommissioning a Building, Site, Structure or Facility

- ✓ Remove and dispose of agricultural chemicals according to the pesticide label and applicable federal, state and local requirements. This includes wash water, water from dikes and rinsate.
- ✓ Properly dispose of any pesticide containers following the MDA Disposal of Old Pesticide Containers guidance (document 4).
- ✓ Clean dry fertilizer buildings following the MDA Dry Fertilizer Building Maintenance & Abandonment fact sheet. If the concrete pad is left in place, please seal concrete cracks.
- ✓ All sludge, residues and water should be removed from the dikes and properly disposed. Dikes should be disabled so they cannot hold water.
- ✓ Remove residue from any sumps or drains and cap or seal to prevent releases to the environment.
- ✓ If underground NH3 pipes are present, verify there is no residual contamination in the piping.
- ✓ Secure the building and contact state/local authorities to discuss demolition procedures.