FARMERS GET A RARE CHANCE TO GET RID OF OLD, HAZARDOUS PESTICIDES

EPA Funds Multi-County Waste Pesticide Collection Day to Protect Lakes, Streams, Rivers

For Immediate Release: Thursday, April 14, 1999

(#99051) New York, N.Y. This Saturday, dozens of farmers from Genesee, Livingston, Orleans, Wyoming, Niagara, Monroe, Erie and Wayne counties will clean out the old and often hazardous chemical pesticides in their sheds and dispose of them safely as part of the Farm Pesticide Collection Project of the GLOW (Genesee, Livingston, Orleans, Wyoming) Solid Waste Management Committee. Forty-five farmers from the region will arrive at Genesee County Building #2 in Batavia between 9am and noon on Saturday, April 17 to dispose of an estimated 16,000 - 18,000 pounds of waste pesticides including DDT, parathion, copper arsenate, diazinon, captan and other common but potentially harmful products. Following the collection at the Batavia site, the waste pesticides will disposed of at a permitted hazardous waste disposal facility out-of-state. The project was funded with a $70,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

"Protecting people and the environment from the harmful effects of highly toxic pesticides is at the heart of what we do at EPA," said EPA Administrator for Region 2 Jeanne M. Fox. "And although regulations that limit the manufacture and use of certain pesticides are the best protection, we cannot ignore those waste pesticides that already exist in the sheds and storage facilities of our farms and dairy lands. We are very pleased that GLOW and farmers of the northwestern region have taken the initiative to rid our environment of these chemicals, and are proud to support this effort."

EPA sponsored the collection day to help area farmers get rid of old pesticides that often sit unused for years. Many of the pesticides to be collected on Saturday are no longer permitted for agricultural use, and are considered so toxic that they must be disposed of according to strict federal hazardous waste requirements. DDT, for example, a probable human carcinogen and a major hazard to falcons, eagles, hawks and other birds of prey, was banned from agricultural use in 1972. One of the farmers expected on Saturday was so concerned about a leftover ½ gallon of DDT that he completed GLOW's required 3-hour training course on handling and transporting harmful pesticides in order to dispose of the DDT at the event.

The northwestern region of New York State is home to hundreds of streams, lakes and rivers that lead to the Great Lakes, and a large number of underground aquifers that are used for residential drinking water. Releases of pesticides from old and
damaged containers can pose a serious threat to these water systems and the wildlife habitats they support. EPA is particularly concerned about those pesticides that are persistent bioaccumulative toxins (PBTs). PBTs do not easily break down or decrease in potency after they are released into the environment, and over time, can accumulate through the food chain in the tissues of animals and plants. The GLOW Region Solid Waste Management Committee organized this year's collection day in an effort to effectively reduce the threat of leftover pesticides.

NOTE: Media welcome to attend the waste pesticide collection event.

When: Saturday, April 17, 1999
9am - noon

Where: Genesee County Building No. 2
3837 West Main Street, Batavia (use main entrance)

Photo-Ops: Farmers pulling up to building in vehicles; GLOW environmental contractors in hazardous waste gear and respirators unloading drums, packages, and other containers from trucks; GLOW contractors testing the contents of containers labeled "UNKNOWN."

Prior to event: Contact Nina Habib Spencer, EPA
(212) 637-3670
Day of event: Contact Peggy Grayson, GLOW
Cellular-- (716) 739-6336

For more information contact:

Nina Habib Spencer, Press Office
EPA Region 2
290 Broadway
NY, NY 10007-1866
Voice: 212-637-3670 FAX: 212-637-5046 E-Mail: habib.nina@epamail.epa.gov

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