How can I get rid of pesticides I don’t want anymore?

Follow any specific disposal instructions on the label of the pesticide or bring it to a local hazardous waste collection center. EPA and local governments sometimes hold special pesticide collection days (click on your home state on the map in this link) when you may drop-off unwanted pesticides free of charge for proper disposal. If all else fails, small amounts of pesticides, i.e. less than one liquid gallon at a time, may be wrapped in a plastic bag and disposed of in household trash if allowed by your local government. For more information, please visit http://www.epa.gov/grtlakes/seahome/housewaste/src/dispose.htm.
EPA rates pesticide toxicity to humans on a scale of 1 to 4. Pesticides in category 1 are considered highly toxic, and their labels must bear the key word ADANGER.@ Pesticides displaying the word "DANGER" should be applied by certified applicators only. Pesticides in category 2 are less toxic, and will bear the key word AWARNING.@ Pesticides in categories 3 and 4 are the least hazardous, and bear the key word ACAUTION.@ Other hazards may also be listed on the label such as toxicity to aquatic life and birds. To protect yourself and the environment, use any pesticide strictly according to its label instructions.

Where can I get information on a specific pesticide?

The label contains most of the information the applicator needs to know to use the product safely. State and federal agencies also have access to extensive material concerning specific pesticides. You may contact your state pesticides office as a first step towards finding out information about a specific pesticide, or call the National Telecommunications Pesticides Network (NPTN) at 1-800-858-7378. NPTN is open seven days a week from 9:30 A.M. to 7:30 P.M eastern standard time. The NPTN Web site also provides information about various pesticides.

Why do farmers use pesticides?

Farmers use pesticides to increase crop production and produce fruits, vegetables and grains that are free of insects and blemishes. The use of pesticides becomes more prevalent as farmers try to increase yield per acre and new hybrids are cultivated which have not developed a natural resistance to native insects and micro-organisms. Many farmers use a variety of methods to fight pests including applying biological pesticides, introducing natural predators such as bats, removing pests’ breeding grounds and applying chemical pesticides. This mix of methods is supported by EPA, and is called "integrated pest management" EPA encourages farmers to use as few chemical pesticides as possible, and to explore alternate methods of reducing the number of crop pests.

How do farmers know how much pesticide to use?

There are several factors that a farmer uses to decide how much pesticide to use. Useful tools a farmer uses in making this type of decision include:

1. The information printed on the pesticides label. Pesticide manufacturers state directly on the pesticide label how much and how often the specific pesticide should be applied depending on the frequency and severity of the pest infestation.

2. Government regulations.
Who is allowed to spray pesticides on farms?

In most states, only certified applicators are allowed to apply restricted pesticides in agricultural settings. General use pesticides are sometimes used in agriculture as well and they can be applied by anyone.

Contact: habib.nina@epa.gov