

Recovery of Empty Containers

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Each year, golf course superintendents battle relentlessly against pests, such as insects, diseases and weeds. Pest control products, or so-called pesticides, are essential in any efficient pest control strategy. The safe and appropriate use of these products is now well proven; however, where do empty containers all end up? This topic has been examined by the pesticide industry a few years ago in order to find an acceptable solution : the recycling of empty pesticide containers.

The farming industry uses more than 85% of all pest control products being sold and, year after year, it must face the same problem : the disposal of all these empty containers in order to prevent the environment from being invaded by millions of buried, burnt, hidden, reused, stored empty containers.

The Crop Protection Institute (CPIC), or the Canadian Pest Control Industry Association, has adopted a few years ago its own Code of practice and conduct, called « Responsible Care ». Among other things, this Code provides for the management of the entire « life cycle » of pest control products, including waste products. Further to this commitment, the **Empty Pesticide Containers Management Program** has been developed with the collaboration of the Departments of Agriculture and Environment, the retailers and the users.

The 3R's principle, i.e. REDUCE, REUSE and RECYCLE, was then adopted. In order to **reduce** the size of pest control product containers, water-soluble bags have been created, higher concentrate formulations are being used, more activated molecules requiring less packaging have been developed and bulk products are getting more and more popular.

The **reuse** of empty containers went through the manufacturing of reusable bulk and mini-bulk containers, thus decreasing the amount of single-use containers. Finally **recycling**, which is the main component of the program, went through the development of a recovery structure, a disposal expertise and multiple opportunities for these recycled materials.

Farm producers across Canada can now dispose of their empty pesticide containers in a environmentally sound manner by bringing them to one of the many existing collection sites. Most farm pest control product suppliers are authorized to collect empty containers. Such containers are recycled mainly into fence posts or used as a converted energy source for the industrial sector.

The development of an efficient recovery system of empty pesticide containers from golf courses is under way and will be operational by 1999. For more information, please contact your supplier.

In order to be recovered, empty containers must be cleaned. By accepting to collect empty containers, suppliers are acting on a voluntary and ecological basis. They cannot afford to cover for the cleaning costs of all these empty containers. **Each container must be fully rinsed and brought back without any cap or cover by users.**

The accessibility and diversity of pest control products must go along with their rational and safe use. Because of their toxic and often controversial nature, pesticides must be used in a rational way if we want to continue to include them in our daily activities. By recovering empty pest control product containers, our industry and its partners are contributing to their safe use.