

### CleanFarms Cameroon Safeguards Obsolete Pesticides

Cameroon is now one of four countries in Africa with a programme in place to manage obsolete pesticides. The project, known as CleanFarms and funded by CropLife International, aims to make an inventory of obsolete pesticides held by governmental agencies, agro-dealers, farmers and other users. CleanFarms repackages high-risk, obsolete pesticides and transports them to a secure storage area to await removal and disposal. To date, the programme has helped safeguard almost six tonnes of obsolete pesticides in Cameroon and another 100 tonnes will be safeguarded before the end of 2012. Funding is already in place to dispose of the high-risk stocks, now stored in a temporary facility in the city of Edea.

CleanFarms Cameroon gathered inventory data on obsolete pesticides using a two-pronged approach. First, the program implemented an awareness campaign focused mainly on the private sector, including agro-dealers, farmers and other users, to encourage declaration of obsolete stocks. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) then organized inventory visits to public sector stores, which are owned by the government. Data collected from these activities revealed the presence of almost 300 tonnes of obsolete pesticides. Approximately one quarter of the obsolete stocks were manufactured by CropLife International member companies or their predecessors.

CleanFarms encountered several significant challenges, including covering long distances on Cameroon's poor roads to carry out the store visits, and persuading wary pesticide holders to declare their obsolete stocks. However, the challenges were overcome and CropLife International contracted Veolia, an international company that specializes in hazardous waste management, to safeguard the stocks.

Safeguarding the pesticides and containers involves repackaging them in United Nations-approved drums and safely transporting them to major collection centers to securely store them for eventual disposal. Veolia trains staff from public, private and non-governmental sectors on safeguarding skills and supervises all activities. It audited two temporary government storage facilities, upgrading one to comply with the FAO and CropLife International guidelines on safe warehousing of pesticides. These facilities will house the safeguarded stocks until they can be properly discarded.

CropLife Cameroon's main implementation partner is the Yaounde Initiative Foundation (YIF), a non-profit organisation in Cameroon that specializes in managing crop pests and human disease vectors for social and economic development. YIF works in close collaboration with CropLife Cameroon and the Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER), Environment and Public Health. MINADER also recently established a national obsolete pesticides programme, appointing a national coordinator as the contact person between the Ministry of Agriculture and CleanFarms to interact with the FAO on its obsolete stocks activities.

The FAO has supported activities in obsolete pesticide management in Cameroon in several ways. It funded a store visit inventory program in the public sector and secured funding from the European Union to carry out an environmental assessment on the risks of safeguarding activities. In addition, the FAO carried out inventory training to complement CropLife International's training and is co-financing the safeguarding of obsolete pesticides.

The programme disposed of five tonnes of Persistent Organic Pollutants from northern Cameroon as an emergency intervention in 2010. Disposal of the obsolete stocks through high-temperature incineration is expected to start in 2013, pending approval by Global Environmental Facility. Organisers also plan to implement a range of measures designed to minimise the accumulation of obsolete stocks in the future.

Led by CropLife International, this model of safeguarding obsolete pesticides effectively reduces environmental risk in the short term, while multilateral agencies, such as the FAO and national governments, work to acquire funds for disposal operations in the long term.



Safeguarded stock



Safeguarding activities