

CleanFarms Malawi Safeguards Obsolete Pesticides

In November 2008, Malawi became the fifth country in Africa to establish an obsolete pesticides management programme called CleanFarms. The programme's objectives are to take inventory of all obsolete pesticides and empty containers in the private and public sectors and to eventually safeguard them. As of October 2012, CleanFarms has safeguarded about 360 tonnes of waste in two temporary storage facilities in Lilongwe and Blantyre.

The inventory identified a total of 280 tonnes of obsolete pesticides, plus 500 tonnes of low-strength grain dusts and 15 tonnes of methyl bromide. CropLife International members produced well over half of the identified products.

Because no local hazardous waste company existed in Malawi, the project approached a local entrepreneur interested in forming a waste management business. CycleOps, the resulting company, was created and certified by the Environmental Agency of Malawi. Veolia, an international company specializing in hazardous waste management, trained CycleOps personnel and helped oversee its activities. Under Veolia's supervision, CycleOps will continue to carry out all safeguarding activities in 2012. Trevi, an international company that also specializes in hazardous waste, will clear the methyl bromide stock.

CleanFarms currently receives empty containers from farms and estates in Malawi with strict regulations on their disposal. Provided the containers received are triple-rinsed, they will be recycled. This is a pilot project managed jointly by CropLife Malawi and the Product Control Board.

Although the project completed safeguarding obsolete pesticides, there is still work ahead with empty containers and the centralisation of low-strength grain dusts. The project has managed to dispose of 39 tonnes of actellic dusts and six tonnes of Roundup® herbicide. The disposal of the remaining 350 tonnes will be completed in conjunction with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, which will source funding from GEF, an independent financial organisation that provides grants for environmental protection projects in developing countries.

