

CropLife Ghana Starts Container Management Programme

Ghana is one of several countries in Africa with an obsolete pesticides management programme called CleanFarms. Its initial goal was to take an inventory of obsolete pesticides and empty containers in the private sector. Once an estimated 3 million containers were identified, CropLife Ghana decided to start a pilot container management programme. So far, the programme has collected more than 300,000 containers.

The collection programme was introduced in one district around Kumasi, the area where most empty containers were identified. Fourteen collection bins were placed at strategic points throughout the communities after consulting with local leaders. The collection bins were designed to keep children out, so only adults can put containers in the bins and no containers can be removed. A resident from each community holds the key to open the bins. When the bins are full, he or she contacts the district officer from the Ministry of Agriculture, who notifies the CropLife Ghana office. Then a Crop staff member trained in safeguarding is dispatched to collect the containers.

The empty containers are brought to a temporary storage facility where they are sorted by type of plastic. All containers are then tripled rinsed. High-density polyethylene containers are brought to a recycling company where the plastic is recycled into pavement blocks, roofing sheets and other construction materials. A collection shed at the recycling plant only stores pesticide containers collected from the CropLife CleanFarms programme. The recycler pays a fee that is equal to almost USD\$0.05 per kilogram of containers, which covers part of the costs involved in collection and triple rinsing. The remaining costs are paid by CropLife Ghana.

As of October 2012, the collection has been a much bigger success than anyone expected. Several stakeholders thought that farmers would be reluctant to give up such good quality containers without compensation, however, it turned out that many of them were happy to get rid of the containers and collection bins were filled much faster than anticipated. Because of the success of the pilot project, CropLife Ghana plans to expand it to other districts.

