

Ethiopia Safely Removes Obsolete Pesticides

Ethiopia is one of several countries implementing the Africa Stockpile Programme (ASP). In nearly 10 years, the programme has disposed of 3,000 tonnes of obsolete pesticides. Another 850 tonnes still need to be safeguarded and discarded. CropLife Ethiopia has played an active role from the start in verifying the identified products and providing technical advice.

Pesticide safeguarding activities started in Ethiopia as early as 2001 with a project led by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in close collaboration with the Ethiopian government. During that time, 1,500 tonnes were safeguarded and disposed of with funding from CropLife International, Finland, Japan and the FAO. Organisers approached CropLife Ethiopia to verify the identified obsolete pesticides.

In 2004, Belgium supported a second phase of obsolete pesticide management; two years later, the ASP also started activities. The projects identified a total of 1,950 tonnes of obsolete pesticides, of which 1,500 tonnes were safeguarded and discarded. The remaining 450 tonnes will be managed by the end of 2012. In addition, the ASP identified 400 tonnes of DDT held in stores of the Ethiopian Ministry of Health and is seeking funds to safeguard and dispose of it.

There are various causes for the high quantities of obsolete pesticides in Ethiopia. One reason is that for a long time, it was common government practice to distribute pesticides for free in the rural areas. However, instead of determining where the products were needed, the pesticides were evenly distributed over the regions, including areas with limited agricultural activities. Another reason is that Ethiopia received free pesticides from donor states, mainly Japan under its KR2 agricultural project. Here again, supply did not correspond with demand.

Most of the obsolete pesticides are still in government stores, although CropLife Ethiopia expects that some stocks have found their way into the private sector. The organization notes that most store keepers were not aware of the hazards of these obsolete stocks until they received training. Today, among the 900 government stores that exist in Ethiopia, about 600 store keepers have received special training in pesticide management, facilitated by CropLife Ethiopia.

In addition, during the inventory phase of the ASP, organisers identified roughly 800,000 empty pesticide containers. CropLife Ethiopia has started discussions with stakeholders to set up a container management program.



Clean-up operation



Pumping



Refresher training