

POLLUTION PREVENTION PROGRAM AND SITE CLEANUP REVISITED

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Abstract

Most of Wisconsin's agrichemical dealerships continually try to improve all aspects of their businesses including environmental performance. Although not as easily understood as sales figures, environmental matters can affect the bottom line. Unfortunately, dealerships may not always be sure whether their environmental policies and precautions are sufficient to avoid contamination that could be costly. Environmental performance is typically measured by comparison to the requirements of department rules (through inspections) and by measurement of agrichemicals in soil and water (through lab testing). In a less systematic way, the public also assesses dealer's environmental performance. Coming up short of expectations can lead to needless problems.

The Containment and Remediation Section's mission has always been to improve environmental performance at regulated facilities. Recent efforts approach this goal from two directions. First, we've modified bulk storage inspections to check not just whether the required structures and equipment are present, but whether they are also used properly. A pilot survey conducted in 2002 showed a need to focus more on items such as 1) collection sumps, 2) dry fertilizer loading, 3) cleaning application equipment and 4) waste handling. To help inspectors determine whether a facility has these types of problems, they will be conducting more inspections during the busy season than they have in the past.

Nearly 10 years of experience with the Agricultural Chemical Cleanup Program indicates that there can be contaminant sources present at dealerships that are not specifically addressed by current department regulation. The realization that a dealership can repeatedly pass inspections and still be at risk of contaminating the environment led to the second effort; the development of a voluntary pollution prevention program. The aim of the program is to identify unregulated activities that can pollute and to find a solution to correct them. "Environmental Partners" is a new part of the program that commits the department to recognizing dealerships that voluntarily reach certain levels of self-paced environmental improvement. This recognition component intends to show the community that the dealership is committed to a stewardship policy and has gone beyond department requirements to prove it. The Environmental Partners program gives Wisconsin's agrichemical dealerships a clear opportunity to control their regulatory future. Strong participation from the industry will go a long way toward avoiding development of more rules.

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