

The Africa Stockpiles Programme (ASP)

is a multistakeholder partnership to

- dispose of an estimated 50,000 tonnes of obsolete stockpiled pesticides and contaminated waste in Africa in an environmentally sound manner;
- catalyse the development of prevention measures; and
- provide capacity building and institutional strengthening on important chemicals-related issues

in a phased approach over 10 to 15 years.

A large part of funding will be contributed through the Global Environment Facility.

The leading companies of CropLife International have offered funding of up to US\$ 30 million to contribute towards disposal costs and expertise mobilisation, in active collaboration with the World Bank, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), African Union, WWF, Pesticide Action Network (PAN) and other stakeholders (see www.africastockpiles.org).

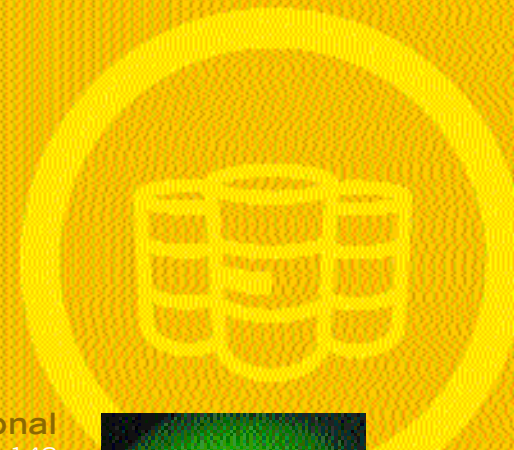
The ASP brings together the skills, expertise, and resources of a diverse group of stakeholders, enabling national leadership to carry out country-led activities. One key objective for CropLife's collaboration in the ASP, apart from complete removal of all obsolete stocks from Africa, is the continent-wide reduction of environmental and health risks from obsolete crop protection products by 'making safe' leaking and the most hazardous stocks through repackaging and appropriate storage prior to disposal.

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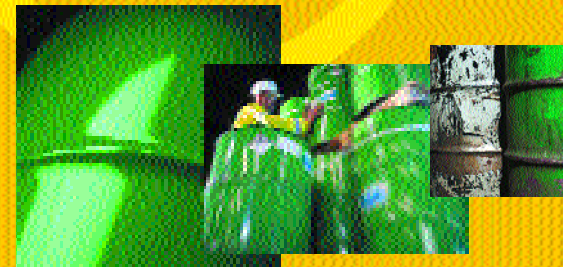
Obsolete stocks

Managing obsolete stocks of crop protection products



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Obsolete stocks of crop protection products

Obsolete crop protection products are those that are unfit for further use or for re-conditioning. Stocks of crop protection products become obsolete mostly because of poor long-term storage during which the product and/or its packaging degrades to a point where it is no longer useable and cannot be cost-effectively reconditioned. Obsolescence may also arise because a product has been de-registered locally or banned internationally.

Obsolete crop protection products exist in many countries, but the largest stocks are in Eastern Europe, Africa, parts of Latin America and the Far East. One estimate suggests that the problem could be as large as 300,000 tonnes of obsolete materials¹. Many have been abandoned, forgotten or even deliberately buried by the owners. In some cases, the original packaging is in very poor condition or has corroded away and the contents have leaked into the surrounding soil, contaminating both the storage site and beyond.

¹ Baseline Study on the Problem of Obsolete Pesticide Stocks. Paper prepared for the OECD-FAO-UNEP Workshop on Obsolete Pesticides, Alexandria, Virginia, September 2000

Why do these stockpiles exist?

This situation, which began 30 or 40 years ago, is due to a number of reasons, but principally:

- poor infrastructure and the resulting failure of centralised purchasing systems to deliver crop protection products to smallholder farmers in appropriate packs and on time
- poor management of stocks, whether donated as development aid or purchased by governments, acquired for the control of strategic pests – locusts, army worms, malarial mosquitoes
- lack of awareness of the issue amongst national authorities and a lack of local expertise and resources to dispose of obsolete stocks safely and effectively
- over-production by local manufacturers in ‘planned economies’.

Some of these stocks originate from CropLife International leading companies², others were originally supplied by local manufacturers.

² CropLife International leading companies are BASF, Bayer CropScience, Dow AgroSciences, Dupont, FMC, Monsanto, Sumitomo and Syngenta. The companies Cheminova, Makhteshim Agan and Shell have also cooperated with CropLife International to remove obsolete stocks.

What is being done to get rid of them?

Obsolete stocks can be disposed of efficiently and safely if skilled resources are brought together (see pictures). CropLife International and its leading companies have worked actively on this issue for more than a decade, in partnership with national governments, aid agencies, international organisations and NGOs. Obsolete products originating from our leading companies are, naturally, the focus of our efforts, but we recognise that our skills contribute to dealing with all obsolete stocks.

We have:

- facilitated over 25 disposal projects by finding bilateral donor funding, organising projects, supervising operations in the field or, when appropriate, re-formulating useable stocks
- provided funding, representing at least the cost of incineration of the products that were originally supplied by our leading companies
- contributed to the safe disposal of over 3400 tonnes of obsolete stocks from developing countries, especially Africa
- promoted initiatives in developed countries, where over 5000 tonnes of obsolete products have been collected from farmers.

Prevention of Obsolete Stocks

How can obsolete stocks be prevented in the future?

Fortunately, the procurement of crop protection products in the developing world has changed significantly over the last years.

Over-production from local manufacture has reduced, centralised purchasing has given way to private markets, the donation of crop protection products as development aid has sharply reduced and the control of strategic pests is better managed.

Nevertheless much remains to be done, particularly:

- implementation of tender guidelines to help governments and other stakeholders to tender for the right product, amount and quality
- the provision of better warehousing
- training in management of crop protection products and their stocks
- disposal of unused products and packs by farmers
- the regulation of the trade in counterfeit and sub-standard crop protection products.

Optimum stock and product management is a commercial necessity for companies and is an area of significant expertise, being one element of our lifecycle approach to product stewardship. Extending that expertise to customers in developing countries represents a challenge and responsibility not only for our industry, but also for all stakeholders who recognise the necessity of responsible chemical use as a key component of integrated pest and crop management and sustainable agriculture.

We continue to seek partnerships to deal with the overall problem; one such partnership is the Africa Stockpiles Programme.

Stages in the safe disposal of obsolete stocks



1 Obsolete stocks discovered in a warehouse where they had been abandoned years before. Some barrels were leaking as a result of corrosion.



2 The operators employed to remove the barrels received training and a full set of protective gear, including respiratory masks.



3 Offloading the empty UN barrels which are approved for safe transport under the International Maritime Dangerous Code.



4 Old barrels are stored in the outer UN barrels.



5 The barrels are labelled with safety instructions and warnings.



6 Loading the barrels into sea-freight containers.



7 Containers are shipped to the incineration plant.



8 Incineration in approved facilities.