

Agrichemical and Environmental News

A Monthly Report on Pesticides and Related Environmental Issues

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*Helping Agriculture Comply
with Environmental
Regulations*

EPA National Ag Center Aids Compliance

**National EPA Center Demystifies
Environmental Issues**

What is the National Ag Center?

The National Agriculture Compliance Assistance Center (National Ag Center) is the first stop for people in the agricultural community who need information on compliance with environmental regulations. Part of EPA's Office of Compliance, the National Ag Center promotes compliance by helping members of the agriculture



Cooperating agencies: Washington State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Washington Counties.
Cooperative Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination.
Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Cooperative Extension office.

FOR FREE SUBSCRIPTION OR CONTACT INFORMATION, SEE END OF ARTICLE.

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community better understand the environmental requirements that affect their business. The National Ag Center also provides information to promote the latest pollution prevention technologies and best management practices.

Growers, livestock producers, other agribusiness, and agricultural information/education providers can access the Center's resources easily via telephone, fax, mail, and the Internet. The National Ag Center is working with the USDA and other agencies to function as the agricultural community's definitive source for federal environmental compliance information. The National Ag Center also helps regional and state agencies provide compliance assistance to local agricultural communities.

The National Ag Center offers information on a variety of topics including: pesticides, animal waste management, emergency planning, ground/surface water, tanks/containment and solid/hazardous waste.

Why was it created?

Many business sectors, including agriculture, are comprised primarily of small businesses. Keeping up with the latest regulations may seem difficult, especially for

For More Information:

National Agriculture Compliance Assistance Center

901 N. 5th Street
Kansas City, KS 66101

Toll Free: 1-888-663-2155

Fax: 913-551-7270

Internet:

www.epa.gov/agriculture

Email: agcenter@epa.gov

To subscribe to the Ag Center News Service, email agcenter@epa.gov with "Subscribe" in the subject line and your email address in the body of the email.

business without personnel dedicated to addressing environmental concerns. The EPA recognizes the desire of these groups to comply with environmental requirements and developed the National Compliance Assistance Centers (www.assistancecenters.net) to help the business community comply. In addition to the National Ag Center, the EPA established ten other Centers, serving painting and coating companies, the transportation industry, local governments, printers, metal finishing operations, automotive services and repair businesses, printed wiring board producers, small chemical manufacturers, and federal facilities.

“It was very gratifying to learn that the Environmental Protection Agency is providing this resource to individuals and employers.” – Web

Do the Compliance Assistance Centers help?

After only a few years of operation, the Compliance Centers are showing results. The Centers' websites get a combined total of over 1460 users daily. Online surveys find that users like the services offered by the Centers, and the users are improving their environmental performance with the Centers' assistance. Concerned citizens are taking the initiative to make changes that both benefit the environment and save money. Over 70% of companies and local government users reported changing their practices to improve environmental performance. Of those, 69% believed that they saved money due to their adjustments. The National Ag Center alone has distributed over 43,000

documents to the ag community in the last year. The Centers are working to make compliance an integral part of the small business culture.

Who does the National Ag Center work with?

The National Ag Center has pioneered partnerships with groups throughout the ag community to better serve your needs. For example, the USDA liaisons work directly with the National Ag Center to promote understanding within EPA of the workings of USDA and the agriculture community by participating in National Ag Center and EPA activities. Regular meetings hosted by the National Ag Center feature guest lecturers from the USDA, the United States Geological Survey, and various trade associations, to promote understanding of ag issues among regional and headquarters EPA employees. The National Ag Center has contacts from coast to coast, and manages to stay involved on many levels through work with groups like the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (SARE), Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA), and even the United States Customs Office.

“Positive feedback... has demonstrated the wisdom of continuing our joint efforts to share program ideas to better meet the needs of small farmers...” – Denis Ebodaghe, USDA National Program Leader/Small Farms Program

Partnerships with academic groups keep the National Ag Center up to date on new trends. The National Ag Center is working with the University of Wisconsin to

develop Environmental Management Systems (EMS) for livestock operations. The National Ag Center also partners with the USDA's Pest Management Centers, in particular the North Central Pest Management Center, which are promoting sound pest management techniques.

Employees from the National Ag Center spend time in the field as well. They visit farm shows and growers' conferences; they take the initiative to get out and meet the farmers. For the past several years, Missouri Farm Bureau has invited the National Ag Center to present their materials at the Western States Farm Show, providing an additional opportunity to get to know its clientele. Direct contact with farmers gives the National Ag Center a perspective unique within the EPA, allowing it to better serve the ag community's needs.

Agricultural compliance is a multifaceted problem, so the National Ag Center approaches the problem from many angles thanks to its interactions with the national ag community. Working closely with the ag community from coast to coast helps ensure that everyone's needs are addressed.

What are we doing to help you?

The Center provides many products and services for the agricultural community:

"I really appreciate the information contained at the National Ag Center. I have been on a number of other EPA sites and found them all useful, but this site is one of the best." – Web feedback

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- A regularly updated website (www.epa.gov/agriculture) with current news and user-friendly materials consolidating information about compliance requirements, pollution prevention, and technical assistance resources for use by farmers, regional and state assistance and educational programs, trade associations, businesses, and local governments. The website also provides links to information sources outside the EPA.
- An electronic news service for periodic updates on the new information in the National Ag Center's website.
- A toll-free number (with real people 9-5 CST!) for those with questions on agriculture compliance issues. The National Ag Center has handled questions dealing with everything from Ostrich carcasses to bat guano, and they are eager to take your questions.
- Numerous EPA documents that may be downloaded from the site or requested in hard copy from the National Ag Center. These materials are available for individual use or in bulk for use in training sessions.

What's new at the National Ag Center?

Livestock and Poultry Environmental Stewardship (LPES) Curriculum

The National Ag Center partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to fund the development of LPES, a national education program applying the principles of environmental stewardship to livestock and poultry production. The curriculum, a collaborative effort of fifteen land-grant universities, MidWest Plan Service (MWPS), the National Ag Center, and the USDA, focuses on total nutrient management strategies and land stewardship, and provides environmental management evaluation tools for farmers and ranchers. The curriculum materials are available free online (<http://www.lpes.org>) or can be ordered in hardcopy or CD format at <http://www.mwpdhq.org>.

*“... You are doing
an excellent job.” –
Web Feedback*

Worker Protection Standard (WPS) Factsheets

The WPS works to reduce pesticide-related illness and injury for pesticide workers, handlers, and employers. The National Ag Center developed a series of fact sheets addressing the most common questions it receives concerning the WPS. Topics include posting requirements, safety equipment, and information exchange. The factsheets are available via the National Ag Center homepage (www.epa.gov/agriculture) under Publications, or by calling 1-888-663-2155 toll-free.

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Animal Agriculture Factsheets

The National Ag Center has produced a fact sheet and brochure entitled, “What to Expect When EPA Inspects Your Livestock Operation”, designed to give livestock operation owners/managers an understanding of the EPA inspection process and possible results. Also available are a series of fact sheets regarding Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) compliance requirements. Copies of the factsheets are available from the sources listed above.

Contact the National Ag Center!

The National Ag Center is a service for America’s agricultural community. To improve its service, the National Ag Center needs to hear from

“The on-line National Ag Center seems very user friendly and full of information.” – Web

you. Please contact the National Ag Center with your environmental compliance questions, and they will do their best to help!

Reach the National Ag Center at:

Toll-free: 1-888-663-2155

Online: www.epa.gov/agriculture

Via email: agcenter@epa.gov

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