

Cotton

Cotton Producers Facing The Worker Protection Standard

Winter 1999

Information Sheet 3

DECONTAMINATION SITES ON A COTTON FARM

A Cotton Producer's Approach To Interpretation and Planning

DEFINING DECONTAMINATION

The Webster Dictionary defines decontamination as *“to rid of a harmful substance, as poison.”* Since 1994, the Worker Protection Standard (WPS), by federal law, has mandated the establishment of decontamination sites on cotton farms for the protection of workers and handlers engaged in agricultural production work and other specified activities. Under this regulation, decontamination supplies must be provided to workers and handlers during their employment on a cotton farm.

Decontamination with the provision of supplies to remove contaminants from skin has not been an uncommon practice on cotton farms in the past. However, prior to the creation of the WPS, there was no consistent requirement and approach on how to implement decontamination. The WPS specifies specific supplies and requirements on how supplies are to be used.

IDENTIFYING THE WORKER AND HANDLER FOR DECONTAMINATION

THE WORKER.....is anyone who: (1) is employed (including self-employed) for any type of compensation and (2) is involved in tasks such as harvesting, weeding or watering, relating to the production of agricultural plants on a cotton farm. This does not include persons who are employed by a commercial establishment to perform tasks as crop advisors.

THE HANDLER.....is anyone who: (1) is employed (including self-employed) for any type of compensation by an agricultural establishment or commercial pesticide handling establishment that uses pesticides in the production of agricultural plants on a cotton farm, and (2) is doing any of the following tasks: mixing, locating, transferring or applying pesticides; handling opened containers of pesticides; acting as a flagger; cleaning, handling, adjusting or repairing the parts of mixing, loading or application equipment that may contain pesticide residues; assisting with the application of pesticides, including incorporating the pesticide into the soil after the application has occurred.

SAMPLE LABELING

AGRICULTURAL USE REQUIREMENTS

Use this product only in accordance with its labeling and with the Worker Protection Standard, 40 CFR part 170. This standard contains requirements for the protection of agricultural workers on farms, forests, nurseries and greenhouses and handlers of agricultural pesticides. It contains requirements for training, decontamination, notification, and emergency assistance. It also contains specific instructions and exceptions pertaining to the statements on this label about personal protective equipment (PPE), notification to workers and restricted entry interval. The requirements in this box apply to uses of this product that are within areas covered by the Worker Protection Standard.

Do not enter or allow worker entry into treated areas during the restricted entry interval (REI) of 48 hours. The REI is 72 hours in outdoor areas where average annual rainfall is less than 25 inches a year.

PPE required for early entry to treated areas that is permitted under the Worker Protection Standard and that involves contact with anything that has been treated, such as plants, soil, or water is:

- coveralls over long-sleeved shirt and long pants
- chemical-resistant gloves, such as barrier laminate or viton
- chemical-resistant footwear plus socks
- protective eyewear
- chemical-resistant headgear

Notify workers of the application by warning them orally and by posting warning signs at entrances to treated areas.

This Publication is Produced
by The Cotton Foundation
in Cooperation With EPA

National
Cotton
Council
OF AMERICA



Stoneville
Pedigreed Seed Company

Additional support is provided by Stoneville Pedigreed Seed Co. as a special project of The Cotton Foundation.

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR A DECONTAMINATION LOCATION

Each location for decontamination must be provided with:

1. Water

- Enough for routine washing (a minimum of **1 gallon per worker** at each location) or more if insufficient and replenish the water as needed during the work period. A minimum of **3 gallons per handler** is required for each location or enough water for washing the entire body if an emergency occurs
- Emergency eye flushing (1 pt.) (Commercially available sterile solution or as specified in the next statement). The eye flush must be **immediately accessible** to handlers and can be maintained in the vehicle the handler is using
- Quality and temperature of water which will not cause illness or injury when contacting the skin or eyes or if swallowed
- If water is stored in a tank, it must not be used for mixing pesticides, unless the tank is equipped with anti-back siphoning or check valves or other mechanism which correctly function to prevent pesticides exposure from the water in the tank

2. Soap

- Any commercially available source of soap used from a dispenser, bar, tube or other form of dispensing is appropriate. Anti-bacterial and special added cleaning agents may aid in removal of contaminants from the skin.

3. Single Use Towels

- Towels refer to paper or paper products that are disposable. Cloth towels that could be reused and lead to further exposure to pesticide contaminants are not acceptable.

PLACEMENT OF THE DECONTAMINATION SITE

FOR HANDLERS: The most common sites are: (1) shop (2) mixing site (3) loading sites, where water and other decontamination supplies are maintained in sufficient quantities for use after mixing and applying pesticides, (4) spray equipment and (5) tractor with a spray tank, usually fitted with an additional tank located on equipment for water and supplies (including coveralls and other personal protective equipment maintained in a protective container which must not be contaminated.

Availability.....during the handling task (when spraying and carrying decontamination equipment) or not more than one-quarter mile from the handling task.

FOR WORKERS: The most common sites are: (1) truck (2) tractor (cultivation); a water tank or other water storage device with PPE supplies contained in a pesticide resistant container must be located near the worksite (must be within one-quarter mile of workers).

Availability.....not more than one-quarter mile from where the working task (cultivation, hoeing, irrigation equipment maintenance) is being done or the nearest access point if the distance is greater than one-quarter mile.

TIP: If the time of 30 days (required to provide decontamination supplies) after the REI or the application has expired and there are no treated fields within one-quarter mile of work activities, then NO decontamination supplies are required. Decontamination supplies are required only when workers are present during the 30-day or 7-day (chemical with REI of 4 hours or less) period following the REI or application has expired.



Project Coordinator and Contributing Editor
Dr. Jim Hamer, Mississippi State University (Retired)
President, Professional Consulting Services, Inc.

Steering Committee
State Department of Agriculture

California - Paul Gosselin

Florida - Steven J. Rutz

Texas - Donnie Dipple

Mississippi - Robert McCarty

University

Arkansas - Ples Spradley

Florida - Norman Nesheim

Producers

South Carolina - Roy Baxley

Texas - Jimmy Dodson

Environmental Protection Agency

Kevin Keaney and Don Eckerman, Washington

Carlton Layne and Jane Horton, Region 4, Atlanta - (404-562-9012)

Karen Heisler, Region 9, San Francisco - (415-744-(1100) (1065)

Region 6 - (214-665-7564)

Washington, DC - 703-305-766

National Cotton Council

Frank Carter

Fred Middleton

Published by The National Cotton Council with the support of The Cotton Foundation in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency. Foundation Special Project support provided by Stoneville Pedigreed Seed Company.

This Material is provided for educational purposes only. The information contained herein is from sources considered reliable and is provided to assist in compliance with the Worker Protection Standard. However, it is not intended to substitute for the EPA's published regulations and guidelines or those of individual states. Consult WPS regulations and EPA with questions concerning compliance.

In no event shall the National Cotton Council, The Cotton Foundation, or Stoneville Pedigreed Seed Company, or their employees, agents or affiliates, or the Steering Committee be liable for any direct, indirect, actual, special or consequential damages resulting from the use of the information provided.