

2024

## PRESS RELEASE

**For More Information:**

**ELLEN G. DUYSEN**

**Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health**

University of Nebraska Medical Center

College of Public Health, Room 3035

984388 Nebraska Medical Center

Omaha, NE 68198-4388

402.552.3394

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*By UNMC, Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health, Omaha, NE*

#### RECYCLING PESTICIDE CONTAINERS

Consider this safe and waste-free option when it's time for spring cleaning.

Whatever legal disposal process you have used for pesticide containers in the past, recycling these plastic jugs may be a wise option for your operation. The Ag Container Recycling Council (ACRC), at <https://agrecycling.org>, is a not-for-profit 501(c)(6) trade association that was incorporated on February 3, 1992. Originally organized under the name Agricultural Container Research Council, the ACRC was formed to promote the interests of manufacturers, formulators, or packagers of various agricultural chemical products distributed in containers. The organization is funded by member funding of cost-effective programs that "foster public health and safety, environmental protection resource conservation, and end-user convenience."

ACRC accepts rigid high-density polyethylene (HDPE) 55-gallon containers and smaller that previously held products utilized in agricultural crop protection, animal health, specialty pest control, micronutrient, biologicals, fertilizer, and adjuvant products. Since its 1992 inception, more than 253,000,000 pounds of farming plastics have been recycled. Researchers have verified that burning

these chemical containers produces PCDD/PCDF emissions that harm human health. These emissions may reach topsoil surfaces and eventually enter the human body through the food chain.

G. Phillips and Sons ([www.gpsagrecycle.com](http://www.gpsagrecycle.com)) offer recycling services in midwestern states, including Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, and Kansas. In partnership with ACRC, G. Phillips and Sons accept containers ACRC designates as eligible for this recycling program:

- Rigid high-density polyethylene (HDPE), 55 gallons and smaller, that previously held products utilized in crop protection, specialty pesticides and fertilizers, and pest control products that held EPA registered products labeled for professional application.
- Crop protection containers must have held EPA-registered crop protection products labeled for agricultural uses. Containers that held non-registered products such as biologicals, adjuvants, crop oils, and surfactants are also eligible for recycling.
- Specialty pesticides and fertilizer containers that held EPA-registered products labeled for professional Structural Pest Control, Animal Health, Turf and Ornamental, Vegetation Management, Nursery and Greenhouse, Forestry, Aquatics, and Public Health uses are eligible for recycling. Also acceptable are containers holding micronutrients, biologicals, fertilizer, and adjuvant products.

Containers must be empty and triple-rinsed or pressure-rinsed (if the product label allows) to remove all residue. Staining is acceptable. Caked-on residue is not. Be sure there is no residue that can be smeared or will flake off when touched with a glove. The interior surfaces of containers must be dry.

To keep containers dry, store them in a building, trailer, or under a plastic tarp. Non-HDPE parts such as caps, metal handles, and rubber linings cannot be recycled and should be disposed of as normal solid waste. Do not put a cap back on the rinsed container. All labels and booklets must be removed as they will interfere with the recycling process.

According to the ACRC website, the organization currently “collects around 11,000,000 pounds of HDPE annually. This plastic is then processed to create saleable, recycled resin, which is repurposed into many useful products. Continually evaluating and approving a wide array of end uses, recycled containers are used in

- Agricultural drainpipe
- Ag Chem Composite IBC Base Plates
- Cinder blocks
- Ground Protection/Construction Mats
- Highway and agricultural fence posts
- Highway signposts
- Landscape edging
- Pallets for a variety of industrial B2B

Applications

- Nursery pots
- Plastic lumber (must meet design specs)
- Rebar chairs, and more

“All these applications are utilized in such a way that any residues on or in the recycled resin will have no real or perceived effect on the environment or the uses,” their website states.

For operations with very large quantities of containers (1,000 pound or more), the University of Nebraska Cropwatch

(<https://cropwatch.unl.edu/2024/tips-recycling-pesticide-containers-2024>) recommends Rural Recycling Grinding, LLC ([www.recyclinggrinding.com](http://www.recyclinggrinding.com)) to collect and recycle containers.

“Typical pickups are in spring or fall,” Jennifer Weisbrod, former Pesticide Safety Education Program Coordinator, Extension Educator, states. “You. May be able to coordinate with neighbors and nearby groups to ensure there are enough containers to weigh more than 1,000 pounds. At the time of pickup, the driver will call and let you know the day and time. Those wishing to receive pickup must call the driver back, or they will not stop. Since this is a free pickup service, they’re on a strict schedule.”

Weisbrod notes that a typical container weighs approximately one pound. Rural Recycling Grinding, LLC has relationships in 36 states and has its own facility in Iowa. The company sources, collects, cleanses, and granulates plastic. They also accept IBCs, tanks, pallets, and shuttles.

A list of collection contractors is available at <https://agrecycling.org/recycling/collection-sites/>.

The ACRC has a selection of educational materials to promote container stewardship and raise public awareness of recycling benefits. These printed brochures and posters are available upon request. A web version of each is available under the site's "Resources" tab.

While ACRC focuses on agricultural containers that are 55 gallons or smaller, a myriad of other agricultural products can be recycled. A table of links to other recycling programs for agricultural plastics and products not included in the ACRC program can be found at <https://agrecycling.org/recycling-other-ag-plastics/>.

***Funding for this educational article comes from the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health and the University of Nebraska Medical Center.***