

MICHIGAN CLEAN SWEEP

Overview

The proper disposal of unused and unwanted pesticides is the goal of the Clean Sweep program in Michigan. The MDA Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program, in cooperation with federal, county and local units of government, has established 15 permanent Clean Sweeps sites located throughout the state.

Individual Michigan residents may dispose of unused and unwanted pesticides by taking them to one of these Clean Sweep sites where they will be collected, packaged for shipping, and disposed of properly. There is no charge for this service. Program costs are paid by the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program (MGSP), grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and services provided by local Clean Sweep site hosts.

History

Michigan's Clean Sweep pesticide collections originally began in 1987 as a series of one-day collections in specific watersheds. These collections would typically involve the services of local Health Departments, MSU Extension offices, and other local entities. The Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) coordinated and provided funding for these collections, which has properly disposed of over 1 million pounds of pesticides.

The move to establish permanent Clean Sweep pesticide collection sites began in 1996 when MDA obtained EPA funding to construct five sites throughout the state. (It is important to note that the construction funds do not always cover all costs related to constructing a new site; in instances where significant site modifications are required, the EPA funding is not sufficient to cover all expenses. In such instances, the host site provides for the remaining construction funds). Thirteen of the current fifteen permanent sites were constructed in this manner (Emmet and Saginaw are the exceptions). Since 1996, over 13 million pounds of pesticides have been collected at the permanent sites.

Funding

MDA, through the MGSP, provides funding to support the disposal of pesticides, while the host site provides for staffing, scheduling, site maintenance, promotion, vendor selection, etc. The EPA has historically provided funding for site construction, and will often provide additional funding for pesticide disposal.

The MGSP expects to spend more than \$175,000 in FY2007 on pesticide disposal costs, and should collect more than 120,000 pounds of pesticides.

Clean Sweep/HHW Linkages

All Clean Sweep sites are run concurrently with local Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) programs. Experience suggests that the link to a HHW program is critical, as local staff are already trained in handling hazardous wastes and in coordinating hazardous waste collection programs; additionally, HHW programs already have a relationship established with hazardous waste disposal waste vendors. Most importantly, however, is the reality that if a customer presents non-pesticides for collection to a Clean Sweep site with an HHW program, the product can still be handled. In the absence of an HHW program, the customer must take back any non-pesticide hazardous waste, which is often a source of consternation for both the site staff and the customer.

Expansion of Clean Sweep Activities

Several Clean Sweep site coordinators are currently providing assistance to local MGSP grantees in order to establish a series of "satellite" pesticide collections throughout the state. These collections, which are locally promoted by either MGSP Groundwater Technicians or MGSP/AmeriCorps Members, will often generate more than four tons of pesticides per event. The participating Clean Sweep site coordinator utilize his/her collection program coordination experience and waste disposal vendor to provide Clean Sweep services in areas that are distant from their permanent site.

In FY99, the MGSP began collecting mercury at Clean Sweep sites, with disposal funds provided by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MGSP funds may only be used to dispose of pesticides).