

Agrichemical and Environmental News

A Monthly Report on Pesticides and Related Environmental Issues

March 2002 • Issue No. 191 • <http://aenews.wsu.edu>

Clean Sweep 2001

Dishing the Dirt on Nationwide Pesticide Disposal

By Nancy Fitz and Jude Andreasen, Office of Pesticide Programs, EPA

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently prepared a document entitled *Clean Sweep Report 2001: State and Local Government Achievements in Disposal of Agricultural Waste Pesticides*. The Clean Sweep Report is a summary of state and local government efforts to protect the environment by collecting and disposing of unwanted agricultural pesticides. It is currently being printed and should be available in paper and electronic form this month. (Watch EPA's Web site, <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides> .)

Background

Over the past twenty years, state and local governments have collected and safely disposed of more than 24.6 million pounds of unwanted pesticides. These efforts, known as "Clean Sweep programs," focus on agricultural pesticides but may also include other pesticides, such as those used by homeowners, golf courses, or highway departments along their rights-of-way. There is no federal mandate to conduct these collections.

Clean Sweeps are the results of state and local initiatives. The states have adopted a variety of approaches to finance and implement their programs. While some programs are conducted on the county level, the Clean Sweep Report classifies the information by



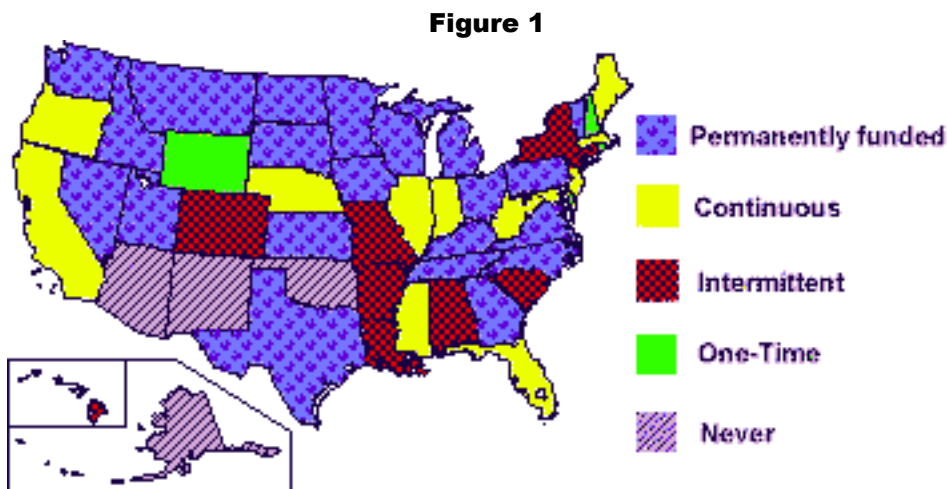
Cooperating agencies: Washington State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Washington Counties.
Cooperative Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination.
Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Cooperative Extension office.

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

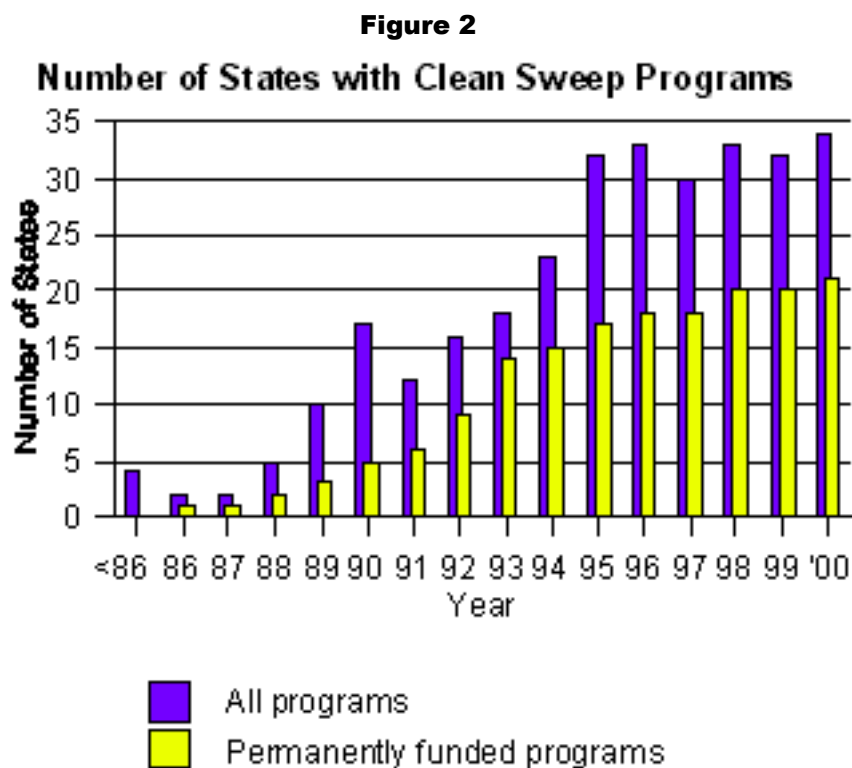
state. All of the programs have the same goal: fostering environmental protection and pollution prevention by removing these potentially hazardous materials from the environment.

Accomplishments

Forty-six states have conducted at least one Clean Sweep program. As shown in Figure 1, the Clean Sweep Report divides states into five categories, which reflect the frequency or permanency of the programs: permanently funded, continuous, intermittent, one-time, and never. A *permanently funded* program is continuous and has reliable, consistent funding in place year after year. Types of permanent funding include state pesticide registration fees, other fee-based funds that support clean up programs, and consistent state appropriations. A *continuous* program is defined in this report as one that has been implemented for at least three consecutive years, but without permanent funding. Although continuous means “without interruption,” a program may still be classified as permanently funded or continuous even if it occasionally skips a year. An *intermittent* program is not continuous but has held more than one collection event. A *one-time* program has held one collection event. Four states have never had a collection.



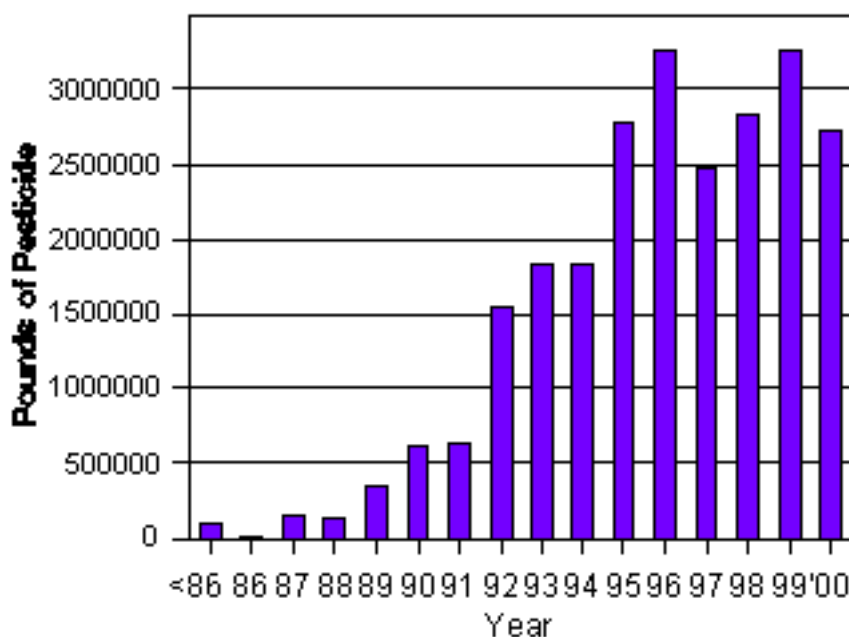
North Carolina held the first Clean Sweep program in 1980. Maine and North Dakota followed with programs in the early eighties. As other states initiated their own programs, the number of states participating in Clean Sweep activities increased rapidly from the late 1980s to the mid 1990s, as shown in Figure 2. Since 1995, the number of states with programs has remained relatively constant, ranging from thirty to thirty-four states. The number of states with permanently funded programs has followed a similar pattern. There was a quick increase in the first half of the 1990s with a steady but slower increase from seventeen to twenty-one states since 1995.



Based on data provided by the states, EPA estimates that Clean Sweep programs nationwide collected over 24.6 million pounds of unwanted pesticides from 1980 through 2000. Figure 3 shows the amount of pesticide collected by all programs per year. A relatively small amount of pesticide was collected through 1991 – about 2.0 million pounds, or 8.1 percent of the total. Since 1992, at least 1.5 million pounds of pesticides have been collected each year and the annual total averaged almost 2.9 million pounds between 1995 and 2000.

Through December 2000, eleven states have collected over one million pounds of pesticides, including Texas with over three million pounds. Twenty-two states have conducted Clean Sweep programs for seven years or longer. In thirteen years of operation (through 2000), the program in Washington State collected almost 1.08 million pounds of pesticides. Run by the Washington State Department of Agriculture, this program is fully funded from the state Model Toxics Control Account. Participants do not have to pay for disposal. All state residents are eligible to participate, although home consumer pesticides are not accepted because most counties have household hazardous waste collection programs.

Figure 3
Amount of Pesticides Collected per Year



Program Operations

In nearly seventy-five percent of the states with Clean Sweep programs, the state's Department of Agriculture or the pesticide regulatory agency has the lead for organizing and overseeing the program. Participation in Clean Sweep programs is sometimes limited to farmers and ranchers, although states are increasingly opening programs to include other participants, such as pest control businesses, dealers, golf courses, and homeowners.

Many programs are paid for using state general funds and/or state pesticide registration fees, but additional financial support is often obtained through participant fees, county funds, in-kind services, and, less frequently, EPA grants. Most Clean Sweep programs collect only pesticides, but some states have found that collecting several waste streams is more cost effective.

Twenty-five states use single-day events as their only collection method, but other states use combinations of single-day events, permanent sites, and on-site pick up. Generally, a hazardous waste contractor provides all materials and services for collection, including manifesting, packaging, transport, and disposal. Most collected material is incinerated as hazardous waste.

Observations

The twenty-one states with permanent funding have collected over 70 percent of all the waste pesticides collected nationwide. The principal advantage of permanent funding is that program managers with a predictable source of funds can devote their energy to program implementation.

Based on data from fifteen states, the cost per pound to dispose of unwanted pesticides has decreased significantly over the past decade. However, the cost of Clean Sweep programs is minor compared to the cost of cleaning up the pollution that can result from improper disposal of unwanted pesticides.

Looking Ahead

No one knows how many pounds of unwanted pesticides have yet to be collected in the United States. Estimating the total amount is difficult due to several factors: 1) many farmers are reluctant to fill out government surveys; 2) some stocks lie forgotten in barns until the owner dies; and 3) unwanted pesticides still accumulate, due to overestimates of pest populations, changing crop patterns, new products, and cancellation of some uses of older products based on new risk assessments conducted under the Food Quality Protection Act.

Assuming pesticide management practices are consistent across the country, it is reasonable to expect that the higher a state's pesticide usage, the higher its quantity of unwanted stocks. States that use the most pesticides have permanently funded or continuous Clean Sweep programs. States with longer-running programs generally have collected higher quantities of pesticides and a larger proportion of the amount of pesticides used since 1960. The quantity of unwanted pesticides collected and disposed by Clean Sweep programs is only a tiny fraction of the pesticides used in the United States.

Since even states with long-term, comprehensive Clean Sweep programs are still collecting pesticides, EPA believes that Clean Sweep programs will continue to be needed for the foreseeable future.

For More Information

The Clean Sweep Report will be posted on EPA's web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides>. The on-line report will have links to each state's program summary; the summaries will be updated periodically. If you have updates or

Agrichemical and Environmental News

corrections to the report or if you would like additional information about Clean Sweep programs, please contact us directly.

Nancy Fitz and Jude Andreasen are with the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pesticide Programs. They can be reached at fitz.nancy@epa.gov , (703) 305-7385 or andreasen.jude@epa.gov , (703) 308-9342, respectively.

FREE SUBSCRIPTION

If you would like to receive monthly e-mail notification when each month's new issue goes on-line, please send an e-mail to majordomo@tricity.wsu.edu. The body of message should read **subscribe aenews_dist**, and nothing (not even a signature line) should follow the subscribe message.

AENews welcomes your comments. Please direct any comments on newsletter content to Catherine Daniels, Managing Editor, (509) 372-7495, fax (509) 372-7491, or cdaniels@tricity.wsu.edu. Comments regarding newsletter format, Web usability, or other general concerns may be addressed to Sally O'Neal Coates, Editor, (509) 372-7378, fax (509) 372-7491, or scoates@tricity.wsu.edu .