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Contact: Ron Perkins

Phone: 877-952-2272

Email: rperkins@acrecycle.org

Crop Protection Industry Celebrates Twenty Years of Recycling

WASHINGTON, DC – The crop protection and specialty pesticide industries are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Ag Container Recycling Council (ACRC), a voluntary group that collects and recycles pesticide plastic containers nationwide. ACRC promotes and funds programs in the U.S. for the recycling of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) plastic containers from crop protection, animal health and specialty pest control products, and its more than 50 members represent the manufacturers, formulators or packagers of these important products. Every ton of HDPE plastic recycled into new products, as compared to using new plastic, saves the equivalent of 450 gallons of gasoline. Since the program's formation in 1992, ACRC has been responsible for recycling 125 million pounds of pesticide container plastic, and in recent years has been recycling an average of 8 million pounds annually.

“ACRC’s members are crucial to our organization’s success, and they demonstrate how industry stewardship works in an exemplary manner,” said Ron Perkins, ACRC Executive Director. “Industry collaboration and regulatory agency support have built a solid coalition across the country, and our members’ expertise was essential in the success of the ACRC recycling program. From container cleaning to ultimate recycling into new useful products, ACRC members created a seamless, safe and effective process.”

ACRC works with thousands of farmers, retailers and applicators nationwide to responsibly and ethically manage pest control containers throughout their lifecycle. The organization’s model has led to:

- Recycling programs in 42 states;
- Savings of more than 625,000 cubic yards of landfill space;
- Reduction of 88,430 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent;

- Energy savings equal to 25,863,000 gallons of gasoline, and the equivalent of 29,970 households' annual energy consumption.

“ACRC is proud of what its members have helped to accomplish in the first 20 years of the organization,” said Bill Spencer, of Arysta LifeScience North America and ACRC Executive Board Chair. “From collecting a record 125 million pounds to providing states and regulatory agencies with valuable input, ACRC has always focused on safety, sustainability and stewardship. I’m excited to see how the program will continue to grow.”

As part of ACRC’s 20th anniversary, the organization will host a reception on Capitol Hill, and celebrate this exemplary stewardship project with ACRC members, Congressional staff and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Joining in the celebration will be several leaders of allied industry associations, including Daren Coppock, Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA) President and Chief Executive Officer.

“ARA commends ACRC and its member companies for their continued leadership in the area of crop protection container recycling and the benefits that it provides to ARA members and customers. Programs like this advance the nation’s public health and environmental protection goals, and demonstrate the ways in which all stakeholders in our industry can work together to achieve our shared principles of environmental stewardship,” said Coppock.

ACRC’s work is representative of the crop protection industry’s commitment to sustainable practices, responsible stewardship and regulatory agency collaboration. The program provided a sound model for California’s container recycling guidelines, and ACRC members provided valuable input to EPA for its Container and Containment Rule. With the support of nearly 95 percent of the crop protection industry, ACRC will continue to grow and pave the way for industry-wide stewardship initiatives.

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The ACRC (<http://www.acrecycle.org/>) is a not-for-profit organization that works to facilitate the collection and recycling of one-way rigid HDPE plastic agricultural crop protection, specialty pest control, micronutrient/fertilizer, and/or adjuvant product containers. This is done through member funding of cost effective programs that foster public health and safety, environmental protection, resource conservation and end user convenience.