ACRC MINIBULK RECYCLING POSITION STATEMENT

In 2010, the Ag Container Recycling Council (ACRC) partnered with the Agribusiness Association of Iowa (AAI) in the implementation of a statewide mini-bulk recycling pilot program in Iowa. Additional statewide programs were implemented simultaneously by organizations in other states. These programs were successful in achieving the ACRC objective of identifying the role that the ACRC should play in working with industry stakeholders to properly steward mini-bulk container disposal. The key findings from the Iowa and other statewide minibulk recycling programs are listed below.

Based on the successful Iowa Pilot, the ACRC Executive Board has determined there are sufficient mechanisms to address the needs of our industry in the proper management of unwanted mini-bulks. Therefore the ACRC will not provide funding to any collection or recycling program for mini-bulks in the foreseeable future. The ACRC will remain focused on our original mission of collection and recycling of pesticide containers 55 gallons or smaller in size while sharing practices needed for good product stewardship.

The ACRC offers the following guidance to assist stakeholder groups that desire to plan and implement mini-bulk recycling programs in the future:

1) To be successful, programs need full cooperation of all stakeholders including retailers, distributors, growers, applicators, and agchemical manufacturers.
2) Stakeholder support, both financially and organizationally, is essential to cover costs of orphan containers, avoid destruction of valuable refillable containers and minimize program cost.
3) Prior to conducting a program, stakeholders should be certain to obtain commitment from agchemical companies and recycling vendors before starting.
4) Only clean containers should be accepted. Cleaning guidelines have been developed and are available from the ACRC, EPA, and CropLife America (CLA)
5) Inspecting and sorting is needed FIRST. Only obsolete or damaged containers should be disposed and recycled.
6) There could be a significant number of “orphan” containers and funding mechanisms should be established up front to cover recycling costs
7) ACRC will soon have a documentary video that will be a useful reference in the planning and implementation process. Contact ACRC for access to a copy.
8) ACRC and Crop Life America member companies will provide a list of contacts within its members which either offer their own programs for recycling or will indicate the processes necessary to provide assistance.

The pilot conducted in Iowa was a success due to the support and cooperation of key state stakeholders. If you are thinking about implementing a minibulk recycling project in your region or state we suggest that you solicit the support of state agribusiness and government regulatory agencies. In addition, CropLife America, the Ag Container Recycling Council and the U.S Environmental Protection Agency can provide guidance materials relating to best practices for each step in the recycling process.

For more information, call the ACRC at 877 952-2272 or e-mail rperkins@acrecycle.org.