

# Overview of the North Carolina Pesticide Container Recycling Program

In 1993, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted legislation creating the Pesticide Environmental Trust Fund (PETF). This law requires companies registering pesticide products in North Carolina to pay an additional \$25 or \$50 environmental assessment fee for each brand registered with the NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS). Companies must pay \$25 for products with annual sales less than \$5,000, or \$50 for products with annual sales of \$5,000 or greater. Fees collected from this assessment are deposited into the Department's Pesticide Environmental Trust Fund.

The predominant purpose of the fund is to support pesticide-related environmental programs administered by the NCDA&CS. Most importantly, the PETF provides funding for pesticide disposal assistance and pesticide container recycling programs in a majority of North Carolina counties. Each year \$51,875 in grant funding is available to establish or enhance county pesticide container recycling programs at a maximum of \$12,500 per county and can be used to fund storage containers, shelters, signage, PPE, pressure rinse nozzles and outreach materials. The first grants were awarded in 1995. Since then a total of \$1.3 million has been awarded through 214 grants to 94 of the 100 counties in North Carolina. Currently, 70 counties operate and maintain pesticide container collection sites in the state.

Only governmental entities such as state universities, county cooperative extension, county solid waste services, or municipalities are eligible for PETF funding. To qualify for PETF pesticide container recycling grants, the county government and other entities shall be willing and able to provide sites for the storage of pesticide containers for recycling. Management and personnel needs are to be supported by these various entities. This support shall be committed to in writing in the form of a proposal for funding from the county government and other entities with the authority to accept and direct resources including a detailed budget. The county shall have a commitment from the local North Carolina Cooperative Extension to conduct an educational and training program and advertise the plastic pesticide container recycling program.

Renee Woody, Environmental Programs Manager, Structural Pest Control and Pesticides Division, NCDA&CS administers the PETF grants as well as the statewide pesticide container recycling program. She enthusiastically promotes and supports the program and works with seven pesticide inspectors to monitor the collection sites, conducting audits on an annual basis. Counties also vie for the annual John L. Smith Excellence in Pesticide Container Recycling award.

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A new challenge faced by the recycling community was the passage of the North Carolina Solid Waste statute that prohibits the disposal in landfills of any rigid plastic container from 8 ounces to 5 gallons in size, GS 130A-309.10 (f)(11). Pesticide containers are exempt from this statute, but pesticide containers not properly prepared for recycling could create problems when comingled with other High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) plastic that may be used for non-industrial products. Therefore, county site personnel receive special training to inspect pesticide containers for proper rinsing and ensure that they are kept separate from other recycled HDPE plastic.

NCDA&CS, NC Cooperative Extension, County Solid Waste Services, farmers and other stakeholders work closely with our Ag Container Recycling Council contractor for North Carolina, USAg Recycling, Inc., in improving and expanding the pesticide container recycling program. Commitment to providing statewide, user-friendly recycling opportunities has resulted in more than 8.8 million pounds of pesticide containers being recycled from over 200 sites across the state. North Carolina currently ranks 8th in the nation for pounds of pesticide containers recycled.

