

Submission

By



to the

Ministry for the Environment

on

Waste Minimisation in New Zealand
A Discussion Document from the Ministry for the Environment

May 2009

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WASTE MINIMISATION IN NEW ZEALAND SUBMISSION BY AGCARM Inc

Key Points In Submission

- Agcarm supports the government fully investigating if a mandatory product stewardship scheme is warranted for agrichemicals, including pesticides, veterinary medicines, farm cleaning products, plant growth regulators and other unspecified chemicals.
- A mandatory scheme must not add further costs to industry.
- Management of a mandatory scheme or schemes must remain within the agrichemical industry.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Agcarm welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Waste Minimisation in New Zealand discussion document, published in March 2009¹.

1.2 Agcarm is an industry association of companies which manufacture, distribute and sell agrichemicals and veterinary medicines. Member companies are committed to ensuring that these products are used safely, effectively and sustainably. Agcarm represents 30 member companies ranging from global enterprises to small New Zealand-owned companies.

1.3 Agcarm has chosen not to provide feedback on the submission template form. This is because Agcarm is interested in submitting primarily on Part 2: Identifying products that are priorities for product stewardship.

2.0 Questions for Part 2: Identifying products that are priorities for product stewardship

2.1 Agcarm notes that this section seeks feedback on identifying products that might be priorities for product stewardship. Of particular interest is one of the categories on the list of three products proposed for a full investigation to see if a mandatory product stewardship scheme is warranted - agrichemicals, including pesticides, veterinary medicines, farm cleaning products, plant growth regulators and other unspecified chemicals.

2.2 Agcarm actively supports product stewardship schemes for agrichemicals. Agcarm's key objectives include 'assistance and leadership in the collection, identification and disposal of waste agrichemicals and waste agrichemical containers'².

¹ Ministry for the Environment. 2009. *Waste Minimisation in New Zealand – A discussion document from the Ministry for the Environment*. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment

² Agcarm Strategy and Business Plan, February 2009

- 2.3 Agcarm notes that the Ministry is also supporting the development of a voluntary product stewardship scheme for agricultural chemicals.
- 2.4 Agcarm is a founder member of the AgRecovery Foundation, and Agcarm's Chief Executive is a Foundation Trustee.
- 2.5 Nearly all Agcarm members are 'brand owners' in the AgRecovery Foundation, that is they pay a levy on their products to fund stewardship schemes.
- 2.6 The levy is currently funding plastic container recycling, with some earmarked in future for a voluntary industry-government Chemical Recovery Scheme that is due to begin on July 1, 2009.
- 2.7 Agcarm would prefer that all industry participants who hold registrations to sell pesticides, veterinary medicines, farm cleaning products, plant growth regulators, and other chemicals should belong to the AgRecovery chemical recovery scheme. Alternatively, if a company chooses not to belong to AgRecovery, they should be required to set up or join an alternative chemical recovery scheme.
- 2.8 Agcarm does not normally support compulsion through regulation as it would prefer to see voluntary industry-led solutions that are effective and sustainable.
- 2.9 Agcarm's preferred option would therefore be all participants in the agrichemical industry to voluntarily embrace an industry scheme such as AgRecovery or something similar. This would 'level the playing field' so that all agrichemical manufacturers were contributing to product stewardship.
- 2.10 Full industry participation in levy-based stewardship schemes would create higher levy income and spread the costs fairly over all manufacturers.
- 2.11 However, while there has been strong support for rural recycling schemes, some industry players have yet to join or set one up.
- 2.12 **Agcarm therefore supports the government fully investigating to see if a mandatory product stewardship scheme is warranted for agrichemicals, including pesticides, veterinary medicines, farm cleaning products, plant growth regulators and other unspecified chemicals.**
- 2.13 It is noted that if agrichemicals are declared a priority product, the Ministry will consult further about the proposal, possible guidelines, the expected contents, and effects of a mandatory scheme, and any regulations required to support the scheme.
- 2.14 Agcarm recommends that any new regulations could be part of ERMA product controls under the HSNO Act, in the area of disposal.
- 2.15 Agcarm's support for an investigation into a mandatory agrichemical product stewardship scheme is conditional on there being no more costs for industry,

and a suitable definition of “mandatory”.

- 2.16 Members are already paying a levy of 13 cents per litre of product sold into the New Zealand market. Some companies are paying total levies well into six figures to fund product stewardship. Agcarm members expect this levy to fall over time as more companies join AgRecovery.
- 2.17 Agcarm would therefore **strongly oppose** any mandatory scheme which added more costs to industry. These extra costs could for example be linked to a bureaucracy set up to oversee a mandatory scheme. Any such costs must be minimal and funded entirely by government.
- 2.18 Agcarm would also strongly oppose any mandatory scheme which was taken from the hands of industry and instead run by government. However, Agcarm notes that the purpose of the Waste Minimisation Act is “to encourage (and, in certain circumstances, require) the **people and organisations** involved in the life of a product to share responsibility for -
- (a) ensuring there is effective reduction, reuse, recycling, or recovery of the product; and
 - (b) managing any environmental harm arising from the product when it becomes waste.”³

We look forward to reading the summary of submissions.

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³ Waste Minimisation Act, Part 2, Clause 8