

CleanFARMS Benin obsolete pesticides inventory and outreach

July 2018

As part of a GEF-funded FAO country project entitled “The disposal of POPS and obsolete pesticides and strengthening life cycle management of pesticides in Benin”, CropLife International is partnering through the implementation of the CleanFarms Benin project involving a national outreach and declaration campaign and contribution of funding for safeguarding and disposal. An inventory had been completed by the FAO in 2012, which found 129 tons of obsolete pesticides.

The CleanFARMS Benin project was launched following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by CropLife International and the Government of Benin (September 2014) and the Inception Workshop of the FAO/GEF project (March 2015). The process of identifying stocks of obsolete pesticides started with an outreach campaign offering holders of obsolete pesticides the opportunity to voluntarily declare their stock. The declaration forms included the possibility for holders of empty pesticide containers to declare them too. The declaration process was widely communicated through newspapers, radio and government extension services. A total of 95 extension officers were trained in the distribution and completion of declaration forms. The outreach campaign ran for three months between September and December 2015. A total of 745 completed declaration forms were returned of which 179 declared obsolete pesticides, the rest of the forms declared empty pesticide containers. In total around 1,350 tons of obsolete stocks and over 230,000 empty containers were declared. Component 2 of the GEF funded FAO project is developing a pilot project in the Borgou and Alibori regions to promote triple rinsing and collection of empty pesticide bottle. The collected bottles will be sent to a local NGO that recycles collected plastics.

Following the outreach campaign an inventory was made in stores that had declared significant volumes of stocks of highly hazardous obsolete pesticides and in stores where the 2015 declaration volumes were significantly different to the 2012 inventory. Three inventory teams of 4 people carried out the work, following training in risk assessment and safe inventory practices by the international hazardous waste company Polyeco. During the outreach, declaration and inventory, the 1,350 tonnes of obsolete stocks found was significantly more than had been expected, greatly exceeding the budget available for safeguarding and disposal. A budget had been foreseen for the safeguarding and disposal of a total of 200 tons of obsolete pesticides. CropLife International worked with project partners, the FAO and Ministry of Agriculture to identify the stores and products that posed the highest risks to people and the environment to determine the priority 200 tons to select for disposal. The selected 200 tons will be safeguarded and taken for high-temperature incineration late 2018 or early 2019. The remainder are lower risk stocks that were found to be well stored until further disposal funding becomes available. However, around 700 tonnes were recently expired and registered for use, so the government is considering re-testing, and if still within specification, re-validating them for use, rather than disposing of them.

FAO is working with the government to introduce procurement practices less likely to result in the accumulation of obsolete pesticides in the future.