

Ag chemicals need fire control plan

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Fires involving agricultural chemicals are so potentially dangerous that every farmer and homeowner using chemicals and every merchant selling them needs a fire control plan, according to Gary L. Smith, a safety specialist with the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service.

Smith, an agricultural engineer who specializes in farm safety programs told a statewide audience at the Maryland Agricultural Pesticides Conference recently about the fire

dangers of fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides.

"While some ag chemicals are relatively harmless under normal conditions, they may become explosive or toxic in a fire," he said. Smith cited sulfur, which will smolder without burning if left undisturbed, but may explode when hit with a hard stream of water.

He said, "If ammonia nitrate, a common fertilizer used by both farmers and home gardeners, reaches a temperature of more than 370 degrees Fahrenheit, a heat

producing reaction occurs and a variety of explosive gases are released.

The safety specialist, who also conducts training programs for firemen, told of an incident near Damascus, Maryland, last year in which 50 firemen were sent to nearby hospitals for treatment of exposure to toxic smoke.

Smith said, "Some chemicals may remain harmless until water used in fighting the fire vaporizes into steam on contact and carries toxicants into the air. As the steam cools it releases the toxic

chemicals as 'fall-out'. They may be inhaled causing respiratory damage or they may be absorbed through the skin, causing equally harmful results."

"The types of fire we are experiencing involves chemicals ranging from those the average homeowner might have stored in a backyard shed, to chemicals on farms in various kinds of storage conditions. They might be well marked in good pesticide storage buildings or they may be setting around the corner in the back of the barn," he said.

Smith offered advice to farmers, homeowners, and merchants alike. A fire control plan will cost little or nothing, and it may prevent the death or serious injury of family members, neighbors, or firemen trying to save a barn or business. He also pointed out the cost savings that can result from such a plan.

"Clean-up costs following a chemical fire can be expensive. Run-off of water contaminated by chemicals can contaminate drinking water sources for humans as well as farm animals. Nearby crops may be damaged or soil rendered unsuitable for planting. These are just some of the liabilities," he said.

A plan should take into account highway access, adjoining land use, water sources, drainage, equipment access, and any other factor that may contribute to fast, safe response by local fire fighting companies.

Farmers who would like help in developing an on-farm fire control plan should contact the local Extension office and local fire department. Merchants selling or storing agricultural chemicals should check with their local fire department for additional information.

Plan ahead for over-the-road farming safety

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill. — Smaller profit margins during recent years have prompted many farmers to expand the size of their operations by renting or purchasing fields that might be more than just a few miles away. That means road travel — and considerations of both safety and time efficiency.

Tom Leslie, product planning manager for Massey-Ferguson, contends that road travel with farm equipment involves skill, experience and common sense. And it also demands advance planning. Part of this planning includes a close look at routes available from the home farm to the field. In fact, this should be a consideration in acquiring the extra land.

"Be sure to check for overhead power lines and the width of the road," Leslie says. "If the road is too narrow, without wide shoulders, it could be dangerous. Getting too close to an edge that shears off can

easily lead to overturned equipment."

Bridges are another important consideration. Carefully examine the bridge planks and check load limits. If there is any doubt about the safety of a bridge, call the county supervisor or county engineer to find out if the bridge will be safe to cross with the type and weight of equipment you own.

Once the route is planned, the specialist recommends that equipment be properly marked for road travel. Lights and reflectors are essential. Regulations for these will vary from state to state. However, most states require at least reflectors and lights for night travel. These typically include two white lights, visible in front for 500 feet, and a red light in the rear on the extreme left, visible for 500 feet. If a tool bar extends wider than the tractor, be sure it is well illuminated. And display a Slow Moving Vehicle sign prominently

at the correct location on the back of equipment.

Equipment manufacturers are well aware of the need for safety features.

"Most new tractors are equipped with roll-over protective structures, seat belts, flashing indicators, turn signals, parking brakes and rearview mirrors," Leslie points out. "Safety features such as these can save lives. Be sure to take full advantage of them."

When hauling equipment, additional safety precautions are

necessary. Leslie stresses that equipment should be carefully matched to the trailer being used for transport. "Check the width of the trailer and the equipment, the load capacity of the trailer, and the equipment weight," he says. "Also check the signals and the brakes."

"If there are brakes on both the truck and trailer, check both sets and practice stopping before going out on the road," Leslie says. "A practice run with the trailer unloaded is a good way to become familiar with route stops at minimum hazard."

Fulton Grange 66

Fulton Grange 66 met on January 25 at the Oakryn Hall in Lancaster County.

The grange announced that Clifford Holloway Jr. has been appointed the local representative for the credit union of the PA state grange.

Holloway presented the evening's program which was a

talk on fires, and smoke detectors. He also spoke on the safe installation of wood stoves.

Charles Browning and his wife spoke on the trip he and his wife took to Hawaii.

Charlotte Derr will show slides and speak on Eagle awareness at the next meeting, February 8.



HOW UNIPEL® 13-34-10

fertilizer can get your corn crop off to a super start:

It has a high concentration of water-soluble Phosphorus that gets to young seedlings quickly. Helps plants establish a good root system — the starting point for top yields. Its quick-acting and long-lasting Nitrogen team up to feed the young plants for full yield potential, continually from sprouting to harvest.

This is the Starter Special that corn growers know from good experience. It's highly effective as a banded starter. And it's SAFE... no chance of ammonia damage to tender, young seedlings when used as a "pop up" and applied directly with the seed at 50 lbs./acre.

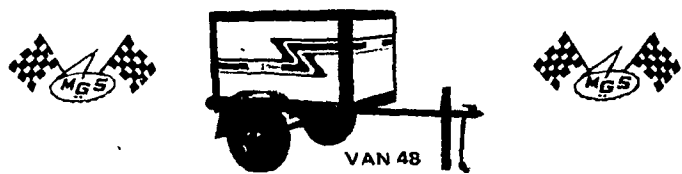
How can we fit UNIPEL 13-34-10 into your corn fertility program?



P. L. ROHRER & BRO., INC.

SMOKETOWN, PA

PH: 717-299-2571



HITCH UP TO A WINNER!



MGS Trailers

Near Zinn's Diner at the PA Turnpike North of Exit 21.

HAULING FIREWOOD? SNOWMOBILES? CYCLES?

MGS TRAILERS has your answer with convenience in mind!

VISIT our rustic sales barn to see these winning trailers first hand.

YES, MGS can install a hitch and wire your car to match your new trailer.

All we do, makes it easy for you to
"HITCH UP TO A WINNER"
8-5 Weekdays and 8-12 Noon Saturday
215-267-7528