

Palm Beach County Operation Cleansweep Pilot Collection, 1998

Palm Beach County is a mostly urban county on the southeast coast of Florida with a population of just over 1,000,000 (in 1997). West Palm Beach is a major urban center with a diverse economy. There are significant agricultural activities in the western half of the county.

A collection was held on Saturday, April 4, 1998 at a closed landfill in Lantana, FL and at the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Services (IFAS) Research Center in Belle Glade, FL. The event was sponsored by the Pollution Prevention Coalition of Palm Beach County and funded entirely by the Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County (SWA). Representatives from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County and United Agri Products were present.

Participants were required to pre-register and provide an inventory of materials for planning and budgeting purposes. To address the major concern that the agriculture community has a low level of trust towards governmental or regulating groups, participants were given the opportunity to pre-register anonymously but still required to provide the inventory. The 39 participants brought in more than 27,000 pounds of material. All but one of the participants had pre-registered for the collection. Due to the success of this collection as an efficient way to collect large amounts of hazardous materials, the SWA is considering making Operation Cleansweep into a permanent education and disposal program for the county.

About 40-50% of the pesticides collected were usable product, including chlorpyrifos and pendimethalin. Many of these items were in unopened boxes. The chlorpyrifos products could have been used elsewhere. The 70 gallons of pendimethalin was specially formulated with a red dye which made its use undesirable for the intended application. It was suggested that, in the future, the manufacturer could perhaps be asked to take back the product in similar situations.

Much of the material accepted from the Research Center was unidentifiable. Some of these were known only by their research number while others had been unusable and often unlabeled product accepted by the Center from area growers. As a result, SWA staff decided not to accept anything that would require substantial analytical cost. To avoid substantial disposal costs in the future, it was suggested that the Research Center require manufacturers to take back research materials when research has been concluded and limit or eliminate the practice of accepting unusable and unlabeled product from area growers.

Data Sources for This Report:

1. "Palm Beach County CSUP Collection" fax to CSUP Working Group from Burt McKee, United Agri Products, April 6, 1998
2. "Operation Cleansweep" press release, Palm Beach County, FL, May 20, 1998.

