



*This is the way your pest control room should look. All it takes is a broom, some paint and some steel shelving. Photo by Jason Kubel.*

## Operation Cleansweep Collects 1 Million Pounds Of Pesticides

By Terence McElroy and Sarah Williams

Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Charles H. Bronson and Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Michael W. Sole announced in mid-March that "Operation Cleansweep" had collected more than 1 million pounds of pesticides during the program's 12 years of

operation. A partnership between the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the program collects canceled, suspended or unusable pesticides from Florida farmers, nurseries, golf courses and pest control companies for proper disposal.

"Our agency's efforts, and that of DEP, have removed more than 1 million pounds of unused and outdated pesticides from farms, businesses and other commercial sites – chemicals that otherwise could pose a danger to our environment," Bronson said. "This program illustrates what government can accomplish when it works together."

Operation Cleansweep collects and disposes of pesticides to protect agricultural workers, emergency responders, the public and the environment from potential health and environmental risks from stored pesticides. Some products are old and may be stored in containers that are deteriorating, while others, such as chlordane and DDT, can no longer be used legally. To date, pesticide products have been collected from nearly 1,500 participating farms, dairies, ranches, nurseries, golf courses and professional pest control operations in 65 counties.

"Operation Cleansweep is a convenient, cost-effective, public-private partnership to dispose of unwanted or outdated pesticides, providing free collection and disposal for Florida's pesticide consumers," said Sole. "This program provides a safe method of collection and disposal that is more

protective of Florida's natural resources and our agricultural economy."

Proper disposal of pesticides can be costly and a complicated regulatory burden for small farmers and other pesticide users. Operation Cleansweep offers an opportunity to avoid these formidable barriers and promotes safe and environmentally-sound pesticide use, handling and disposal.

In addition to disposal of unwanted pesticides, participants in the program also receive educational material that includes tips on purchasing pesticides; inventory control; stock rotation; proper labeling, storage, and handling; and how to respond to leaks, spills, and exposure incidents. Funded by in-kind contributions from public and private partners and the Florida Legislature, the program's goal is to collect and dispose of unwanted pesticides as well as prevent the need for future Operation Cleansweep collections through proper storage, labeling and pesticide purchasing.

To sign up for Cleansweep collection and disposal service, e-mail Robin Waddell at [waddelr@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:waddelr@doacs.state.fl.us) at the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; or call toll free at 877-851-5285, or fax at 386-418-5527.

For other information about Florida's Operation Cleansweep, e-mail John L. Price at [ljohn.l.price@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:ljohn.l.price@dep.state.fl.us) at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, or call him at 850-245-8751 (SunCom 205-8751) or fax at 850-245-8811 (SunCom 205-8811).



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