
Section 24

Be A Professional

It is important to be able to assure the public that pesticides are being handled responsibly on your farm. Everyone has their own concerns or attitudes about safe and environmentally sound use of pesticides. To develop and maintain a good public image, you should:

- ▶ Know your farm business
- ▶ Have a professional attitude
- ▶ Have a professional image
- ▶ Conduct your farm activities safely and responsibly
- ▶ Communicate with your neighbours, your local community and your customers.

Good public relations will:

- ▶ Enhance the credibility of the farm community
- ▶ Improve public trust and confidence
- ▶ Improve public education which will result in improved public support
- ▶ Help you to understand public concerns and misconceptions, so that you can deal with complaints and difficulties as they arise.

Present a Positive Image for Agriculture



Actions Speak Louder than Words

The consumer relies on you to make good decisions about pest management. That means you have to know about – the pest to be controlled, the crops or animals affected, the pesticides that could be used, the effects on the environment, safety practices, certification requirements, and federal, provincial and local laws. And you have to act responsibly.

Learning is an ongoing activity. Keep up to date by reading information about products and attending grower meetings, seminars and trade shows. Talk to government employees and company representatives. Learn where to go for answers to your questions.

AGCare (Agricultural Groups Concerned About Resources and the Environment) is a coalition of 17 member groups representing Ontario's 45,000 growers of field and horticultural crops. AGCare provides information and support to growers, and the public, on issues such as: pesticide use in agriculture, developments in crop biotechnology, and other related farm environmental concerns. On behalf of Ontario farmers, AGCare helped to initiate the Grower Pesticide Safety Course and mandatory certification for growers, as a way to encourage responsible use, handling, transportation and storage of agricultural pesticides on Ontario farms. For more information about AGCare, its member groups, and Ontario farm environmental issues, visit AGCare's web site. The address is: **www.agcare.org**

The Ontario government updates its publications on pest control methods to include new research. You can keep up to date by reading these publications. The following chart shows some helpful publications from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. For more information on the publications offered by OMAFRA call **1-888-466-2372** or 519-826-3100, or go to the web site **www.omafra.gov.on.ca**

Mail orders should be addressed to:
ServiceOntario, Ground Floor
1 Stone Rd. West
Guelph, Ontario
N1G 4Y2

Publication #	Title
75	Guide to Weed Control
360	Fruit Production Recommendations
363	Vegetable Production Recommendations
367	Ontario Mushroom Pesticide Recommendations
370	Production Recommendations for Greenhouse Floriculture
371	Growing Greenhouse Vegetables
383	Nursery and Landscape Plant Production and IPM
384	Turfgrass Management Recommendations
812	Field Crop Protection Guide
816	Turf IPM Manual

There are also many private industry publications such as sprayer and nozzle guides. Talk to your suppliers to keep up to date with their products.

Attitude and Image

Project a Professional Image as a Farmer

- ▶ Be respectful, honest, polite and courteous to neighbours and customers.
- ▶ Try to answer questions or complaints accurately and promptly.
- ▶ Consider your neighbours.
- ▶ Make sure your property is clean and tidy.
- ▶ Make sure you and your employees wear appropriate protective clothing and personal protective equipment when handling pesticides.
- ▶ Set a good example for your employees and neighbours. It will increase their confidence in you.

Work Habits

Work Habits/Activities

Conduct your work habits professionally.

- ▶ Be safety conscious when you select and apply pesticides.
- ▶ Apply pesticides responsibly according to the label.
- ▶ Work safely.
- ▶ Use well maintained, clean, properly calibrated equipment.
- ▶ Keep accurate records.
- ▶ Store pesticides safely.
- ▶ Operate vehicles and equipment in a safe, sensible manner considering soil, weather, road conditions, etc.
- ▶ Keep emergency telephone numbers on hand.
- ▶ Have a pesticide safety plan in case of fire or emergency.
- ▶ Prevent the spread of disease and pests by cleaning equipment after each use.
- ▶ Observe the results of pesticide applications and evaluate how well the targeted pests were controlled.
- ▶ Follow all pesticide legislation.

Communication Building Rural-Urban Bridges of Understanding

Communication means listening as well as speaking. Try to understand the issues that concern your neighbours and your community. When a question or concern is raised, be honest, frank and cooperative. Keep the community informed about any farm practices that may affect their safety.

Talk about what the good agricultural practices you use. If you have an opportunity, let the public know about the steps you take on your farm to protect consumers and the environment from pesticides.

Talk to local police and fire departments so you know how to handle an emergency.

Participate in On-Farm Food Safety Programs

Some commodity organizations have already developed on-farm food safety programs and some groups are working on developing programs. These programs may include guidelines that will help you to prevent pesticide residues. If you don't already participate in one of these programs, check with your commodity organization to see what information and help they may have to offer.

Fill in Pesticide Use Surveys

Government and commodity sponsored pesticide use surveys provide important information to answer consumer concerns. This information may also be valuable to PMRA. Accurate pesticide use data can help PMRA to make decisions about new pesticide registrations and re-evaluations of currently registered products. This can be especially important for minor crops.

Review Questions



1. List three (3) ways to develop and maintain a good public image.

1.

2.

3.