

AGROCHEMICALS ON YOUR FARM: SECURITY

Man-Made and Technological Threats



Agrochemicals are a common component in rural communities and on farms. Unfortunately, some (e.g., anhydrous ammonia) can be the target of theft for illegal use (e.g., methamphetamine production). Follow these prevention measures to deter chemical thefts on your farm.

Prevention Measures

• Chemical storage

- Keep chemicals stored in a locked building, storage cabinet, closet or room.
- Make sure doors and windows are secured.
- Post signs on the door, building, fence to indicate chemical storage. Examples: “No Trespassing”, “Danger – Unauthorized Persons KEEP OUT.”
- Signs should have at least two emergency phone numbers posted.
 - Your phone number
 - Emergency response (e.g., law enforcement or fire department)

• Inventory

- Know your inventory so you can identify missing chemicals quickly.
- Keep storage areas neat and organized to keep track of equipment and chemicals.

• Know potential signs of tampering or illegal activity.

- Unattended chemicals or tanks are often targeted.
- Possible signs of theft or tampering:
 - Footprints in the soil
 - Stained soil
 - Valves or caps that are not tightly closed or which have been tampered with
 - Items left near site (duct tape, garden hose, plastic tubing, barbeque grill propane tanks)

• Educate your employees about theft prevention measures.

- Have them maintain enhanced security awareness to unusual or suspicious actions.
- Make sure they know signs of theft or tampering to look for.

Anhydrous Ammonia Tanks

• Minimize the time the chemicals are on your farm.

- Have tanks delivered as close to application time as possible.
- Return tanks immediately when the application is finished.

• Store in secure location.

- Locate tanks in well-lit, secure areas where they are visible from your house and where valves are clearly visible.
- Make sure all tanks are labeled with signs that warn of hazardous chemicals.

- Contact local law enforcement or local drug force personnel to help identify security measures and encourage nighttime patrols of your area.
- Deter intrusion with motion-detector lights, fences, walls, locked doors and alarms, security lighting, video cameras.
- Consider building a fence or other barrier around chemical tanks, with clearly visible warning signs.
- Block roads, lanes or entrances near the chemical tanks with a gate or barricade to complicate thefts.

• Tanks should be secured or disabled so unauthorized persons cannot access material in containers.

- Purchase or rent locking devices for nurse tank valves.
- Bleed and remove hoses at the end of the day to remove excess liquid and prevent use of them to steal your material.
- Return excess chemicals to the chemical distributor.
- Remove hoses from storage tanks during the off-season and store them separately from the tanks.

• Visually inspect tanks regularly for signs of tampering or illegal activity.

- Place brightly colored plastic wire ties or seals between the valve wheel and the roll cage; check regularly to see if they have been broken.
- Be extremely cautious when finding empty containers at your farm.
- Write down any suspicious vehicle or person that you notice. Send the information to your local law enforcement.

If You Suspect a Theft

• Contact law enforcement immediately!

- Report suspicious vehicles or persons, thefts, signs of tampering, leaks, or any unusual activity to local law enforcement officials.

• If you discover someone near the tank who should not be there:

- Do not confront the person. Users of methamphetamine may become violent with little provocation.
- Contact law enforcement immediately.
- Do not disturb a crime scene.

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