

## Pesticide & Fertilizer Security

*By Bob King, Director*

*Agriculture and Life Sciences Institute–Monroe Community College*

When our nation's threat level is elevated or at high, agribusiness, farmers, golf courses, and lawn care businesses should be especially vigilant regarding the physical security of any and all chemicals. More specifically, we are concerned about the misuse of fertilizers and pesticides; security of aerial application equipment; and the potential for an intentional introduction of human, livestock, or plant diseases.

To minimize the risk of terrorism at your place of work, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issues alerts to anyone involved in transporting storing and/or using pesticides.

The agricultural industry has long known the importance of the management and safe handling of pesticides in one form or another such as safe storage, accurate labeling, and carefully following label directions. Today, additional management tools are required because of heightened terrorism concerns.

Consider the following:

**Secure your buildings, manufacturing facilities, storage areas, and surrounding property:**

Focus on preventing intrusion into any area used to manufacture and/or store a pesticide. Increase your awareness by conducting a security assessment of your facility by yourself or hire outside professionals to assist you in this process. Make sure that your phone lines are protected and have a service interruption alarm. Consider installing exterior strobe lights with alarms where neighbors and law enforcement can see them if an unwanted intrusion occurs.

Construct structural barriers such as steel doors and barred windows; install fencing and access gates so that law enforcement and passers-by can view the property. Discuss your lighting plan with local law enforcement.

Establish a procedure for locking up your facility and implement a key control for locked containers, equipment, vehicles and vessels.

**Secure pesticides, application equipment and vehicles:** Focus on preventing intruder access to mixing, loading and application tools. Know your inventory and do not allow unattended loaded trailers on site and inspect tanks visually each morning.

**Reduce the risk of damage:** Be aware of how a computer hacker or a physical intrusion by a vandal or saboteur could literally stop your business within 30 seconds. Now is the time to look at your facility and predict how an illegal action may be carried out and paralyze your business.

**Develop procedures and policies that support your security needs:** Use standardized hiring procedures and inventory management policies, and adopt advance emergency response procedures. Think about escorting all customers or visitors in storage yards or near loading docks. If you have a lot of employees establish an ID badge system to distinguish your employees. And remember to post signs indicating: no trespassing, private property, closed circuit TV surveillance, patrolled, no vehicles beyond this point, etc.

**Immediately report** any missing inventory, threats or suspicious behavior to local law enforcement authorities.

If you need assistance in evaluating your facility call your local police department, Sheriff's office or the New York State Police. Many of these agencies have "Crime Prevention" Officers, who can work with you on home and business security and have free information on crime prevention

*Sources: Offices of the Sheriff – Monroe, Livingston and Wyoming Counties; New York State Police – Troop E*

*Original Printing: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County, Rochester, NY*