

Officials seek cheap method to dispose of dangerous chemicals

BY SUSAN KAUFFMAN
Staff Writer

Orange County agricultural experts and state pesticide specialists are devising a way for county homeowners and farmers to safely and legally dispose of pesticides and

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cans with pension plans would see a more direct effect. These individuals indirectly own much of the nation's stock through the mutual funds that make up retirement pensions, he said. The crash could have an adverse effect mainly on people close to retirement, he said.

The stock market was a little closer to normal by Tuesday. The Dow Jones closed up at 102.27, which experts said was expected.

"I'd be surprised if it would go down much more," Stegeman said.

Economists and financial analysts offered speculation on why the market plunged.

"The market was greatly overvalued," Stegeman said. "A lot of people were just waiting for a signal."

The most important signal was the rise in the interest rate, he said. The U.S. bombing of Iranian oil platforms in the Persian Gulf on Monday and the huge trade deficit also were contributing factors, he said.

Rogers said, "(The event in) the Persian Gulf was the freshest bad news that contributed to it."

He said other factors affecting the drop included the increasing interest rates, the weak U.S. dollar, and the high trade and budget deficits.

"They all came together... (Monday) and gripped the market at once," Rogers said.

chemicals without paying a small fortune.

Improper use and disposal of over-the-counter pesticides and industrial strength insect, rodent or fungi poisons used by farmers constitute a potential safety and health problem, said William McClelland, pesticide and hazardous specialist with the state Food and Drug Administration.

"Even though pesticides such as DDT have long been banned, millions of pounds were made and lots of farmers still have it in barns," said McClelland.

The federal government halted production of DDT, an organic chlorine, in 1972 when it was discovered that the chemical moved up through the food chain, said John Smith, a state pesticide expert.

Used motor oil and some types of unused household bleach must also be properly disposed of because they can be harmful to the environment, said Bill Mainous, director of the county agricultural extension office.

Hazardous waste disposal is expensive. Regulated disposal haulers generally require a minimal transportation fee of \$1,500 to send a transfer truck for waste, said Jewel Morris of the Environmental Protection Agency in Raleigh.

A joint committee of state, county and city waste officials will meet this

winter to propose ways to organize a county-wide collection day or days when residents can drop off chemicals at a designated site, Mainous said. He will be involved in educating the public about the hazardous wastes and publicizing collection days.

"The homeowner really is stuck," McClelland said. "He can hang on to the material or give it away. If he absolutely must get rid of it, he has to pay a disposal company. I hate to see someone pay \$1,000 to have a quart of DDT hauled away."

The Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1980 prompted changes in the state law that placed more severe restrictions

on wastes that can legally go into landfills. What could have been thrown in the garbage can and carried to the city dump in the past must now be hauled to disposal sites authorized by the EPA.

Mainous estimated a one-day waste pick-up would cost \$40,000. McClelland concurred with the estimate, but added that it could possibly be higher.

The tab would probably be picked up by the state, which is working with a limited two-year budget of \$250,000, McClelland said.

"The whole area of hazardous waste involves a lot of financial cost, and penalties for incorrect handling

can be substantial," McClelland said.

The human and health costs of ignoring potential hazards are also great.

"In certain cases chronic exposure to pesticides could cause severe medical problems, even death," McClelland said.

But not everyone is aware of hazards.

"There's a full range of pesticide users — those who are absolutely terrified for fear of getting some skin burn from holding a closed container, to those with a mentality that says this is dangerous to rodents and insects but not toxic to humans," McClelland said.

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