

## New Farm Chemical Use Laws in Victoria

Farmers and contractors using agricultural and veterinary chemicals applied to land, crops and livestock are now required to make specified records of all chemical use within 48 hours of the use. They must now also notify of any intention to use aerial and mister spraying near certain sensitive locations including schools and hospitals.

Department of Primary Industries Senior Chemical Standards Officer, Les Toohey, said that the new requirements reflect community expectations for managing the risks to health, trade, environment and animal welfare from the use of farm chemicals. Industry led quality assurance programs already mandate chemical use record keeping and the new regulations will ensure a consistent standard across Victoria.

Prior to the new regulations coming into force on 24th July 2007 it was only necessary for farmers to keep records of particular high risk groups of agricultural chemicals including Schedule 7 DANGEROUS POISONS.

For stock animals there are new specific requirements to record treatment with Hormonal Growth Promotants (HGPs), Schedule 4 Poisons and any veterinary chemical that has an applicable Withholding Period.

While the new record requirements for agricultural chemicals apply to a wider range of products, they have been simplified with less information needed to be noted. "For instance, people using poison baits or fumigants and sprays within structures are no longer required to record weather details," said Mr Toohey.

There are a few exemptions from the new record keeping laws. These include the use of any household and home garden products and the application of chemicals through small hand-held manually operated sprayers. The new requirement to record use of veterinary chemicals only applies to stock animals, and not to companion animals.

Land managers intending to use aerial or mister spraying within 200 metres of schools, hospitals, aged care services or children's services must now notify the pilot or mister operator in writing of the existence and location of the facility.

For the purpose of the new regulations a mister has been defined to include any fan assisted sprayer including a mist blower, orchard sprayer, air blast sprayer, air shear sprayer or any other sprayer producing fine or very fine spray quality.

"The purpose of this new regulation is to give the manager of the facility the necessary information and opportunity to take steps to avoid potential risks to what are sensitive areas within our community," said Mr Toohey.

Spraying is not allowed to commence until at least 24 hours after information about the intended spraying time and the chemical details are provided by the pilot or operator to the landholder. The landholder must then provide the details about the proposed spraying to the school principal or facility site manager at least 12 hours before the spraying is to commence.

Further information on the new chemical use requirements including a free record keeping template are available from the DPI Customer Service Centre on 136186 or visit the DPI website at [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/chemicalstandards](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/chemicalstandards).