Proper storage of pesticides by the smallholder farmer

Recognize the problem
Pesticides are used extensively in Ghana by farmers for the control of weeds, insects and diseases. Some farmers do not store these chemicals appropriately and as a result they increase the exposure for themselves, their families and livestock to these dangerous chemicals. Proper pesticide storage helps to prolong the effectiveness of the pesticide, while at the same time protecting the health of people, animals and the environment.

Background
Proper pesticide storage and knowledge on how to deal with accidental spillages reduce the chances of having an accidental release of pesticides in the environment, which can cause contamination of water, food and feed, for humans and animals. There is no need to expose yourself and your family to the toxic effects of pesticides before you've even begun to apply them in the field. It is very important to read the label of the pesticide carefully and store each pesticide as per the label specification and general pesticide storage recommendations.

Management
• Pesticides should be stored out of the reach of children, unauthorized persons and animals by placing them under lock and key
• They should not be kept under beds in bedrooms, in the kitchen or in any storage area where food, animal feed, human medicine, veterinary supplies, seed, fertilizer or other stored products are kept, due to the risk of contamination
• Storage materials should be made of fire resistant robust materials such as an old trunk or metal drum. Metal cabinets placed at least 5ft above ground and metal shelves are easier to decontaminate
• Pesticides should be kept in their original containers to prevent accidents and should never be stored in food or drink containers
• Powdered formulations should be stored separately from liquid ones with powdered ones preferably stored above liquid ones
• The storage area should be cool, dry and out of sunlight with adequate ventilation
• Purchase sufficient quantities for the season to avoid prolonged storage

When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Ghana

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