

Big Changes in Agriculture

Guy Chadwick, a farmer out of Ropesville, Texas, said he did not know of the regulations the Environmental Protection Agency has implemented until doing many hours of research on the matter. He and his family have been farmers for many years from the Carolinas and nothing like this has ever caught their attention before. He feels a sense of outrage since he relies on the land to provide his income.

“Why the EPA is getting heavily involved in our practices, I don’t know. As farmers we depend on the land to make our income and we were raised to treat the land with respect for that purpose, which is why these new regulations come as a shock,” said Chadwick.

Chadwick said when he discovered the price and fines of these new regulations, he believed that farmers have begun to grow food for the world, and the more the EPA is charging farmers, the higher the cost of food. Chadwick has prided himself on his land and his effort to take care

of it and feels that the government should not tell him how to run his operation. He also believes many farmers and ranchers will take his side on this matter.

The agency’s recent gain in funding led to certain

techniques and practices normally used for those in the oil industry being applied in the agricultural arena. These techniques include building pit liners around any oil by-product container, ground water remediation plans, and Spill Prevention & Controlled Countermeasures (SPCC) plans. The Clean Water Act has

been changed over the years but is now requiring all landowners who have any chemical or oil by-products on site to follow these new rules.

For those to whom the regulations apply, they must know what it means to be in compliance. There are several preventative measures to keep products out of navigable waters and keep the soil clean.

The most crucial part of this process is having a SPCC plan. This plan notes all chemicals on site and what needs to be done to keep them in compliance. Shane Currie, of Talon, said this is cheap considering what you face by being out of compliance. Currie has been working in the environmental field

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Example of fuel tanks on a farm out of compliance.
Image from Brink, Inc



Tanks that are out of compliance.

for around 20 years. He has first-hand knowledge from working in his field on what fines and issues someone who is out of compliance could face.

“Farmers should definitely take these regulations seriously, as fines range from \$500 to 35,000 a day depending on the offense” Currie said.

Currie has many years experience writing these plans and getting people back into compliance, but this is the first time in his 20 years of environmental work that he has seen the EPA bring these regulations to farmers.


“The EPA will actually drive around looking for those out of compliance, so it is crucial that people affected remain proactive,” said Currie.

These regulations took affect in 2013 and continue to remain active. The amount of product you have on site depends on what tier of the EPA, with tier one being the lowest and tier three being the highest. The gallons and pounds of chemicals on site determine what tier you and your farm will be listed under. As Shane has said, fines can range from \$500 to 30,000 and that is issued per day

that the land is out of compliance and has no SPCC plan. These fines could shut many farmers and ranchers down permanently.

These regulations are only a year old, but the EPA has made it known that they are here to stay. Since these regulations are so new, it is too soon to tell the effect it will have on the industry, but one thing is for sure - they are here to stay. As the years go by, the need for clean water, soil, and vehicles will continue to become a major issue in the political spotlight.

Chadwick keeps his land’s prosperity priority.

“I make sure I am clean with my chemicals and fuel that I use so that it does not damage the land I have in crops or the water that I drink from my property.” 

Colton Dann
CYPRESS, TEXAS

