

# Clemson University Department of Pesticide Regulation

## Warning: Carefully Consider Pesticide Sales Before Making a Purchase!

### *A Guide for Agricultural Growers & Pesticide Applicators*



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Bulletin 11

The regulatory agency responsible for registering pesticides in South Carolina is warning consumers to be careful about purchasing pesticides over the phone.



The Clemson University Department of Pesticide Regulation usually sees an increase in the number of telephone pesticide solicitations each spring. Unfortunately, these products are not always the bargain that they appear to be. Often they are highly diluted and when compared to concentrate available from your local suppliers, it may end up costing much more.

#### **Are all Pesticides Sold Over the Phone a Rip Off?**

Buying from companies or salespeople that you know (either in person or by phone) is usually not a problem. Buying from an unsolicited caller without first obtaining written product information, such as a pesticide label, often does cause problems. Customers that are targeted by these sales techniques may include farmers, greenhouse / nursery operators, and golf courses, as well as commercial or public sector maintenance programs. In many cases, these sales efforts involve herbicides, but other types of pesticides may be offered, as well.

#### **What are Some Typical Sales Pitches?**

A typical sales pitch is to compare their products with a well-known brand—"It works just like Roundup®!" Pesticides like these that are sold over the phone are seldom, if ever, a good deal. These products are usually "ready-to-use"

formulations, and while they do have the same active ingredient as the well-known brand, they are mostly water. It is always less expensive to buy concentrate from a reputable supplier and mix it yourself than to buy a ready-to-use formulation from an unknown source.

Making the sale COD (Cash on delivery) is another typical aspect of these sales. According to customers who have received these calls, the telemarketer usually cannot or will not answer questions or provide a label or other printed information. When presented with these questions, these telemarketers will usually respond by saying, "You must act now to receive a special price!"



### How Can I be Sure about the Product I am Purchasing?

Remember, it's best to get a copy of the pesticide label and read it carefully before you purchase anything. This way, you can make sure that advertised uses (or claims made by a sales representative) are legal and accurate before you buy.

If a seller (1) cannot or will not answer your questions; (2) will not provide you with a label and a material safety data sheet (MSDS); or (3) says that you "must act now" to receive a special price or offer, you should carefully consider the transaction.


Remember: what a salesperson tells you and what is on the label may be very different.

### Where Can I Get More Information?

To find out whether or not a product is registered in South Carolina, contact the Department of Pesticide Regulation at 864.646.2150, or visit our website at <http://www.clemson.edu/dpr> and click on the Registrants and Products link.

### Checklist for Purchasing Pesticides

The following guidelines should be considered before you purchase any pesticides over the phone from unsolicited salespersons and telemarketers.

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- ▶ As the saying goes, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."
  - ▶ If they will not mail you information about a product before you buy it, then don't buy it.
  - ▶ If you do not know the salesperson, think twice about buying pesticides from them.
  - ▶ If they say this is a one time offer—you must buy today...don't.
  - ▶ Check with the Department of Pesticide Regulation if you are unsure about a product's registration.

As part of Regulatory and Public Service Programs at Clemson University, the Department of Pesticide Regulation has been serving the State of South Carolina for over a century. We license pesticide dealers, private and commercial applicators, and pest-control businesses. We register pesticide products for use in the State and perform quality assurance analyses of pesticide formulations. DPR protects farm workers from pesticides by administering the Federal Worker Protection Standard in South Carolina.

The Department of Pesticide Regulation administers the State Groundwater Protection Plan, the Pesticide Container Recycling Program, and the Integrated Pest Management in Schools Initiative. The Federal regulations that protect endangered species from pesticides have also been assigned to the DPR.

We are the enforcement and investigative authority in the State for pesticide use, alleged pesticide misuse, substandard termite treatments, and the Wood Infestation Report required in most real estate transactions.

<http://www.clemson.edu/dpr>