

**U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 7
11201 RENNER BOULEVARD
LENEXA, KANSAS 66219
BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATOR**

In the Matter of:

Wells Ag Supply, LLC

Respondent.

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Docket No. FIFRA-07-2022-0121

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL ORDER

Preliminary Statement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7 (EPA or Complainant), and Wells Ag Supply, LLC (Respondent) have agreed to a settlement of this action before the filing of a Complaint, and thus this action is simultaneously commenced and concluded pursuant to Rules 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) of the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits, 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2).

Jurisdiction

1. This proceeding is an administrative action for the assessment of civil penalties initiated pursuant to Section 14 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), 7 U.S.C. § 136l and in accordance with the Consolidated Rules of Practice.
2. This Consent Agreement and Final Order serves as notice that EPA has reason to believe that Respondent has violated Section 12 of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136j.

Parties

3. Complainant, by delegation from the Administrator of EPA, the Regional Administrator of EPA Region 7, and the Director of the Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division of EPA Region 7, is the Branch Chief of the Chemical Branch of EPA Region 7.
4. The Respondent is Wells Ag Supply, LLC, a limited liability company in good standing under the laws of, and doing business in, the state of Iowa.

Statutory and Regulatory Background

5. Congress enacted FIFRA in 1947 and amended it in 1972 and in 1996. The general purpose of FIFRA is to provide the basis for regulation, sale, distribution and use of pesticides in the United States. 7 U.S.C. 136 *et. seq.*

6. Section 2(t) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(t), defines “pest” to mean (1) any insect, rodent, nematode, fungus, weed, or (2) any other form of terrestrial or aquatic plant or animal life or virus, bacteria, or other micro-organism (except viruses, bacteria, or other micro-organism on or in living man or other living animals) which the Administrator declares to be a pest under Section 25(c)(1).

7. Section 2(u) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(u), defines “pesticide” to mean any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest.

8. Section 2(s) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(s), defines “person” to mean any individual, partnership, association, corporation, or any organized group of persons whether incorporated or not.

9. Section 2(gg) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(gg), defines “to distribute or sell” to mean to distribute, sell, offer for sale, hold for distribution, hold for sale, hold for shipment, ship, deliver for shipment, release for shipment, or receive and (having so received) deliver or offer to deliver.

10. Section 2(p) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(p), defines “label” to mean the written, printed, or graphic matter on, or attached to, the pesticide or device or any of its containers or wrappers.

11. Section 2(y) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(y), defines “registrant” to mean a person who has registered any pesticide pursuant to the provisions of this subchapter.

12. Section 2(dd) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(dd), defines “establishment” to mean any place where a pesticide or device or active ingredient used in producing a pesticide is produced, or held, for distribution or sale.

13. Section 2(w) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(w), defines “produce” to mean to manufacture, prepare, compound, propagate, or process any pesticide or device or active ingredient used in producing a pesticide.

14. 40 C.F.R. § 165.3 further defines “produce” to mean to manufacture, prepare, propagate, compound, or process any pesticide, including any pesticide produced pursuant to Section 5 of FIFRA, and any active ingredient or device, or to package, repackage, label, relabel, or otherwise change the container of any pesticide or device.

15. 40 C.F.R. § 165.3 defines “repackage” to mean to transfer a pesticide formulation from one container to another without a change in the composition of the formulation, the labeling content, or the product's EPA registration number, for sale or distribution.

16. 40 C.F.R. § 165.3 defines “refiller” to mean a person who engages in the activity of repackaging pesticide product into refillable containers.

17. 40 C.F.R. § 152.3 defines “pesticide product” to mean a pesticide in the particular form (including composition, packaging, and labeling) in which the pesticide is, or is intended to be, distributed or sold. The term includes any physical apparatus used to deliver or apply the pesticide if distributed or sold with the pesticide.

18. Section 2(q)(1) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(q)(1), states, in pertinent part, a pesticide is misbranded if (E) any word, statement, or other information required by or under authority of this subchapter to appear on the label or labeling is not prominently placed thereon with such conspicuousness (as compared with other words, statements, designs, or graphic matter in the labeling) and in such terms as to render it likely to be read and understood by the ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase and use; or (F) the labeling accompanying it does not contain directions for use which are necessary for effecting the purpose for which the product is intended and if complied with, together with any requirements imposed under section 136a(d) of this title, are adequate to protect health and the environment.

19. 40 C.F.R. § 156.10 provides requirements for labels and labeling for pesticide products.

20. 40 C.F.R. § 165.67 provides requirements for refillers of pesticides.

21. Section 12(a)(2)(S) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136j(a)(2)(S), states it shall be unlawful for any person to violate any regulation issued under Section 136a(a) or 136q of FIFRA.

22. Section 12(a)(1)(E) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136j(a)(1)(E), states it shall be unlawful for any person in any state to distribute or sell to any person any pesticide which is adulterated or misbranded.

23. Section 14(a)(1) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136l(a)(1), authorizes a civil penalty of not more than \$5,000 for each offense. The Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015, 28 U.S.C. § 2461, and implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 19, increased these statutory maximum penalties \$21,805, for violations that occur after November 2, 2015, and for which penalties are assessed on or after January 12, 2022.

General Factual Allegations

24. Respondent is and at all times referred to herein was, a “person” within the meaning of FIFRA.

25. Syngenta Crop Protection, LLC is the registrant of the pesticide Syngenta Acuron Herbicide, EPA Reg. No. 100-1466.

26. Respondent owns and operates the registered establishment located at 55560 150th Avenue, Fonda, IA.

27. Respondent stores and repackages the registered pesticide Syngenta Acuron Herbicide, EPA Reg. No. 100-1466 at the registered establishment located at 55560 150th Avenue, Fonda, IA.

28. On or about May 5 and May 11, 2021, the Iowa Department of Agriculture conducted an inspection at Respondent's establishment located at 55560 150th Avenue, Fonda, IA.

29. At the time of the inspection, the label on the bulk tank that contained Syngenta Acuron Herbicide, EPA Reg. No. 100-1466 was torn. As a result, the label was missing information on first aid, precautionary statements, and portions of storage and disposal.

Allegations of Violations

30. The Complainant hereby states and alleges that Respondent has violated FIFRA and federal regulations promulgated thereunder, as follows:

Count 1

31. The facts stated in Paragraphs 24 through 29 above are herein incorporated.

32. Section 2(q)(1) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(q)(1), states, in pertinent part, a pesticide is misbranded if (E) any word, statement, or other information required by or under authority of this subchapter to appear on the label or labeling is not prominently placed thereon with such conspicuousness (as compared with other words, statements, designs, or graphic matter in the labeling) and in such terms as to render it likely to be read and understood by the ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase and use; or (F) the labeling accompanying it does not contain directions for use which are necessary for effecting the purpose for which the product is intended and if complied with, together with any requirements imposed under section 136a(d) of FIFRA, are adequate to protect health and the environment.

33. Section 12(a)(1)(E) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136j(a)(1)(E), states it shall be unlawful for any person in any state to distribute or sell to any person any pesticide which is adulterated or misbranded.

34. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 156.10(a)(1), every pesticide product shall bear a label containing the information specified by the Act and the regulations in this part. The contents of a label must show clearly and prominently (1) hazard and precautionary statements as prescribed in subpart D for human and domestic animal hazards and subpart E for environmental hazards and (2) directions for use.

35. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 156.10(i)(2), the directions for use shall include the following, under the headings “Directions for Use”: specific directions concerning the storage, residue removal and disposal of the pesticide and its container.

36. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 156.10(a)(2)(i), all words, statements, graphic representations, designs or other information required on the labeling by FIFRA or the regulations in this part must be clearly legible to a person with normal vision, and must be placed with such conspicuousness (as compared with other words, statements, designs, or graphic matter on the labeling) and expressed in such terms as to render it likely to be read and understood by the ordinary individual under customary conditions of purchase and use.

37. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 156.10(a)(4)(ii)(B), when pesticide products are stored in bulk containers, whether mobile or stationary, which remain in the custody of the user, a copy of the label of labeling, including all appropriate directions for use, shall be securely attached to the container in the immediate vicinity of the discharge control valve.

38. 40 C.F.R. § 165.67(c) states that repackaging a pesticide product for distribution or sale without either obtaining a registration or meeting all of the conditions set forth in this section is a violation of Section 12 of FIFRA.

39. Section 12(a)(2)(S) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136j(a)(2)(S), states it shall be unlawful for any person to violate any regulation issued under Section 136a(a) or 136q of FIFRA.

40. The inspection revealed that Respondent repackages Syngenta Acuron Herbicide, EPA Reg. No. 100-1466 and is therefore a refiller as defined by 40 C.F.R. § 165.3.

41. The inspection revealed that Respondent stored Syngenta Acuron Herbicide, EPA Reg. No. 100-1466, in a bulk container at its registered establishment.

42. The inspection revealed that the label used by Respondent on the bulk container of Syngenta Acuron Herbicide was torn and was missing first aid, precautionary statements and portions of storage and disposal.

43. Respondent’s failure to include first aid, precautionary statements and portions of storage and disposal on the bulk container label for Syngenta Acuron Herbicide is a violation of 40 C.F.R. §§ 156.10(a)(1), (i)(2), (a)(2)(i), and (a)(4)(ii)(B) and therefore constitutes unlawful misbranding pursuant to 7 U.S.C. § 136j(a)(1)(E), for which Wells Ag Supply, LLC and Respondent are both liable pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 165.67(c).

44. The inspection revealed that Respondent did not meet the requirements of 40 C.F.R. § 165.67(c) because it neither (1) obtained a registration for Syngenta Acuron Herbicide, nor (2) met the conditions of 40 C.F.R. § 165.70(b) because the pesticide product was not labeled with the product's label with no changes.

45. Wells Ag Supply, LLC's failure to comply with the requirements of 40 C.F.R. § 165.67(c) is a violation of Section 12(a)(2)(S) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136(a)(2)(S).

CONSENT AGREEMENT

46. For the purpose of this proceeding, as required by 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b)(2), Respondent:

- (a) admits the jurisdictional allegations set forth herein;
- (b) neither admits nor denies the specific factual allegations stated herein;
- (c) consents to the assessment of a civil penalty, as stated herein;
- (d) consents to the issuance of any specified compliance or corrective action order;
- (e) consents to any conditions specified herein;
- (f) consents to any stated Permit Action;
- (g) waives any right to contest the allegations set forth herein; and
- (h) waives its rights to appeal the Final Order accompanying this Consent Agreement.

47. Respondent consents to the issuance of this Consent Agreement and Final Order and consents for the purposes of settlement to the payment of the civil penalty specified herein.

48. Respondent and EPA agree to the terms of this Consent Agreement and Final Order and Respondent agrees to comply with the terms specified herein.

49. Respondent and EPA agree to conciliate this matter without the necessity of a formal hearing and to bear their respective costs and attorneys' fees.

50. Respondent consents to receiving the filed Consent Agreement and Final Order electronically at the following e-mail address: *grant@wellsagsupply.com*.

Penalty Payment

51. Respondent agrees that, in settlement of the claims alleged herein, Respondent shall pay a civil penalty of seven thousand, six hundred and seventy-six dollars and eighty cents (\$7,676.80), as set forth below.

52. Respondent shall pay the penalty within thirty (30) days of the effective date of the Final Order. Such payment shall identify Respondent by name and docket number and shall be by certified or cashier's check made payable to the "United States Treasury" and sent to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Fines and Penalties
Cincinnati Finance Center
PO Box 979077
St. Louis, Missouri 63197-9000

or by alternate payment method described at <http://www.epa.gov/financial/makepayment>.

53. A copy of the check or other information confirming payment shall simultaneously be sent to the following:

Regional Hearing Clerk
R7_Hearing_Clerk_Filings@epa.gov; and

Katherine Kacsur, Attorney
kacsur.katherine@epa.gov.

54. Respondent understands that its failure to timely pay any portion of the civil penalty may result in the commencement of a civil action in Federal District Court to recover the full remaining balance, along with penalties and accumulated interest. In such case, interest shall begin to accrue on a civil or stipulated penalty from the date of delinquency until such civil or stipulated penalty and any accrued interest are paid in full. 31 C.F.R. § 901.9(b)(1). Interest will be assessed at a rate of the United States Treasury Tax and loan rates in accordance with 31 U.S.C. § 3717. Additionally, a charge will be assessed to cover the costs of debt collection including processing and handling costs, and a non-payment penalty charge of six (6) percent per year compounded annually will be assessed on any portion of the debt which remains delinquent more than ninety (90) days after payment is due. 31 U.S.C. § 3717(e)(2).

Effect of Settlement and Reservation of Rights

55. Full payment of the penalty proposed in this Consent Agreement shall only resolve Respondent's liability for federal civil penalties for the violations alleged herein. Complainant reserves the right to take any enforcement action with respect to any other violations of FIFRA or any other applicable law.

56. The effect of settlement described in the immediately preceding paragraph is conditioned upon the accuracy of Respondent's representations to EPA, as memorialized in the paragraph directly below.

57. Respondent certifies by the signing of this Consent Agreement that it is presently in compliance with all requirements of FIFRA and its implementing regulations.

58. Full payment of the penalty proposed in this Consent Agreement shall not in any case affect the right of the Agency or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law. This Consent Agreement and Final Order does not waive, extinguish or otherwise affect Respondent's obligation to comply with all applicable provisions of FIFRA and regulations promulgated thereunder.

59. Complainant reserves the right enforce the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.

60. Nothing contained in this Consent Agreement and Final Order shall alter or otherwise affect Respondent's obligation to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local environmental statutes and regulations and applicable permits.

General Provisions

61. By signing this Consent Agreement, the undersigned representative of Respondent certifies that he or she is fully authorized to execute and enter into the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement and has the legal capacity to bind the party he or she represents to this Consent Agreement.

62. This Consent Agreement shall not dispose of the proceeding without a final order from the Regional Judicial Officer or Regional Administrator ratifying the terms of this Consent Agreement. This Consent Agreement and Final Order shall be effective upon filing by the Regional Hearing Clerk for EPA, Region 7. Unless otherwise stated, all time periods stated herein shall be calculated in calendar days from such date.

63. The penalty specified herein shall represent civil penalties assessed by EPA and shall not be deductible for purposes of Federal, State and local taxes.

64. This Consent Agreement and Final Order shall apply to and be binding upon Respondent and Respondent's agents, successors and/or assigns. Respondent shall ensure that all contractors, employees, consultants, firms, or other persons or entities acting for Respondent with respect to matters included herein comply with the terms of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.

RESPONDENT
Wells Ag Supply, LLC

Date: 11-18-2022

By: _____



Grant Wells

Print Name

Owner, CEO of Wells Ag Supply

Title

COMPLAINANT
U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Date: _____

Candace Bednar
Chemical Branch Chief
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division

Katherine Kacsur
Office of Regional Counsel

FINAL ORDER

Pursuant to Section 14(a) of FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. § 136l(a), and the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits, 40 C.F.R. Part 22, the foregoing Consent Agreement resolving this matter is hereby ratified and incorporated by reference into this Final Order.

Respondent is ORDERED to comply with all of the terms of the Consent Agreement. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.31(b), the effective date of the foregoing Consent Agreement and this Final Order is the date on which this Final Order is filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Karina Borromeo
Regional Judicial Officer

Date

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order was sent this day in the following manner to the addressees:

Copy via Email to Complainant:

kacsur.katherine@epa.gov

Copy via Email to Respondent:

grant@wellsagsupply.com

Dated this _____ day of _____, _____.

Signed