



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

JAN 07 2013

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Richard W. Sobalvarro
Rajkowski Hansmeier LTD
11 - 7th Avenue North
P.O. Box 1433
St. Cloud, Minnesota 56302

Re: Harvest Land Cooperative, Morgan, Minnesota
Consent Agreement and Final Order
Docket No. **CERCLA-05-2013-0007**

Dear Mr. Sobalvarro:

Enclosed please find one copy of the fully executed Consent Agreement and Final Order (CAFO) in resolution of the above case. The U.S. EPA filed original CAFO with the Regional Hearing Clerk on January 7, 2013.

Please pay the CERCLA civil penalty in the amount of \$3,885 in the manner prescribed in paragraph 24 and 25, reference your check with the CERCLA billing document number 2751330B007 and the docket number CERCLA-05-2013-0007

The payment is due on February 6, 2013.

Please feel free to contact Ruth McNamara at (312) 353-3193 or by e-mail at mcnamara.ruth@epa.gov if you have any questions regarding the enclosed documents. Please direct any legal questions to Mary McAuliffe, Associate Regional Counsel, at (312) 886-6237 or by e-mail at mcauliffe.mary@epa.gov. Thank you for your assistance in resolving this matter.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Hans, Chief
Chemical Emergency Preparedness
and Prevention Section

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5**

In the Matter of:)	Docket No. CERCLA-05-2013-0007
)	
Harvest Land Cooperative)	Proceeding to Assess a Civil Penalty Under
Morgan, Minnesota)	Section 109(b) of the Comprehensive
)	Environmental Response, Compensation,
Respondent.)	and Liability Act
_____)	



JAN - 7 2013

Consent Agreement and Final Order
Preliminary Statement

REGIONAL HEARING CLERK
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AGENCY

1. This is an administrative action commenced and concluded under Section 109(b) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 9609(b), and Sections 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) and (3) of the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits (Consolidated Rules) as codified at 40 C.F.R. Part 22.

2. The Complainant is, by lawful delegation, the Chief of the Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Branch, United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), Region 5.

3. Respondent is Harvest Land Cooperative, a corporation doing business in the State of Minnesota.

4. Where the parties agree to settle one or more causes of action before the filing of a complaint, the administrative action may be commenced and concluded simultaneously by the issuance of a consent agreement and final order (CAFO). 40 C.F.R. § 22.13(b).

5. The parties agree that settling this action without the filing of a complaint or the adjudication of any issue of fact or law is in their interest and in the public interest.

6. Respondent consents to the assessment of the civil penalty specified in this CAFO, and to the terms of this CAFO.

Jurisdiction and Waiver of Right to Hearing

7. Respondent admits the jurisdictional allegations in this CAFO and neither admits nor denies the factual allegations in this CAFO.

8. Respondent waives its right to request a hearing as provided at 40 C.F.R. § 22.15(c), any right to contest the allegations in this CAFO, and its right to appeal this CAFO.

Statutory and Regulatory Background

9. Section 103(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9603(a), requires any person in charge of a facility to immediately notify the National Response Center (NRC) as soon as that person has knowledge of any release of a hazardous substance from the facility in an amount equal to or greater than the hazardous substance's reportable quantity.

10. Section 103(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9603(a), provides a mechanism to alert federal agencies that a response action may be necessary to prevent deaths or injuries to emergency responders, facility personnel and the local community. A delay or failure to notify could seriously hamper the government's response to an emergency and pose serious threats to human health and the environment.

11. Section 109(b) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9609(b), authorizes U.S. EPA to assess a civil penalty of up to \$25,000 per day of violation of CERCLA Section 103. The Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996, 31 U.S.C. § 3701 note, and its implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 19 increased the statutory maximum penalty to \$32,500 per day of violation that occurred after March 15, 2004 through January 12, 2009 and to \$37,500 per day of violation for violations that occurred after January 12, 2009.

Factual Allegations and Alleged Violations

12. Respondent is a “person” as that term is defined under Section 101(21) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(21).

13. At all times relevant to this Complaint, Respondent was in charge of the ammonia nurse tank located at Section 30, Birch Cooley Township, Renville County, Minnesota (facility).

14. Respondent’s facility consists of equipment, storage container, or any site or area where a hazardous substance has been deposited, stored, disposed of, or placed, or otherwise come to be located.

15. Respondent’s facility is a “facility” as that term is defined under Section 101(9) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(9).

16. Ammonia CAS# 7664-41-7 is a “hazardous substance” as that term is defined under Section 101(14) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(14).

17. Ammonia has a reportable quantity of 100 pounds, as indicated at 40 C.F.R. Part 302, Table 302.4.

18. On November 4, 2009, at or about 3:00 p.m., a release occurred from Respondent’s facility of approximately 1140 pounds of ammonia (the release).

19. In a 24 hour time period, the release of ammonia exceeded 100 pounds.

20. During the release, approximately 1140 pounds of ammonia spilled, leaked, emitted, emptied, discharged, escaped into the ambient air.

21. The release is a “release” as that term is defined under Section 101(22) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(22).

22. Respondent had knowledge of the release on November 4, 2009 at approximately 3:00 p.m.

Civil Penalty

23. Complainant has determined that an appropriate civil penalty to settle this action is \$3,885.00 for the CERCLA violation. In determining the penalty amount, Complainant considered the nature, circumstances, extent and gravity of the violation, Respondent's agreement to perform a supplemental environmental project, and with respect to Respondent, its ability to pay, prior history of violations, economic benefit or savings resulting from the violation and any other matters as justice may require. Complainant also considered U.S. EPA's Enforcement Response Policy for Sections 304, 311 and 312 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act and Section 103 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, dated September 30, 1999 (EPCRA/CERCLA Enforcement Response Policy).

24. Within 30 days after the effective date of this CAFO, Respondent must pay a \$3,855.00 civil penalty for the CERCLA violation. Respondent must pay the penalty by sending a cashier's or certified check, payable to "EPA Hazardous Substance Superfund," to:

U.S. EPA
Superfund Payments
Cincinnati Finance Center
P.O. Box 979076
St. Louis, MO 63197-9000

The check must note the following: In the Matter of Harvest Land Cooperative, the docket number of this CAFO, and the billing document number 2751330B007.

25. A transmittal letter, stating the Respondent's name, Respondent's complete address, the case docket number and the billing document number must accompany the payment.

Respondent must send a copy of the check and transmittal letter to:

Regional Hearing Clerk, (E-19J)
U.S. EPA, Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604

Ruth McNamara, (SC-5J)
Chemical Emergency Preparedness
and Prevention Section
U.S. EPA, Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604

Mary McAuliffe, (C-14J)
Office of Regional Counsel
U.S. EPA, Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604

26. This civil penalty is not deductible for federal tax purposes.

27. If Respondent does not timely pay the civil penalty or any stipulated penalties due under paragraph 39, below, U.S. EPA may bring an action to collect any unpaid portion of the penalty with interest, handling charges, nonpayment penalties and the United States enforcement expenses for the collection action. The validity, amount and appropriateness of the civil penalty are not reviewable in a collection action.

28. Pursuant to 31 C.F.R. § 901.9, Respondent must pay the following on any amount overdue under this CAFO. Interest will accrue on any amount overdue from the date the payment was due at a rate established pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 3717. Respondent must pay a \$15 handling charge each month that any portion of the penalty is more than 30 days past due. In addition, U.S. EPA will assess a 6 percent per year penalty on any principal amount 90 days past due.

Supplemental Environmental Project

29. Respondent must complete a supplemental environmental project (SEP) by providing hazardous materials response equipment to the local responders to reduce the risk to the community should a release occur.

30. Respondent must complete the SEP as follows:

- a. Purchase and provide to the Springfield Fire Department:
 - 1) A thermal imaging camera to detect heat;
 - 2) An extraction tube to extract bodies from hazardous situations;
 - 3) Slide hammer used to force the tube where needed;
 - 4) Rescue accessory kit that accompanies the rescue tube
 - 5) CMC USAR Task Force Kit including basket, ropes and harness used to rescue trapped individuals; and
 - 6) 12 Fire Vulcan LED vehicle mount rechargeable flashlights to be mounted in fire trucks.
- b. Purchase and provide to Springfield Public Utilities:
 - 1) A Altair 4x Multigas Detector with Data Logging, Charger, calibration Cap, Tubing & CD; used to detect gas leaks and determine the type of gas being released; and
 - 2) MSA Control, Flow 1000 SPI, used in conjunction with the gas detector.

31. Respondent must spend at least \$14,568.00 to complete the SEP.

32. Respondent certifies as follows:

I certify that Harvest Land is not required to perform or develop the SEP by any law, regulation, order, or agreement or as injunctive relief as of the date that I am signing this CAFO. I further certify that Harvest Land has not received, and is not negotiating to receive, credit for the SEP in any other enforcement action.

I certify that Harvest Land is not a party to any open federal financial assistance transaction that is funding or could be used to fund the same activity as the SEP. I further certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief after reasonable inquiry, there is no such open federal financial transaction that is funding or could be used to fund the same activity as the SEP, nor has the same activity been described in an unsuccessful federal financial assistance transaction proposal submitted to U.S. EPA within two years of the date that I am signing this CAFO (unless the project was barred from funding as statutorily ineligible). For purposes of this certification, the

term “open federal financial assistance transaction” refers to a grant, cooperative agreement, loan, federally-guaranteed loan guarantee or other mechanism for providing federal financial assistance whose performance period has not expired.

33. U.S. EPA may inspect the facility at any time to monitor Respondent’s compliance with this CAFO’s SEP requirements.

34. Respondent must submit a SEP completion report to U.S. EPA on or before March 31, 2013. This report must contain the following information:

- a. Detailed description of the SEP as completed;
- b. Description of any operating problems and the actions taken to correct the problems;
- c. Itemized costs of goods and services used to complete the SEP documented by copies of invoices, purchase orders or canceled checks that specifically identify and itemize the individual costs of the goods and services;
- d. Certification that Respondent has completed the SEP in compliance with this CAFO; and
- e. Description of the environmental and public health benefits resulting from the SEP (quantify the benefits and pollution reductions, if feasible).

35. Respondent must submit all notices and reports required by this CAFO by first class mail to Ruth McNamara at the address provided in paragraph 25 above.

36. In each report that Respondent submits as provided by this CAFO, it must certify that the report is true and complete by including the following statement signed by one of its officers:

I certify that I am familiar with the information in this document and that, based on my inquiry of those individuals responsible for obtaining the information; it is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I know that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fines and imprisonment for knowing violations.

37. Following receipt of the SEP completion report described in paragraph 34, above, U.S. EPA must notify Respondent in writing that:

- a. It has satisfactorily completed the SEP and the SEP report;
- b. There are deficiencies in the SEP as completed or in the SEP report and U.S. EPA will give Respondent 30 days to correct the deficiencies; or
- c. It has not satisfactorily completed the SEP or the SEP report and U.S. EPA will seek stipulated penalties under paragraph 39, below.

38. If U.S. EPA exercises option b, above, Respondent may object in writing to the deficiency notice within 10 days of receiving the notice. The parties will have 30 days from U.S. EPA's receipt of Respondent's objection to reach an agreement. If the parties cannot reach an agreement, U.S. EPA will give Respondent a written decision on its objection. Respondent will comply with any requirements that U.S. EPA imposes in its decision. If Respondent does not complete the SEP as required by U.S. EPA's decision, Respondent will pay stipulated penalties to the United States under paragraph 39, below.

39. If Respondent violates any requirement of this CAFO relating to the SEP, Respondent must pay stipulated penalties to the United States as follows:

- a. Except as provided in subparagraph b, below, if Respondent did not complete the SEP satisfactorily according to the requirements of this CAFO, Respondent must pay a penalty of \$14,568.00.
- b. If Respondent did not complete the SEP satisfactorily, but U.S. EPA determines that Respondent made good faith and timely efforts to complete the SEP and certified, with supporting documents, that it spent at least 90 percent of the amount set forth in paragraph 31, Respondent will not be liable for any stipulated penalty under subparagraph a, above.
- c. If Respondent completed the SEP satisfactorily, but spent less than 90 percent of the amount set forth in paragraph 31, Respondent must pay the difference between what was spent and \$14,568.00.

- d. If Respondent did not submit timely the SEP completion report Respondent must pay penalties in the following amounts for each day after the report was due until it submits the report:

<u>Penalty Per Violation Per Day</u>	<u>Period of Violation</u>
\$200	1st through 14th day
\$400	15th through 30th day
\$600	31st day and beyond

40. U.S. EPA's determinations of whether Respondent completed the SEP satisfactorily and whether Respondent made good faith and timely efforts to complete the SEP will bind Respondent.

41. Respondent must pay any stipulated penalties within 15 days of receiving U.S. EPA's written demand for the penalties. Respondent will use the method of payment specified in paragraphs 24 and 25, above, and will pay interest, handling charges and nonpayment penalties on any overdue amounts.

42. Any public statement that Respondent makes referring to the SEP must include the following language, "Respondent undertook this project under the settlement of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's enforcement action against Respondent for violations of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act release reporting requirements."

43. For federal income tax purposes, Respondent will neither capitalize into inventory or basis, nor deduct any costs or expenditures incurred in performing the SEP.

General Provisions

44. This CAFO resolves only Respondent's liability for federal civil penalties for the violations alleged in the CAFO.

45. This CAFO does not affect the rights of U.S. EPA or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law.

46. Respondent certifies that that it is complying with Section 103(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9603(a).

47. This CAFO does not affect Respondent's responsibility to comply with CERCLA and other applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations.

48. This CAFO is a "final order" for purposes of U.S. EPA's EPCRA/CERCLA Enforcement Response Policy.

49. The terms of this CAFO bind Respondent and its successors and assigns.

50. Each person signing this consent agreement certifies that he or she has the authority to sign for the party whom he or she represents and to bind that party to its terms.

51. Each party agrees to bear its own costs and attorney's fees in this action.

52. This CAFO constitutes the entire agreement between the parties.

**In the Matter of: Harvest Land Cooperative, Morgan, Minnesota
Docket No.**


Harvest Land Cooperative, Respondent

11/27/2012
Date


Name: Dennis Schreier
Title: General Manager
Harvest Land Cooperative

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Complainant

12/18/12
Date


Sharon Jaffess, Chief
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Branch
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5

12-18-12
Date


Richard C. Karl, Director
Superfund Division
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AGENCY
DEC 24 2012
OFFICE OF REGIONAL
COUNSEL

In the Matter of: Harvest Land Cooperative, Morgan, Minnesota
Docket No. CERCLA-05-2013-0007

Final Order

This Consent Agreement and Final Order, as agreed to by the parties, shall become effective immediately upon filing with the Regional Hearing Clerk. This Final Order concludes this proceeding pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.18 and 22.31. IT IS SO ORDERED.

12-21-12

Date



Susan Hedman
Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5

RECEIVED
JAN - 7 2013
REGIONAL HEARING CLERK
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AGENCY

In the Matter of: Harvest Land Cooperative, Morgan, Minnesota
Docket No. CERCLA-05-2013-0007

Certificate of Service

I, Ruth McNamara, certify that I filed the original and a copy of the Consent Agreement and Final Order (CAFO) with the Regional Hearing Clerk, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5, delivered a copy of the CAFO by intra-office mail to the Regional Judicial Officer, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5, and mailed a second original CAFO by first-class, postage prepaid, certified mail, return receipt requested, to Respondent by placing it in the custody of the United States Postal Service addressed as follows:

Richard W. Sobalvarro
Rajkowski Hansmeier
11 – 7th Avenue North
P.O. Box 1433
St. Cloud, Minnesota 56302



on the 17th day of January, 20123

Ruth McNamara
Ruth McNamara
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5