

For Immediate Release

April 18, 2005

**Clemson University conducts security vulnerability assessment
of agricultural product retail sales**

Washington, D.C. – Approximately 220 agricultural retail sales locations in South Carolina will be contacted as part of a statewide Homeland Defense survey by Clemson University to determine the vulnerability of fertilizer sales for misuse as explosives.

“Work will begin immediately using the Web-based Asmark Security Vulnerability Assessment,” said David Arnold, biosecurity assessment coordinator for Clemson University’s Regulatory and Public Service Programs.

The assessment will be used to increase security awareness, to establish a database of emergency contact information and to identify security issues for future consideration. Sites selected for the assessment are those that handle security-sensitive products. The assessment meets design criteria of the Center for Chemical Process Safety and is being made available to retailers through state fertilizer, agricultural chemical and agribusiness associations. Nationally, more than 2,400 facilities have performed such an assessment.

“This tool gives the agricultural retail industry an unprecedented opportunity to take the lead in defining how it will do its part for homeland security,” said Jack Eberspacher, president and CEO of the Agricultural Retailers Association. “It also allows the agricultural products retail sector to choose how to work with the Department of Homeland Security and to define its own security program before the government mandates it.”

Allen Summers, president of the Asmark Institute, worked with Clemson officials to provide the service through the Agribusiness Security Working group, a national partnership that is made up of the Agricultural Retailers Association, CropLife America and The Fertilizer Institute. Summers cited the experience as “a great example of how retailers benefit when there is a cooperative spirit. We expect the Asmark Institute to help facilitate more projects like this in the future.”

Kraig R. Naasz, president of The Fertilizer Institute, said, “Our industry is delighted to partner with Clemson University in assisting our industry’s agricultural retailers to avail themselves of this important security tool.”

Jay J. Vroom, president and CEO of CropLife America, said, “Clemson’s decision to use the SVA reinforces what we’ve been saying all along – that voluntary industry-led initiatives and partnerships are vital to homeland security efforts.”

Funding for this assessment is provided by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the S.C. Law Enforcement Division, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control and Clemson University Regulatory and Public Service Programs.

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