



SOUTH AFRICAN PEST CONTROL ASSOCIATION
SUID-AFRIKAANSE PLAAGBEHEERVERENIGING

SAPCA

SAPCA BULLETIN

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JAIL OR LABEL – THE CHOICE IS YOURS!



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**On behalf of AVCASA – the Association of Veterinary and Crop
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Civilised society created systems of order that include norms, standards, policies, laws and regulations. These regulatory mechanisms were not conceptualised to hamper development and progress but rather to assist it. It is surprising that certain elements of society regard “order” as a stumbling block for their own progress in life and it is these elements that threaten the good order of modern civilisation.

In the arena of pest control and pesticide, order is paramount for the protection of not only people but also the environment that is exposed to the products we apply to manage pests, weeds and diseases. Most countries have strong regulatory frameworks for pesticides and pest control. South Africa’s Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act, 1947 (Act No. 36 of 1947) has aged rather well and has certainly not shed any teeth since its inception in 1947. The only major sword hanging over the head of this paramount piece of legislation is its grey beard penalty clauses.

Despite its seniority amongst legislative tools in South Africa, Act 36 of 1947 has some solid foundations in terms of pesticides and how they may be used. Section 7 is very clear on the principle that all pesticide sold in the Republic must be registered under Act 36 of 1947, must be effective and must be of sound composition. It is an offense to try and sell, buy, use or dispense of an unregistered pesticide or a pesticide that fails to meet the specifications that were offered for the purposes of registration.

The Act also has supportive regulations of which the most prohibitive one is Regulation No. R1716 of 26 July 1991 that prohibits the use of any pesticide for any other purpose or any other manner than that specified on the label of such products. This regulation puts the handcuffs on anything that is not label directed. Going back to the Act we find another principle in the fine print of the sections: Section 7 (2) disallows the use of a pesticide by a pest control operator – that has to be registered as such – for any other purpose or any other manner than that specified on the label. A double barrel shotgun is less daunting than these two sub-pieces of legislation.

Many pest control operators operate without being registered as such by the Registrar of Act No. 36 of 1947. It is without doubt a major challenge as these rogue operators conn the public into believing their cheap services can be compared with those of reputable and registered pest control operators. The public should also understand that contracting such individuals for pest control work puts in harm’s way and should there be any repercussions they are as guilty as the unregistered operators. No decent pest control service can be offered at a cheap rate and the moment such an offer is made, the red flags should be raised.

One of the more troublesome transgressions is when even registered pest control operators buy pesticides that are only registered for agricultural use and apply those in the domestic environment. Chlorpyrifos that was withdrawn from the household, home garden, pest control and hospitality market due to the large number of human poisoning incidents is still used by a few registered pest control operators.

The question is whether there is any justification to use pesticides that are registered for agriculture in public health pest control. A simple answer is NO because South Africa has a very wide range of public health pesticides, some of which are registered exclusively for pest control operator use. There is no reason to buy and use a product that is registered for agricultural use.

An area which is also ridden with the roaches of the pest control industry is woodborer treatment. Any person who knows a bit about wood destroying organisms will agree that it is a highly specialised field of pest control, yet many rookies test their hand (unregistered) at this.

The golden highway for pest control operators is well paved with a plethora of efficient and professional products. Trying to take a short cut is a guarantee for failure, civil litigation and criminal prosecution. Stay on track with the ACT and its regulations and stay out of the overcrowded accommodation offered by Correctional services!