

DISPOSAL OF TREATED SOYBEAN SEED

Early-season diseases and insects are common problems in Midsouth and Mississippi soybean farming. Seed treatments have been and continue to be instrumental in controlling these risks. However, using these seed treatment products turns the seed into a material that must be handled and treated differently than untreated seed if they are not planted to produce a crop.

An [article](#) posted on the USB website discusses a dilemma that will be encountered by soybean producers on an increasing basis: preventing unplanted soybean seed that have been treated with crop protection pesticides from entering the commodity grain market. As stated in that article, “We need to properly handle and dispose of treated seed” to ensure that our customers do not reject imports of US commodity beans.

The above article does not give specifics for handling of treated seed that were not planted, so guidelines have been summarized from the links shown below. These summary points and the details found in the shown links can be used to make decisions about the management and/or prevention of this possible contamination in Mississippi soybean farming.

- **Green Manure Crops.** Planting treated seed on fallow or otherwise unused parcels of land is a cheap, safe, and effective method for disposing of small amounts of treated seed. Care should be taken to ensure that any one area is not overplanted so that a labeled rate for any of the treatment pesticides is not exceeded on a given area. This is likely the best and preferred method for disposal of treated seed when the following guidelines are

followed.

Use an acceptable seeding rate (do not double or triple plant);

Plant seed deeper than 1 inch; and

Immediately incorporate seed that are broadcast.

- **Enlist a Valid Disposal Agent.** If this option is used, ensure the Disposal Agent has valid and necessary national and local environmental permits to accept and dispose of treated seed. Develop a contract with the Disposal Agent to ensure proper conduct during the disposal process.
- **Incineration or Sanitary Landfill Waste Management Facility.** These entities generally have the required environmental permits. This may be an expensive approach, however, especially if large amounts of seed are involved. The sanitary landfill option may require special packaging. This method requires that a determination be made if the treated seed is considered as normal solid waste or as hazardous waste.
- **Incineration for Power.** The cost relative to the above two options should be lower since the seed will be converted to energy for sale by the incineration facility. The high-temperature burning used by these facilities does a thorough job of incineration. The deliverer of treated seed should ensure that these facilities have the required permits for handling waste materials.
- **Wildlife Habitat Plantings.** This method

allows the seed to be used for its intended purpose of planting. However, if the seed bag states that the treated seed may be hazardous to wildlife, do not use this method of disposal.

- **Things Not To Do.**

Never burn treated seed in a stove used in the home or farm shop.

Never compost treated seed.

The following is a list of links to online papers/articles that give definitive guidelines and details for the disposal of pesticide-treated seeds. Included in each of these articles are links to other valuable information sources that are pertinent to the process and can be used by Mississippi soybean farmers to address this issue.

[The International Seed Trade Federation](#)

The Center for Integrated Pesticide Management:
[Article 1](#) and [Article 2](#)

[Syngenta Environmental Stewardship](#). Seed treated with Syngenta active ingredients such as mefenoxam and fludioxonil (ApronMaxx) and ApronMaxx + thiamethoxam (CruiserMaxx) are not classified as hazardous wastes and are subject to solid waste regulations at the state and local level.

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