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Authorities Investigate Contaminated Corn in Eastland County

Hunters Advised to Avoid Harvesting or Eating Game in Affected Area

AUSTIN, Texas – The Texas Department of Agriculture and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are investigating an incident involving the misuse of the pesticide Temik in the southwestern area of Eastland County in early October.

Corn seed was treated with Temik and placed in and around some peanut fields near the intersection of U.S. 183 and County Road 173 south of Cisco. TDA is investigating why the corn was treated with Temik and distributed in this location.

The contamination of the peanut fields has killed a number of feral hogs, at least one deer and two birds. Authorities have since taken steps to remove the contaminated corn, and no dead animals have been found at the site since the investigation began more than a week ago.

Authorities are advising deer hunters to refrain from harvesting deer or feral hogs or eating deer or hog meat taken from within a 5-mile radius around the intersection of U.S. 183 and County Road 173 south of Cisco. However, TPWD is encouraging hunters to continue to enjoy hunting elsewhere in Eastland County and surrounding counties.

Since the chemical involved is rapidly eliminated from an animal's body after ingestion, toxicologists say the likelihood is low that eating game from the affected area will harm people. Toxicologists say literature about Temik indicates 90 percent of the pesticide is naturally eliminated from a live animal's body within 24 hours if it's not a lethal dose.

However, since the agencies involved cannot state for certain whether game is safe to eat, they're advising hunters not to harvest or consume game from within the affected area. Authorities say hunters should never eat carcasses of animals found on the ground or animals that appear sick or diseased.

Affected animals are not likely to have traveled far after ingesting contaminated corn. Toxicologists believe a deer or other animal which ingests a lethal dose of the pesticide involved will die very soon after ingestion, likely in the immediate vicinity. Authorities point out that no additional dead animals have been found at the affected site since the incident came to light more than two weeks ago.

Corn seed samples collected from the site have confirmed the presence of high levels of Aldicarb – an active ingredient found in Temik, a registered and approved pesticide.

Aldicarb is highly toxic and only a small amount is needed to kill an animal, but it could be rapidly metabolized and eliminated from an animal's body

Temik can be harmful to wildlife and domestic animals that may come into contact or feed on something that contains the pesticide.

Enforcement authorities are assessing possible violations of state and/or federal law, including the possible use of a pesticide inconsistent with the label. If an investigation finds an individual did break the law they could face administrative penalties, civil penalties and possibly criminal prosecution. The Texas Department of Agriculture could fine the individual \$5,000 per violation and there could be multiple violations. The Attorney General would handle any civil penalties and the county prosecutor would decide on criminal prosecution.