

# clarity the aim; more confusion the result

By Bruce Evans, Evatech, Nelson.

IN THE LAST ISSUE OF THIS COLUMN A DIAGRAM SHOWING THE TWO CLASS 9 LABELS WAS USED TO TRY AND PROVIDE CLARITY ON THE ISSUE OF DIFFERING LABELS BEING REQUIRED FOR TRANSPORT AND HSNO.

Cropping of the original picture for space saving reasons may have unfortunately led to more confusion by wrongly swapping the captions.

Check out the correct labels to the right to clarify that there are two 'Class 9' product labels, one for Dangerous Goods and one for HSNO.

Could this be the type of confusion referred to in Phil Taylor's New Zealand Herald story on 27 September, about the cause and effects of the April Tamahere fire and explosion that led to one fireman's death and seven colleagues being injured?

The story is titled 'Cause of death: Legisla-

tion' and subtitled 'a convoluted set of regulations lit a fuse that exploded with the Tamahere cool store fire'. The article further argues 'the immediate cause was the explosion and fire....the root cause is the confusion caused by the very badly put together legislation.'

Lest we forget, 24 years earlier firemen were also killed and injured in the ICI chemical store fire at Mt Wellington, again caused by a major fire.

The HSNO legislation came out of that fire and its aftermath with the express desire of providing clarity to a convoluted legislative scene with huge holes in.

The Department of Labour has laid several charges regarding the explosion against several unspecified parties alleging breaches of relevant legislation.

These court cases will eventually provide the missing details and presumably lessons but meantime it behoves industry to heed the signals we know about both fires and examine one's own state of preparedness.

We know from both chemical disasters that fires start easily and the downstream effects can be catastrophic.

The VJ chemical store fire in Hastings in recent times also led to DoL prosecutions after directives to minimize flammable liquid volumes being stored were not heeded.

Could we hope that our agrichemical industry is better prepared for and aware of the risks? After all we have had longer than most to get our minds around the new HSNO legislation that aims to prevent disasters like these.

I'm told that as industries go, 'we' in agriculture are better off than most in HSNO compliance terms as we have 35,000 odd Approved Handlers trained and our manufacturing and supply companies have had longer to become compliant than other chemical industries.

ERMA signed off on our Agrichemical industry Code of Practice NZS 8409 in 2004, long before other industries, many of whom are still waiting for their Codes of Practice to be developed.

Many agrichemical suppliers are now on their third annual renewal of their HSNO Location Certificates and thus one could assume that all is well in terms of compliance preparedness in the agriculture chemical industry.

I really wished I could deliver a glowing report card but visits to suppliers in recent times to check on renewals and train staff provide some stark reminders that new legislation in itself does not provide safe and effective hazard-free workplaces.

The common denominator in these non-compliant and prevalent hazardous situations is poorly coordinated work practices that seem to be occurring in spite of HSNO Approved Handlers being on site.

How can we explain situations where Class 5 oxidisers are repeatedly stored alongside incompatible substances?

Glycerine and bloat oils are incompatible with Class 5 and if they come together could easily start a fire just like the ICI disaster 24 years ago.

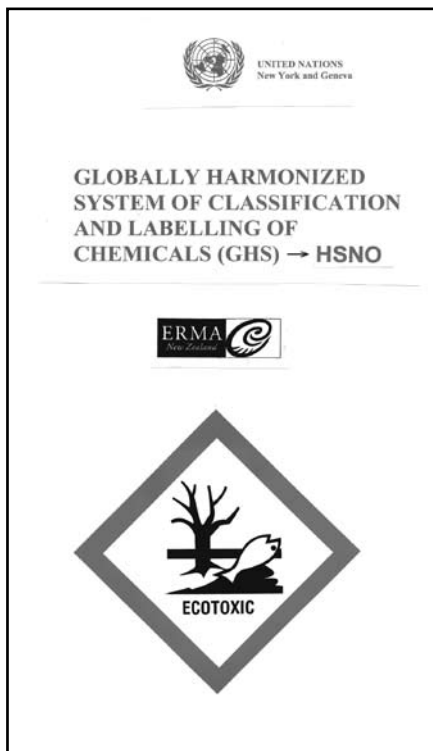
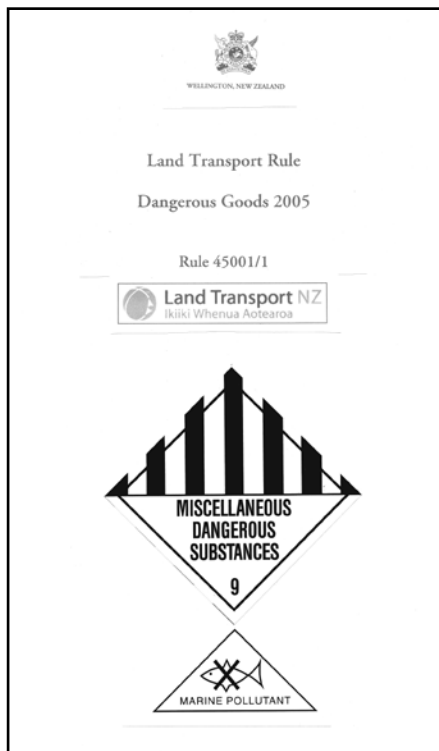
Flammable solvents used to make agrichemical formulations are no less flammable just because they have not come with Safety Data Sheets providing details on flashpoint etc.

Ignorance of relevant hazards is not a suitable defence in a court of law or more importantly in a situation where highly flammable substances are used in areas where ignition is possible. Wasn't this one of the factors in the Tamahere coolstore fire?

Workpractices that were okay 12 months ago ▶

Bruce Evans.





**The right way around this time... Far left the Class 9 label for Dangerous Goods (DG). And then left, Class 9 for HSNO. We apologise for any confusion caused by incorrect captions in the last issue.**

are not supplied to customers who are not Approved Handlers.

Compliance with Class 6-9 substances is not subject to the annual checks that Class 3-5 substances are as a result of the Location Certificate renewal.

Thus there is more onus on the person in charge to take all practical steps to make sure that Class 6-9 compliance is managed without external checks from ERMA Test Certifiers.

Which brings us back to the need for comprehensive training and the need for that training to cover a wide range of compliance issues including transport.

Richard Bean, the senior engineer with Land Transport NZ has made a very good point in the latest Novachem Agrichemical Manual.

His recommendation? If you consign agrichemicals as part of your job, complete the National Certificate in Agrichemical Supply course, sometimes called the Growsafe Distributors Accreditation course. Many Approved Handler courses do not address all the significant consignor duties required to be compliant with legislation.

Have a great Christmas break; just be careful how you light that Christmas barbecue.

◀ have somehow fallen into disarray in the intervening times as new or untrained staff are introduced to the workplace.

Class 6 Toxic products have their own compliance requirements.

I struggle to understand why trained Approved Handlers do not appear to be helping their untrained work colleagues deal with compliance and ensure that systems are in place to ensure that toxic tracked substances



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Competencies required for the role include:

- Sales and Team leadership experience
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- Ideally product and brand management experience
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Competencies required for the role include:

- NZ Registered Veterinary Surgeon
- At least 5 years' experience as a practice vet
- Excellent technical transfer skills at all levels
- Attention to detail and ability to relate well to farmers

**If you would like to discuss either role in confidence, please phone Deb Francis on 021 2245000 or Alwyn Coll on 027 2291444. Otherwise, please send your CV with letter of application to [apply@ag-recruit.co.nz](mailto:apply@ag-recruit.co.nz) (Quote either ref BM45 or BM17)**

