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South Carolina
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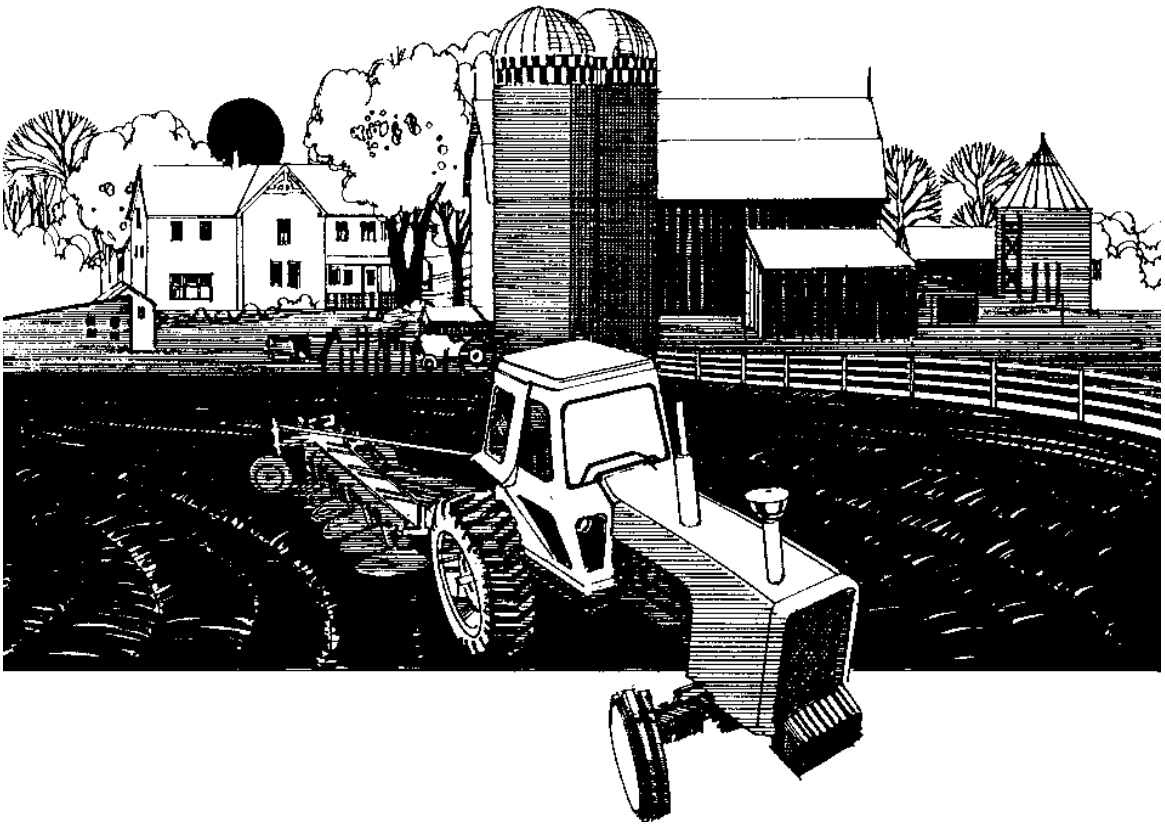

Handling and Storing Pesticides

An Environmental Self-Assessment

Clemson University
Lake and Watershed Association of South Carolina
USDA Water Quality Project
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USDA Farm Service Agency
South Carolina Department of Agriculture
South Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts

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Before Completing Your Self-Assessment

This self-assessment is one in a series of voluntary environmental self-assessments in the Farm-A-Syst program. For a more complete picture of activities or conditions on your farm that could affect water quality, review other Farm-A-Syst and Home-A-Syst environmental self-assessments, available at your county Extension office.

This self-assessment on handling and storing pesticides is an important part of the Farm-A-Syst program. This voluntary program helps you evaluate conditions on your farm that could threaten drinking water quality and water quality in streams, rivers, lakes, groundwater, and other sources. The information on this page tells you why you should use pesticides properly for water quality, health, environmental, and legal reasons. Read it carefully before completing this self-assessment.

Your responses to this self-assessment are for YOUR use. Although completing this self-assessment is voluntary, taking a few minutes to respond may help you identify potential areas on your farm that could lead to water quality problems. You may find it useful to involve your spouse and/or children in completing your self-assessment. If you need other help or follow-up information, contact your county Extension office.

Why You Should Be Concerned About Pesticides

Pesticides play an important role in agriculture by making possible an abundant, high-quality food supply. Some of the same chemicals, however, used to control crop pests also can harm people, livestock, pets, fish, and wildlife. Used properly, pesticides pose little threat to drinking water quality. Used improperly, pesticides may contaminate drinking water (wells) and surface waters such as streams and lakes, and are a direct health risk as well. These potentially harmful impacts are greatly reduced by proper pesticide use, storage, and container disposal, according to the product label. As a pesticide user, it is your legal responsibility to use pesticides according to the product label to reduce these risks. The label is the law.

Although drinking water contamination from pesticides is rare, it is possible under certain conditions. For example, pesticides may enter the groundwater that supplies drinking water indirectly, by leaching or moving through the soil, or directly by leaks and spills. Pesticides can enter a drinking water supply by backflow or back-siphonage during pesticide mixing. Pesticides may also enter groundwater through a poorly sealed well or an abandoned well. Pesticides applied immediately before a heavy rain may wash into streams or other surface waters and threaten fish and wildlife. For these reasons, do not use pesticides around a drinking water source or other water sources.

If your drinking water comes from a private well, it is your responsibility to make sure the water is safe. While you should not be alarmed simply because pesticides are used on your farm or near your home, you may want to have your water tested if pesticide use is frequent or if there is a pesticide spill, an unexplained illness, or a change in activities that may increase the risk of pesticide or other contamination. Contact your county health department for the names of laboratories that can test your water for contaminants. As a precaution, keep the telephone numbers of your doctor, the South Carolina Regional Poison Control Center, and South Carolina Agromedicine handy in case of accidental poisoning.

For personal protection, always wear required protective clothing and follow required field reentry periods when using pesticides. Keep all pesticides in original containers and out of children's reach.

A Word About Regulations

Farm pesticides are regulated by state and federal laws. You can be held liable for any damage to people, animals, fish, or wildlife resulting from your pesticide use and handling practices. Protect yourself, others, and the environment by using pesticides exactly as directed on the label. Also, triple-rinse or pressure-rinse empty containers immediately after use and dispose of by recycling or in an approved landfill. For more information on pesticide-use regulations, contact the South Carolina Department of Pesticide Regulation or the Department of Entomology's Pesticide Information Progam at the address on the back cover. Safely store and transport pesticides and all potential pollutants to reduce the chance of an

accident or spill.

Develop an emergency response plan so you will know what to do in case of a spill, fire, or other emergency. For more information on controlling a spill or to report a spill, contact the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). For other information on pesticides, contact your county Extension office.

As a farm operator, you also are required to protect farm workers from pesticide exposure and to keep records of restricted-use pesticide applications. This self-assessment focuses on water quality and does not include these additional requirements. For more information on worker protection and pesticide record keeping, contact your county Extension office or the South Carolina Department of Pesticide Regulation.

The 1990 Farm Bill contains provisions for record keeping by private applicators, which mandates keeping certain minimal records on each use of restricted-use pesticides. However, whether you use a restricted or general-use pesticide, keeping good records of each pesticide use is simply a good management practice. Good records help you determine the value, efficiency, and economics of each of the various pesticides and other pest management practices you use to produce a crop or commodity. These help you determine not only the benefits of using certain pesticides, but also gives you a historical record to help pinpoint or identify potential problems arising from pesticide use.

Good records are especially valuable if any pesticide misuse claims are made against you, such as charges that you contaminated an aquifer or water body. For additional information on recordkeeping, contact your county Extension office or the Department of Pesticide Regulation listed at the back of this publication.

Understanding Your Self-Assessment

Your drinking water and other water sources are least likely to be contaminated by pesticides if you use all of the low-risk practices in this self-assessment. You may not be able to use all low-risk practices initially, but use as many as practical to protect water quality and the environment. As you complete your self-assessment, do not be alarmed if you check several or even many high-risk statements. This does not automatically mean your farm has water quality problems; it does, however, tell you that attention may be needed to avoid problems.

Directions

This self-assessment is a set of three statements, each with a low, medium and high ranking. This ranking relates to the level of risk to your drinking water quality or other environmental risks associated with that activity or condition. First, read all statements in each set, then check the one box that best describes conditions on your farm. Remember, this self-assessment is for your information. Your goal is to eventually apply as many low-risk practices as you can.

Part 1. Pesticide Storage Practices

Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
☐ You reduce the amount of pesticides stored by buying only the amount you expect to use for an application. Additional pesticides are purchased only when needed.	☐ You usually buy only the product amounts you expect to use for an application, but sometimes buy more in case you might need some later in the season.	☐ You usually do not check to see what pesticide products are on hand before buying others. You often have products left over after an application or a production season.
☐ You usually store small amounts of pesticides, or less than 1 gallon or 10 pounds of each pesticide, on your farm.	☐ You usually store more than 1 gallon or 10 pounds, but less than 55 gallons or 50 pounds of each pesticide.	☐ You usually store large amounts of pesticides: more than 55 gallons or 50 pounds of each of several pesticides.

** **Bold type** means, in addition to being a high-risk practice, this activity violates South Carolina/Federal water quality, health, or pesticide use laws and regulations.*

Part 1. Pesticide Storage Practices *(Continued)*

Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
☐ You do not store liquid pesticides at any time (all stored chemicals are dry).	☐ You store some liquid and some dry pesticides.	☐ You store only or mostly liquid pesticides.
☐ All pesticides you store have low potential to leach through the soil (see accompanying list showing leaching potential of pesticides).	☐ Most pesticides you store have low or medium leaching potential. Few, if any, have a high leaching potential.	☐ Any pesticides you store have a high leaching potential.
☐ Your pesticide storage area is a roofed building with a concrete floor and curb to contain leaks and spills, is ventilated, and more than 100 feet from a well or surface waters.	☐ Your pesticide storage area is roofed with a concrete floor and no curb, or has a wooden floor, and is at least 100 feet from a well or surface waters.	☐ **Your pesticide storage area is in the open, or has a gravel or dirt floor where spills could contaminate the soil, or is less than 100 feet from a well or surface waters, or pesticides are stored in your wellhouse.**
☐ Your pesticide storage area is fenced, locked, and separated from other activities. No other products are stored with pesticides.	☐ Your pesticide storage area is fenced, but sometimes open to activities that could damage containers or spill pesticides.	☐ **Your pesticide storage area has no fence and is open to theft, vandalism, and children, or is used to store other products or house livestock.**
☐ You separate any unusable, or cancelled pesticides in the pesticide storage area until safe disposal in a recycling or collection program.	☐ You keep unusable, suspended, or cancelled pesticides with other pesticides in clearly marked containers.	☐ You bury **on the farm or dump off the farm property** unusable, suspended, or cancelled pesticides stored where convenient, or in unmarked containers.
☐ You store any pesticides in clearly labeled original containers in good condition. Most, if not all, containers are plastic or metal. You place any containers in poor condition within another liquid-proof container.	☐ You have some pesticides in deteriorating metal containers, or parts of some labels are hard to read or missing.	☐ You store some pesticides in metal containers with holes or weak seams that may leak, or some containers have no label, or **any pesticides not in original containers.**

** **Bold type** means, in addition to being a high-risk practice, this activity violates South Carolina/Federal water quality, health, or pesticide use laws and regulations.*

Part 2. Pesticide Mixing and Application Practices

Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
☐ Before using any pesticide, you always read the label and use the product according to label directions.	☐ You usually read pesticide labels before using the product, but **sometimes rely on memory of past use of the product or a friend's advice for rates and uses.**	☐ **You usually don't read pesticide labels and don't always know if your use of the product complies with label directions, or pesticides are applied without regard to label directions.**
☐ You personally see to it that others who use pesticides on your farm are well-trained and handle all chemicals safely according to label directions.	☐ You usually supervise others on your farm who use pesticides, **but aren't always around to give directions or advice.**	☐ **Others on your farm apply pesticides with little or no supervision or without your direct knowledge.**
☐ You always check weather conditions before applying pesticides to make sure they are not applied when rain or wind may cause pollution or drift problems.	☐ You usually check the weather before applying pesticides, but sometimes apply them when weather is less than ideal.	☐ You usually don't check the weather before applying pesticides and **apply them regardless of weather conditions.**
☐ You are always careful to mix only the amounts of the pesticide you need to complete the job at hand.	☐ You sometimes mix more of a product than you really need to complete the job.	☐ You often have pesticide mix left over after finishing the job and are left with a disposal problem.
☐ You have a concrete pesticide mixing and loading pad with a curb to hold spills. The pad drains to a sump (pit or reservoir) to help collect and transfer spills, or you mix/load at the application site. Any spills are cleaned up immediately.	☐ You have a concrete pesticide mixing and loading pad, but no curb or sump to help collect and transfer pesticides. Most spills are collected.	☐ You have no pesticide mixing and loading pad. **Some spills are cleaned up late or not at all and soak into the ground or drain toward a well or surface waters.**

** **Bold type** means, in addition to being a high-risk practice, this activity violates South Carolina/Federal water quality, health, or pesticide use laws and regulations.*

Part 2. Pesticide Mixing and Application Practices *(Continued)*

Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
☐ You always mix and load pesticides more than 100 feet and downhill from a well or surface waters. You're very careful to prevent spills.	☐ You usually mix and load pesticides at least 100 feet or downhill from a well or surface waters. **Spills sometimes happen.**	☐ You usually mix and load pesticides less than 100 feet or downhill from a well or surface waters. **Spills are frequent.**
☐ You use a separate clean water tank (nurse tank) as a water source when mixing pesticides.	☐ You use a hydrant away from a well as a water source when mixing pesticides.	☐ You use a hydrant near a drinking water source, a drinking well itself, or water from a pond or stream as a water source when mixing pesticides.
☐ You use a closed system to mix and load pesticides (no pesticides are poured by hand; they go directly through a hose from the container to application equipment).	☐ You hand pour most pesticides; your sprayer fill port is easy to reach.	☐ You hand pour most pesticides; your sprayer fill port is hard to reach.
☐ You inspect wells near pesticide mixing and application areas annually and keep them in good condition. No abandoned wells are on your farm or property.	☐ You check wells near pesticide mixing and application areas every two or three years and keep them in good condi - tion. You have properly sealed any abandoned well.	☐ You seldom or never check wells near pesticide mixing and application areas. You have **wells with cracked casings or are poorly sealed, or are abandoned, and are unsealed**
☐ You prevent pesticide water from backflowing into a well by installing a check valve, and/or by securing the hose 6 inches above the sprayer tank water line. You fill the tank partially with water before adding pesticide unless the label tells you otherwise.	☐ Your pesticide mixing system has no check valve, but you handhold the hose in the sprayer tank above the water line. **You usually follow filling instructions on the product label.**	☐ **Your pesticide mixing system has no check valve and you handle or leave the hose where it may fall below the water line. You add pesticides before adding water, or don't read the label for filling instructions.**

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Part 2. Pesticide Mixing and Application Practices *(Continued)*

Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
☐ When filling a pesticide spray tank, you stay on the site from start to finish to make sure there are no overflows.	☐ You stay in the area when filling a pesticide spray tank and **usually check to make sure there are no overflows.**	☐ **You start the spray tank filling procedure and leave the area. You check only when you think the tank is filled or nearly filled.**
☐ Before the application, you check nozzles, hoses, and pumps for leaks. You re-check during operation to make sure equipment is working properly.	☐ You usually check spray equipment before applying pesticides, but don't often check equipment once in operation.	☐ **You usually don't check spray equipment before applying pestcides and usually aren't aware of any problems until there is a leak or breakdown.**
☐ You calibrate pesticide application equipment before beginning, re-check it before finishing the job.	☐ You usually calibrate pesticide application equipment before beginning, but sometimes use the existing setting or don't re-check it before finishing the job.	☐ You use the same pesticide equipment calibration as the previous year, or **don't calibrate equipment at all and do not know for sure how much pesticide is being applied.**
☐ You maintain a buffer area of more than 100 feet between pesticide application areas and a well or surface waters, or follow the product label for any more restrictive buffer area requirements.	☐ You maintain some buffer areas between pesticide application areas and a well or surface waters, but usually less than 100 feet.	☐ You maintain little or no buffer area between pesticide application areas and a well or surface waters, or **don't follow the product label and applied pesticides contaminate water sources of humans; harm animals, fish, or wildlife.**
☐ When finishing the last pesticide application, you rinse the sprayer in the field and spray the rinse water on a labeled crop more than 100 feet from a well or surface waters.	☐ You rinse the pesticide sprayer at the mixing site, and spray the rinse water on a field turnrow at least 100 feet from a well or surface waters.	☐ You rinse the pesticide sprayer at the mixing site and **dump the rinse water less than 100 feet from a well or surface waters, near your home, or in a field.**

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Part 2. Pesticide Mixing and Application Practices *(Continued)*

Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
☐ You fill your sprayer half-full with water first, turn on the system and check for proper operation and leaks, then add pesticide products and any adjuvants in the order given on the pesticide.	☐ You put water into your sprayer first, but don't usually turn the system on to check it before adding pesticide products.	☐ You put pesticides into your sprayer while filliing it with water, or put pesticides in first.
☐ You have a good way to keep your water fill line above the top of the spray tank and always maintain an air gap when filling the tank.	☐ You usually keep the water fill line above the top of the spray tank.	☐ You don’t have a good way to keep your water fill line above the top of the spray tank and sometimes the end of the hose is under the surface of the filling tank mixture.
☐ You have back-flow protection devices on all hoses (placed nearest the outlet end of the hose) and water sources on your farm and have separate wells or water source for drinking water and for non-drinking water needs.	☐ You have back-flow protection devices on some hoses or water sources on your farm. You use the same well or water source for drinking water and for non-drinking water needs.	☐ You have no back-flow protection devices on any hoses or water sources on your farm. You use the same well or water source for drinking water and for non-drinking water needs.
☐ You know the depth to groundwater at your well; where you store pesticides and farm-use petroleum products and other chemicals; where you mix and load pesticides; and where you apply pesticides.	☐ You know the depth to groundwater at your well, possibly at some other locations on your farm.	☐ You do not have a good idea as to the depth to groundwater for your farm.
☐ You have a written contingency plan for your farm in the event of a pesticide or chemical spill that you, your family and employees are familiar with. You have spill cleanup equipment located at sites with a high probability of spills (storage and mix load sites).	☐ You have given instructions on spill clean-up to those on your farm within the past year. You have at least some spill clean-up equipment at one appropriate site on your farm.	☐ You have no formal spill clean-up procedure outlined for your farm, and have not given instructions on how to clean-up a pesticide or chemical spill to those on your farm. You have no specific equipment designated or available for immediate use in case of a spill.

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Part 3. Pesticide Container Disposal

Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
☐ You try to reduce the number of empty pesticide containers that must be disposed by buying products in mini-bulk or returnable containers.	☐ You buy some pesticide products in mini-bulk or returnable containers.	☐ Most or all pesticides you buy are in small containers that require special handling or treatment before disposal.
☐ You triple rinse or pressure rinse empty pesticide containers immediately after use; use the rinse water on a labeled crop; and take rinsed containers to a recycler or approved landfill as soon as practi - cal. Empty pesticide bags go to an approved landfill.	☐ You rinse empty pesticide containers and apply the rinse water on uncropped land at least 100 feet from a water source. Empty containers and bags are stored on the farm for long periods of time.	☐ **You rinse containers one or more day(s) after application. You store unrinsed pesticide containers or apply pesticide rinse water less than 100 feet from any water source, or bury rinsed pesticide containers on the farm, or bury or dump unrinsed or partly filled containers or burn empty pesticide bags.**

Part 4. Record Keeping

Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
☐ You always keep detailed records of all general and restricted use pesticide applications, including spot treatments. Your records include at a minimum the name and certification number of the certified applicator making the application; the brand or product name and EPA registration number of the pesticide; the total amount applied; the size and location of the area treated; the crop; commodity; site and weather conditions; the date, calibration rate; and method of equipment calibration used.	☐ You only keep the minimum records required for restricted-use pesticides by the USDA Pesticide Recordkeeping regulation, which includes: brand name and EPA registration number of the pesticide; total amount applied; crop; commodity and site (including size); dates; and certified applicators name and certification number.	☐ You do not keep records of any of your pesticide applications.

** **Bold type** means, in addition to being a high-risk practice, this activity violates South Carolina/Federal water quality, health, or pesticide use laws and regulations.*

Your Farm-A-Syst Score Sheet

This score sheet helps you understand your self-assessment of handling and storing pesticides by letting you compare your low, medium, and high risk activities and conditions. To do your score sheet, use a pocket calculator and follow these steps.

First, count your answers for each level of risk in your self-assessment. Write these numbers in the three spaces in column A of the chart below.

Second, add these numbers to give your total number of answers. Write this number in each of the three spaces in column B. You'll use this same number each time to figure a percentage.

Third, divide your number of answers in each level of risk by your total number of answers. Multiply your answer each time by 100 to convert this number to a percent.

	A	B	
Number of low risk answers	_____	-:- _____	x 100 = _____ %
Number of medium risk answers	_____	-:- _____	x 100 = _____ %
Number of high risk answers	_____	-:- _____	x 100 = _____ %

Using these percentages is an easy way to compare your low-risk, medium-risk, and high-risk activities or conditions. For example, if your percentage in the lower risk column is 50, it means that 50 percent of the activities or conditions in your self-assessment are a medium- or high-risk to water quality or the environment.

Although there are no "passing" or "failing" grades on your self-assessment, you should compare your percentage of high risk activities to the environmental scorecard below.

- ☐ Less than 25% high risk answers — You're far ahead of the pack in your water quality protection program for handling and storing pesticides.
- ☐ 25% to 50% high risk answers — Your water quality program for handling and storing pesticides generally is on track. A nudge could push you nearer the top.
- ☐ 51% to 65% high risk answers — You're doing some things right, but have a way to go in your water quality program for handling and storing pesticides.
- ☐ 66% to 100% high risk answers — There's no cause to panic; however, there is a significant potential for water quality problems on your farm resulting from the handling and storing of pesticides. Information and assistance to help correct high-risk activities and conditions is available from the agencies listed at the end of this publication.

For more information

- *South Carolina water quality regulations*

  SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
  2600 Bull Street
  Columbia, SC 29201
  (803) 734-5300

- *South Carolina health regulations (sanitation and well separation distances)*

  Your county health department

- *Cost-share assistance*

  Your county Consolidated Farm Service Agency

  or

  Consolidated Farm Service Agency
  1927 Thurmond Mall, Suite 100
  Columbia, SC 29201-2375
  (803) 765-5186

- *Spills*

  DHEC Emergency Response to Releases and Spills Hotline
  (803) 253-6488

For further information, consult:
Clemson Extension leaflets
PIP 15 - Disposal of Pesticide Containers in SC
PIP 16 - Handle Pesticides Safely
PIP 33 - Mixing/Loading Site Safety
PIP 35 - Reduce Pesticide Drift
EC 670 - Agricultural Chemicals Handbook
(provided through the local Clemson Cooperative Extension office)

Materials in this packet were modified from information developed by Mississippi State Cooperative Extension program as part of the USDA Farm-A-Syst program.

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USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
USDA Farm Service Agency
South Carolina Department of Agriculture
South Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts

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Columbia, SC 29221
(803) 772-0766

DPR
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Greenville, SC 29609
(864) 233-3301

DPR
P.O. Box 287
Ninety Six, SC 29666
(864) 543-3574

DPR
171 Ashley Avenue
MUSC
Charleston, SC 29415
(803) 792-1776

County Extension Offices
Telephone Numbers, and Addresses

County	*Telephone*	*Address*
Abbeville	(864) 459-4106	Box 640, Abbeville 29620
Aiken	(803) 649-6671	Box 2007, Aiken 29802
Allendale	(803) 584-4207	Box 577, Allendale 29810
Anderson	(864) 226-1581	Box 1797, Anderson 29622
Bamberg	(803) 245-2661 (803) 793-5607	Box 299, Bamberg 29003-0299
Barnwell	(803) 259-7141	Box 468, Barnwell 29812
Beaufort	(803) 525-7118	Box 189, Beaufort 29901-0189
Berkeley	(803) 761-6900	Room E-1, 223 N. Live Oak Dr., Moncks Corner 29461
Calhoun	(803) 874-2354	112 Courthouse Annex, St. Matthews 29135
Charleston	(803) 722-5940	259 Meeting St., Charleston 29401
Cherokee	(864) 489-3141	Box 700, Gaffney 29342
Chester	(803) 385-6181	Box 548, Chester 29706
Chesterfield	(803) 623-2134	Box 149, Chesterfield 29709
Clarendon	(803) 435-8429	11A West Rigby St., Manning 29102
Colleton	(803) 549-2596	Box 1086, Walterboro 29488
Darlington	(803) 393-0484	Mozingo Bldg., Darlington 29532
Dillon	(803) 774-8218	Box 631, Dillon 29536
Dorchester	(803) 832-0135	Box 248, St. George 29477
Edgefield	(803) 637-3161	Box 509, Edgefield 29824
Fairfield	(803) 635-4918	Box 329, Winnsboro 29180
Florence	(803) 661-4800	P.O. Box 13499, Florence 29504
Georgetown	(803) 546-4481	Drawer 1100, Georgetown 29440
Greenville	(864) 232-4431	Greenville Co. Sq., 301 Univ. Ridge Suite 4300, Greenville 29601-3660
Greenwood	(864) 229-6681	Box 246, Greenwood 29648
Hampton	(803) 943-3421	Box 646, Hampton 29924
Horry	(803) 248-2267	Box 1005, Conway 29526
Jasper	(803) 726-3470	Drawer A, Ridgeland 29936
Kershaw	(803) 432-9071	Box 248, Camden 29020
Lancaster	(803) 283-3302	Box 10, Lancaster 29721
Laurens	(864) 984-2514	219 Laurens St., Laurens 29360
Lee	(803) 484-5416	Box 232, Bishopville 29010
Lexington	(803) 359-8515	219 E. Main St., Lexington 29072
McCormick	(864) 465-2112	Box 1150, McCormick 29835
Marion	(803) 423-8285	Box 1220, Marion 29571
Marlboro	(803) 479-6851	Box 80, Bennettsville 29512
Newberry	(803) 276-1091	Box 160, Newberry 29108
Oconee	(864) 638-5889	Box 400, Walhalla 29691
Orangeburg	(803) 534-6280	Drawer 1206, Orangeburg 29116-1206
Pickens	(864) 868-2810	Box 995, Pickens 29671
Richland	(803) 929-6030	P.O. Box 192, Columbia 29202
Saluda	(864) 445-8117	Box 246, Saluda 29138
Spartanburg	(864) 596-2993	Box 1010, Spartanburg 29304
Sumter	(803) 773-5561	Box 2377, Sumter 29151-2377
Union	(864) 427-6259	Box 711, Kirby Road, Union 29379
Williamsburg	(803) 354-6106	Box 700, Kingstree 29556
York	(803) 684-9919	Box 669, York 29745

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