

Look for:

- ❑ Enclosed buildings including homes, apartments, motels, hotels, garages, barns, warehouses, office buildings, basements, makeshift structures, and others;
- ❑ Abandoned or suspicious vehicles which may or may not be street-legal, including cars, mobile homes, recreational vehicles, and others with trunks or other enclosed spaces in which lab or waste materials could be concealed, vehicles with windows blocked from view, backseat piles of materials or trash which may conceal chemicals or containers beneath, and vehicles with hijacked electrical wires connected to a nearby building or power pole;
- ❑ Other spaces such as storage units, campgrounds, yards, and other areas where cooking, storage, and/or waste disposal could have occurred, and suspect materials could be concealed;
- ❑ An appearance of clutter, trash, run-down buildings and vehicles, dirty conditions;
- ❑ Unusual and/or tampered wiring in and around a building or vehicle that simply does not make sense;
- ❑ Fire damage;
- ❑ Evidence of booby traps including wiring, warning signs, spotlights, motion detectors, security systems and antennas;
- ❑ Streetlight bulbs broken or not working;
- ❑ Excessive and unusual window coverings, locks, fencing, reinforced doors and gates, aggressive warning signs of guard dog or other threatening nature, and other indicators of apparently extreme privacy needs;
- ❑ Unusual amount of foot traffic for the location;
- ❑ Staining and dead vegetation around drains and plumbing features, surface water drainages, ditches and pavement;
- ❑ Evidence of unregistered underground storage tanks, suspicious septic tanks, waste oil pits, evidence of naphtha (mothball) product and/or other volatile organic compounds in structures, soils, and drains.

Closer inspections of suspicious places and waste piles should involve checking for:

- ❑ Abandoned piles of trash in places not likely to be serviced by trash disposal service;
- ❑ Contents of dumpsters and trash receptacles in suspect neighborhoods;
- ❑ Chemical odors including cat urine, ammonia, acetone, fuel, naphtha, volatile organic compounds, and others;
- ❑ Trash bags, boxes, drums, and other containers with uncertain contents, cat litter bags and especially bulging bags with suspected gas contents;
- ❑ Propane bottles and other containers with improvised tubing and/or blue staining;
- ❑ Taped-up bulging garbage bags with possible gas contents;
- ❑ Drug paraphernalia such as syringes, pipes straws, vials, baggies, white powder;
- ❑ Cold medicine packets (especially Sudafed), boxes, bubble packs;
- ❑ Solvents – toluene, xylene, acetone, denatured alcohol, dry cleaning solvent;
- ❑ Petroleum distillates (paint thinner, white gas, kerosene);
- ❑ Corrosives (acids, bases) of many types and concentrations;
- ❑ Chemical mixtures including separated liquids;
- ❑ Metals (sulfur, iodine, lithium batteries, red, blue, or white phosphorus);
- ❑ Fertilizer such as anhydrous ammonia;
- ❑ Epsom salt, table salt;
- ❑ Matches and match books with missing striker plates;
- ❑ Unusual fanning devices.

What Meth cooks leave behind:

- ❑ Paper boxes and packaging from cold tablets
- ❑ Coffee filters soaked in alcohol or ether
- ❑ Cans, plastic bottles, glass jars
- ❑ Hot plates or electric skillets
- ❑ Left-over chemicals
- ❑ Used syringes
- ❑ Plastic tubing
- ❑ Plastic bags
- ❑ Batteries
- ❑ Propane tanks

What to do if you come across a Meth lab:

- ❑ Remain calm--give yourself time to think clearly.
- ❑ Immediately contact--your local law enforcement agency.
- ❑ Do NOT approach suspects --They are usually armed and dangerous.
- ❑ Do NOT approach the lab area-- Discarded containers, waste and other materials remaining from the Meth lab can be highly volatile. Do not try to clean up the area. The evidence should remain undisturbed until law enforcement arrives.
- ❑ Keep a safe distance--as hazardous materials can ignite or the fumes may overcome you.

How can I keep Meth labs away from my family and property:

- ❑ Make sure sheds, barns and other structures have proper locks and security systems.
- ❑ Develop positive communication with your local law enforcement.
- ❑ Participate in a Farm Watch system or a "good neighbor" policy with people and operations around you. Keep an eye out for suspicious traffic in and around your property, and do the same for your neighbor. Meth manufacturers operate in rural areas to avoid being seen.

If you have questions contact your county sheriff for local regulations, ordinances and concerns. If you would like further information or a program on "Meth is My Neighbor Safety" contact Richard Connell at rconnell@colofb.com.

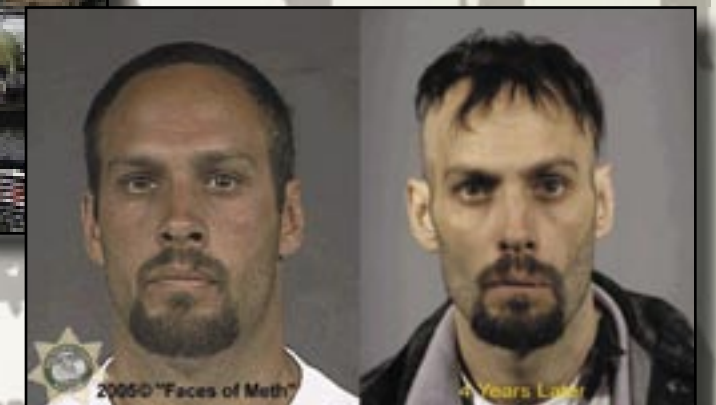
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Meth is my neighbor

Farmers and Ranchers Beware



A Colorado Farm Bureau
Safety & Health Program

In the early part of June, 2006 Dan Craig, President of the Routt County Farm Bureau was startled to discover law enforcement officers from several local, regional and national agencies, including the FBI were surrounding his property near Phippsburg. They searching 413 acres of neighboring land just west of his own ranch and home and adjacent to forest service land.



The law enforcement officers were searching for construction equipment suspected to have been stolen during multiple burglaries in several states during the past several months. Recovered equipment in the ongoing investigation included a D4C Caterpillar bulldozer, a John Deere backhoe, four all-terrain vehicles and a trailer containing "miscellaneous equipment." Several pieces of equipment were also known to have been sold at auction in other parts of the state and surrounding states. As many as 10 different individuals, all employees of the owner, were suspected and most arrested in the raid.

As alarming as the stolen equipment and its "gang of thieves" is the discovery that the property also contains a hazardous waste dump of

methamphetamine by-products and waste. The entire 400 acres has been classified a hazardous waste site although the actual meth dump was a pit 30 feet long and 15 feet wide. Gerald W. Starr of Oklahoma, is the owner of the 413 acres, classified as vacant ag land, which he purchased from a long-time Routt County resident in October of 2005. Starr has not been captured and located at the time of this writing

but it is certain that he is not current with the payments and if captured and convicted will probably not be current with payments. This leaves a question about foreclosure by the previous landowner and difficulty in disposing of or selling the property in the future now that it is a hazardous waste site.

Meth- "there is no illicit drug being used today that has more dire consequences for the environment. We can't arrest our way out of this problem, Law enforcement needs a cooperator, the rural property owners who have a vested interest in keeping their environment clean," says Darrel Steward of the Department of Criminal Investigation (DCI), Riverton Wyoming.

A vineyard in California stands as a prime example. Owners of the 150-acre operation hired an employee who worked hard — both at his job and at making meth. He regularly dumped the meth residues into the nearby creek. Today that vineyard, no longer in the wine-making business, is a toxic waste dump in the clean-up stages.

Though terribly high, the cost for the clean-up to the property owner of more than \$100,000 looms slight in comparison to the loss of a business and its future.



While nearly every newspaper and television news program focuses on the methamphetamine (meth) user as an addict, few turn to the environment, always the victim of a meth producer's lab. The ingredients and

methods used are never intended to enter the human body anymore than a farmer or rancher would combine them to pour into his tractor or feed his cattle. While the rancher and farmer follow EPA rules in getting rid of dangerous chemicals, meth lab trash is being dumped on isolated lands, in ditches, roadbeds, around abandoned buildings and old trailers, creeks and rivers, threatening lives and leaving ranchers with the bill to pay for environmental cleanup.

Meth makers pour toxic chemicals down drains, flush them down toilets and spill them out in backyards; all then make their way back to the ground water supply contaminating both water and soil.

Meth- American made, a billion-dollar business — is the cancer of all drugs. It is also known as "speed" or "crank." It is a potent central nervous system stimulant, produced in makeshift labs set up in rental homes, apartments, motel rooms, garages, storage sheds, cars, campgrounds and various outbuildings, often with windows blacked out. These labs, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) are "an illicit operation consisting of a sufficient combination of apparatus and chemicals that either have been or could be used in the manufacture or synthesis of controlled substances."

Production of meth uses a variety of chemicals including explosives, solvents, metals, salts and corrosives. Even after law enforcement and the DEA remove the bulk of lab-related materials as evidence there are still contaminants on floors, walls, counters, carpets, furniture, sinks, drains and ventilation systems. Exposure to even small amounts of some of these chemicals and their processed combinations can pose serious health risks according to a Washington State Department of Health fact sheet. Those involved in the clean-up are suited and masked just as they are at nuclear sites.

These meth labs are often found at the farthest reaches of a ranch; old homesteads, cow camps no longer used, outbuildings or trailer houses used for temporary employees. Cornell suggests burning any abandoned sites on the ranch that could be isolated enough to be used as a meth lab.

A pound of meth produced generates five or more pounds of hazardous waste and those producers are rarely of a mind to dispose of it carefully. Most casual observers would see the refuse from a meth lab as normal household trash: over-the-counter cold medicine boxes (although now restricted to pharmacy shelves), lithium camera batteries, matches, tincture of iodine, hydrogen peroxide. There may also



be charcoal lighter fluid cans, kerosene, paint thinner, rubbing alcohol and mineral spirits. Also corrosive products such as the muriatic acid used in pools and spas, and sulfuric acid in battery acid. Steward mentioned that Red Devil Lye is also a popular ingredient.

Steward encourages ranchers to watch for unusual amounts of traffic going seemingly nowhere. Many state law enforcement centers send out releases encouraging hunters and fishermen to watch for meth sites and warn of their danger. Sheriffs in Minnesota ask anyone to report the sites and stay away from investigating on their own.

Both officers point to key pieces of information in any refuse related to a lab. There may be coffee filters with blue, green or white residue. The most dangerous is an often-used barbecue grill propane tank. "Ranchers know a valuable throwaway when they see it," explained



Cornell. "A propane tank laying in a ditch is valuable in their eyes but look out! If there's a blue residue around the fittings don't touch." "Some of the contaminants carried to a meth lab in these tanks are very corrosive and within two weeks can explode,"

Education is the first step for rural residents. Vigilance and watchfulness concerning one's property is second.

Signs of a Meth lab:

- Vehicles used are usually older model pickup trucks, vans and rental/moving vans. Items are usually kept covered up in vehicles. Chemical odors may come from the vehicle.
- If you discover chemical odors coming from a field, orchard, unused shed or other structure, notify law enforcement immediately.
- Be aware of boxes or drums with corrosive, flammable, poison placards. Also, laboratory glassware, discarded "pseudophed" boxes or other chemical containers.

