



**For Immediate Release
October 31, 2007**

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**MADIGAN URGES FARMERS AND AGRI-BUSINESSES TO
SAFEGUARD ANHYDROUS SUPPLIES DURING HARVEST SEASON**

FERTILIZER TARGETED BY THOSE MANUFACTURING METH

Springfield – As the illicit manufacturing of the deadly drug methamphetamine continues to pose a threat to rural communities throughout Illinois, Attorney General Lisa Madigan today reminded farmers and chemical dealers that fall is a time that thieves look to steal a key ingredient used in “cooking” methamphetamine: anhydrous ammonia.

Anhydrous ammonia, a chemical used in field preparation, is a staple in the manufacture of methamphetamine. As this year's rapid harvest season is almost complete and field preparation is underway, anhydrous tanks that dot the Illinois prairie are easily accessible and make tempting targets for meth producers.

“Farmers are wrapping up this year's harvest,” Madigan said. “Unfortunately, they are forced to keep one eye on the weather and the other on their anhydrous supplies.”

Madigan urged farmers and chemical dealers to take the following steps to help prevent the theft of anhydrous ammonia:

- Deliver nurse tanks to the field as close as possible to the day of application and have them returned immediately after use.
- Inspect the tanks daily for signs of theft or tampering. Most thefts occur at night and over the weekend. Use brightly colored plastic ties or wire seals on the valves to assist you in determining if tampering has occurred.
- Remove hoses and store them separately from the tanks. There is typically enough ammonia in a standard decoupling hose to make meth.
- Work with local law enforcement to enhance security procedures, including placement and delivery of tanks, and encourage nighttime and weekend patrols.
- Most importantly, DO NOT approach or confront suspicious individuals. They are very likely to be under the influence of meth and may be violent. Call law enforcement immediately.

Madigan also reminded the agricultural community about laws initiated by her office to better protect communities from methamphetamine and to address the problem of anhydrous ammonia theft:

- The Methamphetamine Control and Community Protection Act , which took effect in September 2005, consolidates and strengthens criminal laws against meth production, distribution and use. The Act created two new offenses: possession of anhydrous ammonia with intent to manufacture meth, and aggravated possession of anhydrous ammonia with intent to manufacture meth. The Act also increases penalties for possession of anhydrous ammonia in an unauthorized container and tampering with anhydrous ammonia equipment, raising these offenses from Class 4 to Class 3 felonies.
- The Methamphetamine Precursor Control Act imposes stricter controls on the display and sale of meth's key ingredient, pseudoephedrine. Since the law took effect in January 2006, the number and size of meth labs in Illinois have decreased. This law also resulted in a dramatic reduction in the flow of out-of-state meth-makers coming to Illinois to purchase pseudoephedrine and other meth ingredients.

“My office is constantly exploring new initiatives to help protect farmers and residents against meth-related incidents,” Madigan said. “Additionally, we continue to work with state's attorneys in prosecuting meth makers and dealers.”

More information about meth can be found at the “MethNet” link at Madigan's Web site: www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov . “Methamphetamine and Agriculture,” an informative brochure, also can be downloaded at the Attorney General's Web site at http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/consumers/brochures/methag_0505.pdf

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