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(Neb)-Tank Failures Spill 210,000 Gallons Of Fertilizer In Hemingford

By: John Axtell Posted at: 04/12/2019 11:58 PM
Courtesy Photo

HEMINGFORD, Neb. (AP) - Investigators are trying to determine why a group of 9 storage tanks at Farmer's Cooperative in Hemingford failed about 9:00 Wednesday morning, spilling 210,000 gallons of liquid fertilizer. There was no immediate hazard to any residents in the area.

Co-op general manager Bart Moseman said Friday that the Nebraska Dept of Environmental Quality was notified immediately and that the spill is under investigation with the DEQ also assessing the impact of the spill.

Hemingford Fire Chief Shad Bryner says 2 of the failed tanks contained roughly 40,000 gallons of water with the other 7 holding the liquid fertilizer ammonium polyphosphate. Much of the spillage flowed into storm drains, then into a ditch along Highway 2 for about half a mile outside of town.

Chief Bryner says Farmer's Co-op staff did a good job of getting to the scene of the spill right away and doing what they could to contain it with the help of firefighters and employees from other co-ops in containing and salvage as much of the spilled fertilizer as possible.

Moseman declines to put a dollar amount on the loss of either the tanks or fertilizer, describing it only as "considerable" with a "significant loss of inventory."

He offers a big "thank you" to 3 competitors - Westco, Simplot and Panhandle Co-op - for the staff and tankers they sent to help with the containment and salvage. Westco also provided a storage location for the salvaged fertilizer until a decision can be made on whether any of it can be reused.

The Hemingford Police Department, Box Butte County Sheriff's Office and Nebraska State Patrol all responded and provided traffic and site control.