

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Joann Flower at 3:30 p.m. on February 8, 1999, in Room 423-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Raney Gilliland, Legislative Research Department  
Kay Scarlett, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Kyle Smith, Assistant Attorney General and Special Agent, Kansas Bureau of Investigation  
Jim Schieferecke, forensic chemist, Kansas Bureau of Investigation  
Aaron Harries, Kansas Fertilizer and Chemical Association

Others attending: See attached list

Chairperson Flower asked committee members to review the minutes of February 1 and February 3. If there were corrections or additions, members were asked to contact the committee secretary before 10:00 a.m., February 9, or they will stand approved as presented.

Kyle Smith, Assistant Attorney General and Special Agent with the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, addressed the committee and gave a computerized presentation on the growth and risks involved with methamphetamine production. He reported that methamphetamine labs are multiplying across the state. He said that in 1994 there were 4 clandestine laboratories seized in Kansas; last year there were 189. As of February 7, 1999, he said that 50 labs had been seized, and if this pace continues, over 450 labs will be seized in Kansas this year. He noted that Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and California are the top producers of methamphetamine. He said these labs are contaminating our soil and water, causing fires and explosions, and endangering the safety of the people of Kansas.

Mr. Smith said that the chemicals involved in methamphetamine manufacture are inexpensive and readily available. One recipe for methamphetamine uses anhydrous ammonia which is normally stolen from farmers causing damage to equipment and presenting risks to the rightful owners who approach a tank in the field unaware of an open or damaged valve. He reported that a new, dangerous turn is for meth cooks to finish their process on deserted country roads or in public parks to avoid the danger of explosion and fire in their homes. He warned that innocent Kansas citizens are at risk of being shot and killed if they interrupt these operations. (Attachment 1)

Jim Schieferecke, forensic chemist with the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, answered committee questions and spoke on the chemicals involved in methamphetamine manufacture.

Aaron Harries, Kansas Fertilizer and Chemical Association, reiterated that the chemicals used to make methamphetamine are very volatile and explosions and fires often result. He said that meth thieves may use make-shift containers to hold the stolen anhydrous ammonia such as BBQ propane tanks or regular coolers. He reported that the latest trend is meth-lab equipment in vehicles. He explained that the maximum time from setup to cleanup is two hours, with the cook making the drug next to the anhydrous ammonia tank. Mr. Harries said farmers should remain observant and take note of strangers, suspicious vehicles, footprints around tanks, or items left laying around tanks. He encouraged them to contact the authorities, not to confront or attempt to stop suspicious people themselves. He said anhydrous ammonia tanks should be padlocked and kept in a well lighted area or along a high traffic area. (Attachment 2)

The meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 10, 1999.





# Kansas Bureau of Investigation

Larry Welch  
*Director*

Carla J. Stovall  
*Attorney General*

**House Agriculture Committee  
Feb. 8, 1999  
Testimony of Kyle G. Smith  
Assistant Attorney General  
And Special Agent  
Kansas Bureau of Investigation**

The safety of the people of Kansas is threatened by an epidemic. The plague is the production of methamphetamine. While manmade, this epidemic is no less deadly than any bacteria known to medical science. Meth labs are multiplying across our state at an incredible rate, spreading death and destruction. Clandestine laboratories producing methamphetamine are contaminating our soil and water, and causing fires and explosions. The people and children of Kansas are not only becoming addicts and dying from its use, but also are being poisoned and injured unknowingly when their neighbors operate these laboratories.

Chemicals involved include anhydrous ammonia, acids, red phosphorus, lye and acetone. These deadly chemicals are being handled by offenders with no chemistry background, no respect for pollution controls, no respect for life. In short, these criminals are contaminating our state and killing our citizens. The anhydrous is normally stolen from farmers causing damage to equipment and risks to the rightful owners who approach a tank in the field unaware of an open or damaged valve.

*House Agriculture Committee  
February 8, 1999  
Attachment 1*

The 'cooks' at clandestine laboratories are willing to expose their own children to these deadly fumes and explosions in pursuit of satisfying their need for profits and a need to fill their addiction. In one case in Kansas, a neighbor observed the operators of a methamphetamine laboratory risking their lives to repeatedly enter their burning trailerhome to recover their precious equipment and drugs while their children were still trapped in inside.

The drug itself is extremely addictive and has a pharmacological side effect of making a person paranoid. In addition, these individuals operate in an underworld where rip-offs are common, competitors are armed and law enforcement is constantly searching for them. Not surprisingly labs are sometimes booby-trapped and meth dealers are frequently heavily armed. A new dangerous turn is for meth cooks to finish their process on deserted country roads or in public parks to avoid the danger of explosion and fire in their homes. Innocent Kansas citizens traveling those roads, enjoying our parks, are at risk to being shot and killed if they interrupt these operations. After a meth cook has been completed, these hazardous chemicals are dumped on the ground, in street gutters or down waterlines, creating hazardous waste sites and polluting ground water. The cost for the cleanup of these sites runs to the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

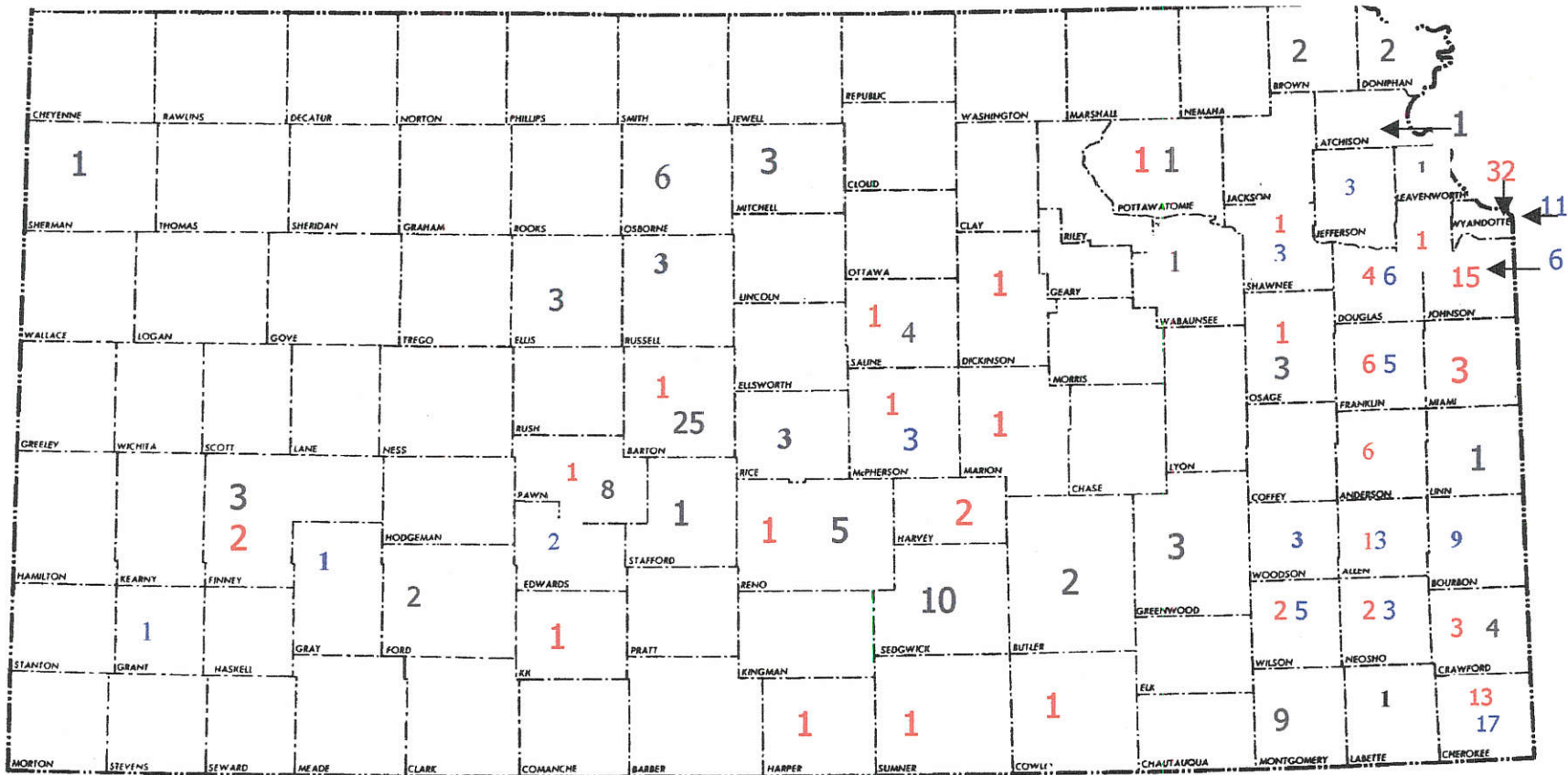
How big a problem are we facing? In 1994 there were 4 clandestine laboratories seized in Kansas. In 1995 that number rose to 7. In 1996 it skyrocketed to 71, a hundred-fold increase. In 1997 there were 99 clandestine laboratories seized. Last year there were 189. As of last yesterday, Feb. 7, 1999, 50 labs had been seized. If that pace continues, our law enforcement officers will be risking their lives in over 450 labs this year. Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and California are reported by the DEA to be the top producers of methamphetamine in the nation.

Last year Missouri took steps in their legislature to reverse this trend. Numerous initiatives were adopted by the Missouri legislature trying to attack this epidemic on every possible front. While we applaud Missouri's efforts, the real effect on Kansans is that it makes our state even more attractive to these purveyors of death, because of the increased difficulties and penalties now found in our neighbor to the east. It is imperative that Kansans take strong, decisive action in meeting the threat to our safety posed by methamphetamine.

I have a short computerized presentation on the growth and risks involved with methamphetamine production that I gave last December at the Council of State Governments annual meeting in San Antonio. I've added a couple of slides and I hope it will be helpful to the committee in understanding the extent of the problem. Attached to my testimony is a map showing the distribution of the labs seized last year and an excellent article on the problem that appeared in the Wichita Eagle this weekend. With me today is Jim Schieferecke, forensic chemist with the KBI's clandestine lab response team. We would be happy to address your questions.



# KANSAS CLANDESTINE METHAMPHETAMINE LABORATORY SEIZURES 1997 & 1998



1997 Seizures – 99 – KBI and DEA  
 1998 Seizures – 189- (1-1-98 through 01-01-99)  
 KBI and DEA

Source: KBI/DEA Records



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Updated SATURDAY February 6, 1999

### Crime and Courts

# Risks rising as drug labs continue to multiply

## As the number of meth labs continues to increase, more people are put in jeopardy by volatile vapors.

By Roy Wenzl and Tim Potter  
*The Wichita Eagle*

On Aug. 22, Ellis County sheriff's officers went to a farmhouse looking for a fugitive, but they found something much more dangerous.

About the same time they found the man, wanted for desecrating a cemetery, they stumbled upon a homemade methamphetamine lab.

In the minutes it took sheriff's officers to realize the danger the lab posed and evacuate the five residents, a deputy suffered serious lung damage after inhaling vapors from ether and anhydrous ammonia used to make the meth, said Undersheriff Bruce Hertel.

Hertel and others in law enforcement point to the incident in western Kansas as an example of how dangerous meth labs can be to public workers or innocent people who stumble upon them.

Particularly at risk are first-responders, including emergency medical technicians and firefighters.

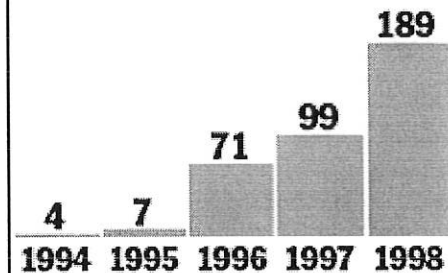
Already this year, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and other agencies have seized 47 methamphetamine labs, evidence the drug and the labs are rapidly becoming a serious threat to public safety throughout the state.

By this time last year, the KBI had taken down only nine labs.

"Deputies or police are stumbling across these labs, not knowing what they are; but this is becoming a significant health threat for everyone and not just for users or police," said Bruce Coffman, the KBI's senior special agent in charge of meth laboratory investigations. "We're starting to have SRS caseworkers stumble across these labs. Motel clerks are

### Meth busts

The number of methamphetamine labs busted up by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, federal Drug Enforcement Agency and other law enforcement agencies has skyrocketed. There have been 47 busts through Friday, compared to 9 busts by same date last year.



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finding them.

"Because of the fumes and the chemicals, the danger to life and health is immediate and could be very dangerous, even lethal."

In the past year, the KBI has trained 5,000 Kansas first-responders on how to avoid death or illness from the labs, Coffman says. There are tens of thousands first-responders in the state, says Sandi Gonzalez, a KBI intelligence analyst, and all are at risk of stumbling across meth labs because of their work.

### No injury tally

Meth labs are multiplying rapidly because drug dealers can make a lot of money from them. Authorities say \$300 worth of ingredients can produce \$3,000 in one night of lab work.

The chemicals used include some of the most toxic and explosive known. KBI and DEA agents never knowingly enter a suspected meth lab unless they wear protective suits and respirators.

No one is keeping a tally on meth injuries in the state, Coffman said, but many more people are likely to be hurt. At least five law enforcement officers, Coffman among them, have been injured, Gonzalez said.

"We've had a couple of filter failures on the respirators we use inside those labs," Coffman said.

"The stuff gets you right away. When I had my problem, I had just taken off my mask; it was hot, I was sweating, and the chemicals go right for your moisture, your nose, lungs or skin. All of a sudden my face just lit up (with burning), and I had to go run to a tank and dunk myself."

Many sheriff's deputies don't have training on how to deal with meth labs, Coffman says, and that makes even a routine traffic stop dangerous.

"A deputy's first move, if he finds a bottle of an unusual chemical, might be to open it and take a sniff; and that could be very dangerous, even fatal."

So far this year, Wichita police have confiscated several labs or supplies of chemicals used to make meth. Wichita, like the rest of the state, also is seeing a marked increase in lab busts, said police Lt. Joe Cutcliff.

### Dangerous ingredients

Also known as "speed" or "crank," methamphetamine is an addictive and illegal stimulant whose use is rising rapidly in Kansas. The drug attracts users because for a price comparable to cocaine, meth provides a longer high. An ounce of meth goes for roughly \$900 on Wichita streets, Cutcliff said.

The state Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services treated 187 hard-core meth users in 1994. The number rose to 682 in 1997 and hit 1,030 last year. Of those 1,030, about two-thirds were from rural areas. Sedgwick, Shawnee and Wyandotte counties accounted for the

remaining third.

Homemade labs are simple and often turn up in private homes, motel rooms, camper trailers and even the trunks of cars. Each lab has the danger equivalent of an Environmental Protection Agency toxic waste site, authorities say. Each site costs the Drug Enforcement Administration about \$3,500 to clean up. So the 44 labs seized so far in Kansas this year will cost about \$154,000; the 189 labs seized last year cost about \$661,500.

The cooks generally concoct small batches, a few ounces at a time, to supply themselves and others.

The ingredients include battery acid, several varieties of lye, red phosphorous, cold medicines and anhydrous ammonia, the chemical farmers use to help fertilize some fields.

"The boiling point of anhydrous ammonia is minus 33 degrees centigrade, and it's stored in those tanks you see at co-ops," Coffman said. "The meth makers are stealing the stuff, bleeding some of these tanks of anhydrous ammonia at night and putting it in little containers. If you get a whiff of that, it could kill you instantly."

The KBI has another worry about the labs, Coffman said. Because of the toxic chemicals, and the regular exposure he and the 12 lab agents endure, the agency is concerned exposure could lead to cancer or blood disorders, he said.

In the Ellis County incident where the deputy suffered lung damage, the deputy has recovered enough to return to work, said Hertel, the undersheriff. He declined to name the deputy.

At one point, the meth-lab damage had reduced the deputy's lung capacity 35 percent, Hertel said. The deputy is still receiving treatment, and it is unclear how much lung damage will remain, he said.

"With the fumes in that house," Hertel said, "it's a wonder the whole house didn't blow."

**Roy Wenzl can be reached at 268-6219 or [rwenzl@wichitaeagle.com](mailto:rwenzl@wichitaeagle.com).**

**Tim Potter can be reached at 268-6684 or at [tpotter@wichitaeagle.com](mailto:tpotter@wichitaeagle.com).**

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A new method for making the drug - methamphetamine - is starting to show up in Kansas. One of the main ingredients used is **ANHYDROUS AMMONIA**

The illegal meth lab operators are bringing containers into CO-OP's asking to have them filled with anhydrous ammonia or going directly to the anhydrous tanks in the fields and filling them.

The illegal meth lab operators are storing their anhydrous ammonia in 20 lb. gas bottles like those used on barbecue grills.

The anhydrous ammonia degrades the brass fittings and valves on those bottles turning them blue or green and making them prone to failure.

**ANYONE** who has come in contact with persons trying to purchase anhydrous ammonia or if your anhydrous ammonia tanks have been tampered with please notify: your local sheriff's office *or the Kansas Bureau of Investigation at 1-800-KS-CRIME in conjunction with Farmland Industries, Inc.*

## What are the SYMPTOMS OF USE?

Some of the symptoms of methamphetamine use are:

- Sleeplessness
- Loss of appetite and weight loss
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Elevated body temperature
- Skin ulceration and infection, the result of picking at imaginary bugs
- Paranoia
- Depression
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Increased blood pressure
- Seizures
- For pregnant women - premature labor, detachment of the placenta, and low birth weight babies with possible neurological damage.
- For intravenous (IV) users - AIDS, hepatitis, infections and sores at the injection site, and infection of the heart lining and valves.



## METH vs. COCAINE?

Methamphetamine is generally cheaper than cocaine and - because the body metabolizes it more slowly - much longer lasting. Methamphetamine's effects may last as much as

ten times longer than a cocaine user's high. With its long-lasting effects, methamphetamine binges may last up to a week, while cocaine binges rarely continue for more than 72 hours. When heavy cocaine users experience paranoia, it almost always disappears once the binge ends. For methamphetamine users, however, severe disturbance of mood and thought may be sustained well beyond the binge. Not infrequently, they persist for days, sometimes weeks. Similarly, the methamphetamine crash is more prolonged, and drug-related depression that users may experience upon awakening can be more severe than any experienced by cocaine users.

## What is HIDTA?

In December 1996, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), Executive Office of the President of the United States, designated identified counties in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota as the Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA). The designation including Kansas resulted from Kansas seeing an explosion in the clandestine manufacturing of methamphetamine by small entrepreneurial users/dealers, primarily utilizing the ephedrine or pseudoephedrine reduction process. Additionally, with the interstate highway system and air/rail hub infrastructure, organizations utilize the Central United States for importation and distribution.

HIDTA is a consortium of law enforcement, prosecution, forensic laboratory and demand reduction professionals who are combining resources and expertise to combat the increase in methamphetamine trafficking and production.

HIDTA was established to promote investigator safety, reduce duplicative efforts, and increase coordination, cooperation, and technological advancement. The mission of the Midwest HIDTA is to reduce and disrupt the importation, distribution, and clandestine manufacture of methamphetamine in the five state region.

# METHAMPHETAMINE



If you have information on a Methamphetamine Laboratory call:

## 1-800-KS CRIME



Prepared by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and the United States Attorney's Office to support the Midwest HIDTA Demand Reduction Initiative Program

## What is methamphetamine?

A drug with immense abuse potential, methamphetamine (known on the street as "speed," "meth," "crank," "crystal-meth," and "glass") is a central nervous system stimulant of the amphetamine family. Like cocaine, it is a powerful "upper" that produces alertness, and elation, along with a variety of adverse reactions. The effects of methamphetamine, however, are much longer lasting than the effects of cocaine, but the cost is much the same. For that reason, methamphetamine is sometimes called the "poor man's cocaine."

As with many drugs, methamphetamine, if prescribed by a physician, is legally available in the United States for the treatment of attention deficit disorders and obesity. Unfortunately, much of the methamphetamine available on the street is illicit methamphetamine from clandestine laboratories in the United States.

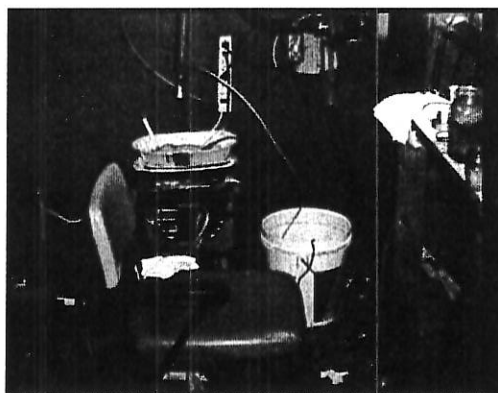
Production originally concentrated in clandestine labs throughout the Western and Southwestern United States, but has spread to the Central United States and beyond. In addition to the clandestine laboratories in the United States, organized crime groups in Mexico appear responsible for increased methamphetamine production on both sides of the border during the 1990's.

## Is there Methamphetamine in KANSAS?

Law enforcement and substance abuse centers in Kansas have observed an increase in the prevalence of methamphetamine. The Kansas Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services reported an increase of 359% in methamphetamine primary problem admissions from Fiscal Year 1994 to Fiscal Year 1997. The Kansas Highway Patrol reported Interdiction Unit seizures for methamphetamine increasing from 1994 to 1997. Clandestine laboratory seizures reported to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and Drug

Enforcement Agency in Kansas have also increased over the same period, as can be seen in the chart below. These seizures reflect reported occurrences throughout the State of Kansas, not just the metropolitan areas.

	KHP SEIZURES (In pounds)	CLANDESTINE LABS SEIZED
1994	6.9	4
1995	9.9	7
1996	21.5	71
1997	59	99



## What is a CLANDESTINE LABORATORY?

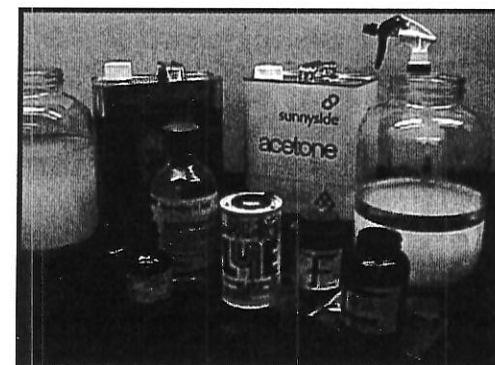
A clandestine laboratory is a laboratory used for the primary purpose of illicitly (illegally) manufacturing controlled substances, such as cocaine and methamphetamine. Clandestine labs are typically small, utilizing common household appliances, glassware, and readily available chemicals. While some clandestine laboratories may be located in industrial areas, they are most frequently located in residential areas.

There are many different methods for producing methamphetamine. Each method has its own inherent dangers. Many of the chemicals used are caustic or corrosive, and some of the processes create noxious and harmful fumes.

11-11  
Additionally, many of the chemicals can be found in common household items such as lantern fuel, cleaners, acetone, muriatic acid, and diet pills.

## What are the DANGERS?

Clandestine laboratories present numerous hazards to people and the environment. Extreme potential for fires, explosions, and exposure to hazardous chemicals and fumes are but a few. Additionally, clandestine labs are considered hazardous waste sites and should only be entered by trained and equipped professionals. Anyone finding a clandestine laboratory should leave it alone and immediately contact local law enforcement or the Kansas Bureau of Investigation at 1-800-KS CRIME



## How is it TAKEN?

Methamphetamine can be ingested, inhaled, or injected. It is sold as a powder or in small chunks which resemble rock candy. It can be mixed with water for injection or sprinkled on tobacco or marijuana and smoked. Chunks of clear, high-purity methamphetamine ("ice," "crystal," "glass") are smoked in a small pipe, much as "crack" cocaine is smoked. Since methamphetamine will vaporize rapidly, some heat the drug and inhale the fumes that are released.

# 1-800-KS CRIME



# ARA TIP Sheet

Information to improve your operation  
From the Agricultural Retailers Association

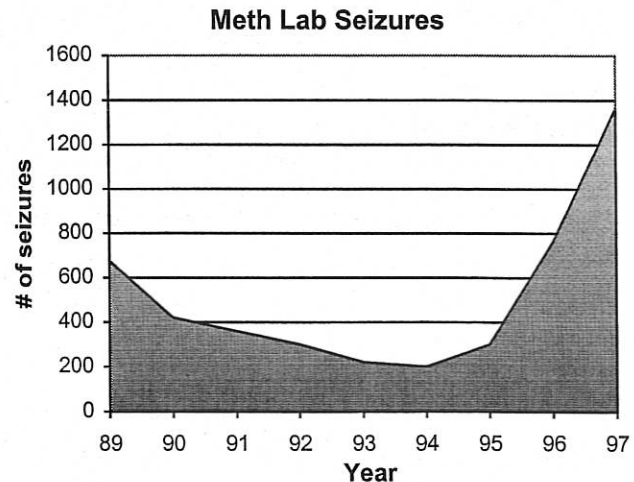
August, 1998



## Ag retailer facilities and customers are easy targets for methamphetamine (meth) "cooks" who need anhydrous ammonia.

### FACTS:

- Methamphetamine isn't simply a drug abuse problem, it is a public safety problem.
- In 1994, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) started seeing a new type of meth lab, which uses anhydrous ammonia. This meth recipe is known as the Nazi recipe because the original German patent, published during WWII, bore the Nazi eagle emblem. This method was unique to rural, southwestern Missouri, but has spread to other midwestern states.
- Thieves often take just 20-30 pounds of anhydrous ammonia, which is easily unnoticed by retailers.
- From 1993 to 1997, meth lab seizures in the U.S. have increased from 270 to 1,431. A drastic increase has been seen in the Midwest.
- Although Mexican meth labs produce the largest amount of meth sold in the U.S., smaller labs are much more dangerous as far as community safety because these "mom and pop" labs often have inexperienced cooks.
- California and Missouri have more meth lab seizures and California by-far produces the largest amounts of meth out of all U.S. states.
- Meth "cooks" prefer rural areas because it is easier to avoid outside contact and they can recruit help from migrant workers, such as those in Calif., Iowa and Ariz.
- The chemicals used to make meth are very volatile and explosions and fires often result with inexperienced cooks.
- For each pound of meth produced, 5-6 pounds of toxic by-products are produced. Meth cooks often dump toxic by-products from meth production on farmland.
- Meth thieves may use rough, make-shift containers to hold the stolen anhydrous ammonia such as BBQ propane tanks or regular coolers. Thieves may not realize that the brass fittings on the propane tanks are corroded by anhydrous ammonia.
- The latest trend is meth-lab equipment in vehicles. Maximum time from setup to cleanup for the Nazi method is two hours. Cooks can make the drug next to the tank.
- Meth recipe ingredients are closely watched by authorities. For example, ingredients that can be bought from local drug stores cannot be sold in large quantities. Likewise, other sources of anhydrous ammonia, such as welding shops and lab supply stores are taking extra steps to secure their ammonia



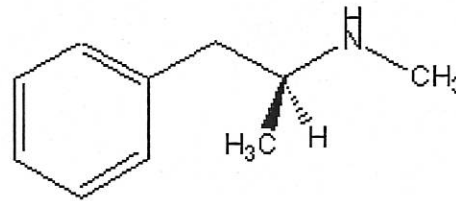
*Newse Agriculture Committee  
February 8, 1999  
Attachment 2*



from theft. As these sources become more difficult to tap, thieves will seek out easier, unsecured sources. This makes it even more important that ag retailers take steps to prevent theft on their tanks.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

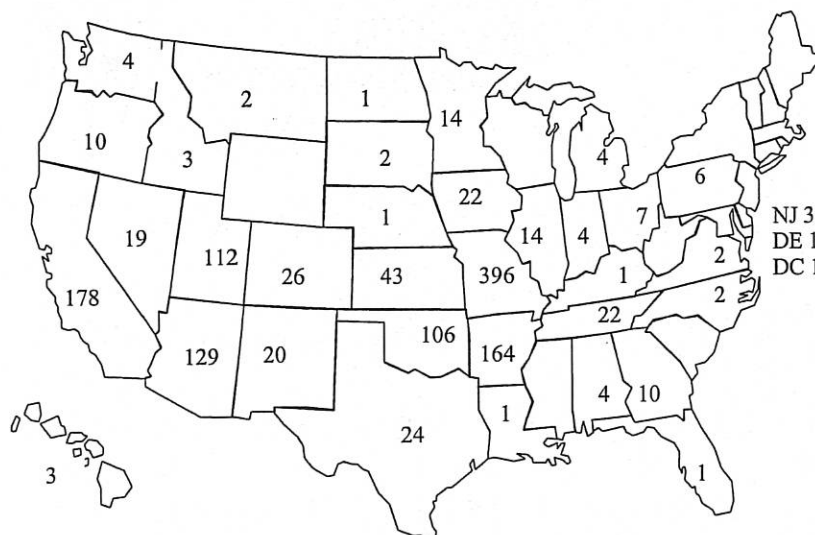
- Meth is also known as speed, crank, ice, crystal and has been called "the poor man's cocaine" due to its low price and its euphoric rush, similar to cocaine.
- Nationally, the typical, regular meth user is white, male, middle income and between the ages of 19 to 40 years-old. Usage is increasing among college students and inner city blacks. Meth is also becoming more popular at teenage rave parties.
- Meth is highly addictive. Users may experience increased energy, lack of sleep and decreased appetite. Long term use can cause mental confusion, severe anxiety, violence, paranoia, tremors and death.
- Meth can be smoked, injected and inhaled and can last eight to 24 hours.
- A recent study in Iowa shows that meth is a contributing factor in 80 percent of domestic violence incidences in that state.



**Meth Chemical Structure**

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Help educate others in your community about this growing problem.
- Remain observant and take note of odd customers, suspicious cars, footprints around tanks, items left laying around tanks, etc. Make a point of ensuring all dust caps are on the valves each night –thieves rarely take time to put them back in place after they tap the tank. Thieves may leave items laying around, such as duct tape or garden hoses.
- Keep in close contact with local authorities. You may notice something that can help local, state and federal authorities bust a lab in your area. If you suspect a theft, contact your local police department immediately. They may contact drug experts within the department or call for assistance from federal drug apprehension groups. And, local authorities who bust a nazi lab may appreciate your help and expertise in disposing of anhydrous ammonia they seize from a lab.
- Don't confront or attempt to stop suspicious people yourself. Many times, anhydrous ammonia thieves are high on meth which means they may have not slept or eaten in days and are very paranoid. They are extremely dangerous. In fact, thieves may throw the ammonia on people who approach them and try to stop them.



**Meth Lab Seizures 1997** \* Source: DEA

- Consider keeping anhydrous ammonia tanks in good lighting or along a high traffic area.
- Consider locking up tanks with padlocks. Or, consider a locked fence area for the tanks.