



## STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE REPORT

# Calcium Nitrate and Anhydrous Ammonia



On October 9, 2006, the State of Iowa announced the development of a “chemical lock” which may assist in limiting the use of anhydrous ammonia in the local manufacture of methamphetamine. Marvin Van Haften, Director of the Governor’s Office of Drug Control Policy announced that calcium nitrate would be added on a voluntary basis to the 26,000 anhydrous ammonia tanks located throughout the State of Iowa. The plan calls for the substance to be injected into the tanks semi-annually, and for the placement of stickers on the tanks indicating the presence of the additive. The cost of the injection was estimated at \$24.00 per tank.

A six year research study at Iowa State University found that adding the calcium nitrate to the anhydrous ammonia tanks renders the ammonia useless in the manufacture of methamphetamine. The goal of the study was to find a chemical which would effectively prevent the use of anhydrous ammonia without further endangering the environment. The study was conducted in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

According to the research (confirmed by DEA forensic tests), methamphetamine cooks typically get a 42% yield from pseudoephedrine when making methamphetamine. When the calcium nitrate is added to the anhydrous ammonia, the yield reportedly drops to two percent or less.

In May 2005, the State of Iowa enacted legislation limiting the sale of products containing pseudoephedrine. All such products were placed behind the store counters and customers have to sign a log when buying such products. Since 2004, the number of methamphetamine laboratory seizures in the State of Iowa

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has dropped 81% from 541 to 103. (Note: This figure is only for laboratory seizures, and does not include chemical dumpsites and glassware seizures.)

The state hopes that the new chemical lock will further limit the ability of methamphetamine cooks within the state and reduce the threat from the highly dangerous clandestine laboratories. This decline may be offset by the efforts by Mexican trafficking organizations to bring high-purity ice methamphetamine into Iowa through their well established smuggling routes.

Because of the combination of factors, it will be very difficult to determine the cause for a decline in methamphetamine laboratory seizures in Iowa or in any other state. In addition to new laws and Mexican ice, other factors which might contribute to decline in laboratory seizures include shifts in law enforcement priorities and a lack of reporting to the EPIC database.

DEA will continue to question sources of information and examine data from all sources to assess the methamphetamine situation in Iowa.

If you have any questions, call GS Jim Ramage, Strategic Intelligence Group, at 314-538-4876.