

Pesticide legislation in greenkeeping

OCTOBER 6 1986 was a momentous day for the chemical industry. After decades of non-statutory codes of conduct on the development, marketing and use of products, it signalled the change to statutory controls which will not only affect chemical manufacturers, but anybody involved in selling them through the established distribution chain in the UK. From January 1 1989, users of these same products will also be controlled.

By Michael Coffey

The chemical industry is, of course, deeply involved in the new statutes. It needs to be because it will be most affected. Within this side of our industry, plans have been made for a number of years, expecting the inevitable and consulting with government to ensure a smooth transition from non-statutory codes to legally demanding controls.

There was a simple aim to the legislation, based on part three of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985. This was: 'to protect the health of human beings, creatures and plants; to safeguard the environment and to secure safe, efficient and humane methods of controlling pests.'

The act gave ministers the power to:

- Control the import, sale, supply, storage, use and advertisement of pesticides.
- Make information supplied in connection with the control of pesticides available to the public.
- Enforce these provisions with powers of seizure, disposal or remedial action.
- Call for data on all products.
- Issue codes of practice.

- Charge fees.
 - Authorise enforcement officers.
- These are the main issues likely to affect greenkeepers with, of course, the first being the most pertinent.

Let us go back to the key dates. From October 6 1986, only *approved* pesticides were able to be supplied, stored or used. Only *provisionally* or *fully approved* pesticides were able to be sold.

This definition of approval is rather different from the old meaning. Until October 6, approval applied to products officially awarded the 'A' mark by the old Agricultural Chemicals Approvals Scheme (ACAS). Products cleared on safety grounds under the old Pesticides Safety Precautions Scheme (PSPS) were allowed to be sold and used, but manufacturers could, if they wished, submit to ACAS the necessary data on efficacy after two years' use under commercial conditions.

This scheme was non-statutory and mainly designed for agriculture, where proof of efficacy was usually required before farmers risked the use on expensive and valuable crops. It had no meaningful use in the amenity pesticide industry, although many people, most notably local authority unions, refused to use any product without the 'A' mark.

After October 6, the word 'approval' embraced both safety and efficacy. To meet the statutory requirements, manufacturers have to submit data on both aspects before ministers will grant full approval.

This has, perhaps, been rather long-winded, but with legislation now controlling all aspects of pesticides, all users can be sure

that the product chosen and bought will have been effective in proper trials, or is undergoing that process.

This is, of course, only of academic interest to greenkeepers who will usually know what product suits them and which is the best to control the various weed, disease or whatever other problems their course is afflicted with.

What is of more interest is the control on the users of pesticides from January 1 1989. From this date, any user who was born on or after December 31 1964 will need to possess a certificate of competence or else be working under the direct supervision of someone with a recognised certificate.

A certificate is also required for anyone using pesticides in the course of commercial service, such as contractors. Included here also are greenkeepers who may occasionally offer neighbouring clubs a spraying service whether or not a payment of any kind is involved.

Tests of competence for spray operators are being developed by the National Proficiency Tests Council (NPTC), but are not likely to be set up until mid-1987. This leaves only 18 months to handle tests and issue certificates to all who require them. It may be helpful to note here that there is bound to be a long queue for the services of the NPTC. It has 52 county committees and they will be responsible for not only testing greenkeepers, but farmers, contractors, local authority groundstaff and all other categories who would be affected.

It seems clear that help will be needed. As a start, one of the first

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duties of BIGGA should perhaps be to organise and coordinate the applications to the NPTC for testing. This coordination will not come cheap and a relevant source of finance is perhaps the contribution made to the Greenkeeper Training Committee by ICI Professional Products through the PGA European Tour. I understand that the 1986 contribution has yet to be allocated to a specific use.

Keith Cleverly, manager of ICI Professional Products, is committed to helping the industry through these complicated procedures. Keith initiated the Amenity Horticulture Committee of the British Pest Control Association and, as an executive board member, is actively involved in managing the training and certification of the ICI distributors who have joined the BPCA. These distributors are, perhaps, more affected than greenkeepers as they need to obtain a certificate of competence by January 1 1988 to sell pesticides. The chairman of the Amenity Horticulture Committee of the BPCA is Len Breakwell.

In the course of 1987, information about how to pass the NPTC tests will come from ICI and any help in matters of chemical application is always available from the company's Farnham office or territory managers. Similar services may also be offered by other manufacturers and distributors.

Greenkeeper plans to keep fully up to date with developments and will report regularly on details of courses and NPTC tests. In the meantime, it would do no harm for BIGGA regional representatives to get to know their local NPTC man.

Barrus and Bunton get together



The Bunton 22in greens mower complete with powered rotary brush between the front roller and cutting reel.

"Until recently, the activities of E.P. Barrus were principally confined to outboard motors and garden machinery," Robert Bennett, company chairman and managing director, said, "but we have formed a new division to handle professional grass-care machinery and now represent Bunton, which manufactures products in the USA and Denmark."

The impressive company headquarters at Bicester is well-equipped to handle sales enquiries. After eight years of yeoman service, the Barrus computer has been put out to grass and has now been replaced by a brand new IBM system 600 megabyte unit with 27 terminals. Each sales desk has its own terminal that allows orders to be entered as customers dictate them by phone.

Bunton is well-known to American superintendents, for it has been building commercial mowers for over 35 years. Today, the company markets its equipment all over the world through a network of distributors specialising in turf products for professionals. The product line includes multi-purpose grounds maintenance tractors, commercial rotary mowers with cutting widths from 12 to 61 inches, greens-

mowers, edgers, trimmers and a variety of other specialised equipment.

The Bunton special 22in greens mower, manufactured in Japan, has a powered rotary brush mounted between the front roller and the reel. The brush rotates in the opposite direction to raise the grass before it is cut and is easily adjusted to suit the pitch of the bottom blade. The brush can be raised to reduce the amount of pressure on the grass or disengaged completely. A verticut attachment for thatching is also available.

To ensure a stable and straight cut, equal power is supplied to both sides of the heavy gauge aluminium alloy drive roller. The nine-blade, cutting reel is resilient and resistant to wear due to its hardened steel construction.

The machine is fitted with a standard handbrake to aid transportation over slopes and banks. Quick-release wheels have pneumatic transport tyres, which give good adhesion on uphill ground. It has an all-gear drive train and a four-cycle Robin engine.

Other features include a plastic grass box designed to catch all the cuttings and hold them.

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