Structure eliminates hazardous spills

BY MARK LESLIE

The president of a lawn-care business said an Ohio Turfgrass Conference audience recently that his firm has "virtually eliminated any serious consequences" from the spills that hazardous materials applicators live in fear of today.

Fred Haskett said that although "accidents are going to happen," the chemical storage building he and other officials at Green World in Dover, Ohio, designed and built provides complete protection.

Haskett said the 2,500-square-foot pesticide containment area—covering half Green World's building—was designed to:

• Contain spills.
• Recycle chemicals.
• Provide for safely handling hazardous materials.
• Protect water, sewer and storm drainage systems.

In much the same facility, he said, is crucial to golf courses and the lawn-care industry as a whole, and, in a worst-case scenario, provides a payback of two to three years.

"We are being watched by a whole host of groups, for a variety of reasons, from the federal government and national groups, to state and local agencies, to private citizens," Haskett said. "And the underlying question is: can we back up our methods, both in the areas of external and internal operations?"

"One accident, one spill, could result in the loss of your business, or the loss of your insurance carrier and your ability to buy insurance," he said.

"You should, as professional, safety-conscious operators, be in compliance on this issue. Your association (Ohio Turfgrass Association) supports it. Your trade journals supply it. Your suppliers to the industry support it.

"The issues are safety and, especially, waste disposal. They loom very large on the horizon for all of us."

"Sooner or later there will be no choice," he said, "I think those of us who have dealt with it on our own terms, head-on, will be better off than those who bury their heads in the sand."

Haskett cited three basic benefits to building the spill-containment structure: economic, environmental, and employee protection.

Economic benefits

"Our estimates are that a company such as mine could be spending as much as $5,000 a year simply waste-product disposal," he said. His building can reduce disposal costs, which can be "astronomical," according to Haskett, includes:

• A secondary containment area; and a spill containment area.

• Provide water, sewer and storm drainage systems.

Haskett's creation can contain any spill Green World might have.

"Accidents are going to happen. We are limiting their impact by containing them. We have virtually eliminated any serious consequences from these events," Haskett said. "And with our recovery system we can recover or recycle all spilled materials... by integrating the storage and mixing systems on site."

A smaller container is used for the same types of residues from ornamental, tree and shrub spray. A third tank is available for non-selective vegetation control residues.

Safe handling

"Another aspect of this system is that it can help establish, or enhance, a program of pesticide handling safety," Haskett said. The separate areas are well-defined, and with the addition of signage and color-coded areas, they serve as a warning and a reminder to the employees as they move about the shop.

Additional features such as emergency eye washers and showers and fire extinguishers are easily accommodated within this system, he said.

"We have a segregated sink within the primary containment area for washing or rinsing gloves and small sprayers, things of that nature, and this falls through into the recycling area," he said.

"Finally, all of our offices and public access areas are completely segregated from all shop areas."

Water and sewer protection

Meanwhile, the system offers protection from contaminating the water, sewer and storm-drainage systems in the area.

The primary protection for fresh water coming into the building is a backflow preventer. In addition, all water outlets except rest rooms are equipped with hand-siphoning devices.

Ground water and sewer system protection

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Green World also has coating on the floors and walls that is chemical- and water-resistant, thus inhibiting spills and allowing workers to recover them.

"The other sections of the building, which support our mowing and maintenance operation, are equipped with discharges into the normal sewer system; but they are also equipped with oil and sediment interceptors," Haskett said.

Haskett said his company went through the government system, getting authorized documentation and approval from local and state regulatory agencies and departments, starting with local health, water, sewer and zoning officials and ending with the Environmental Protection Agency.

Detailed charts and graphs and schematics were prepared appraising the specifics of the building, where the water comes into the building and where it leads in various sites and how it's recovered; what is done with container disposal and triple-rinsing; and where the finished product formulation and usage goes.

The result, Haskett said, is a system that Ohio EPA described to us as the best available technology of this type.

"It provides us with protection from accidents and with handling. It has helped us significantly with public opinion in town among the department heads and municipal people we deal with. It has helped us significantly with insurance rates. And it has established for us a positive relationship with the people who regulate us," he said.

Haskett, who has formed a consulting and design firm to help businesses interested in this type of pesticide containment building, said: "Let's send a new message: that we are a safety-conscious industry; that we are not afraid of good regulation; that we are protecting the environment in and around our facilities; that we are protecting our employees and our neighbors.

"We are only helping ourselves when we do this."

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Nicklaus, Palmer to design portion of major project

A$750-million destination resort that will include 45 Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer-designed golf holes is being planned for the U.S.-owned island of Guam.

Johnson Fain and Perreira Associates, a Los Angeles-based international architectural/planning firm, is doing the master plan and design of 1,300-acre Miyama Hills resort community will include two-hour flight from Tokyo), the American tourism market (Guam is a major project

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