

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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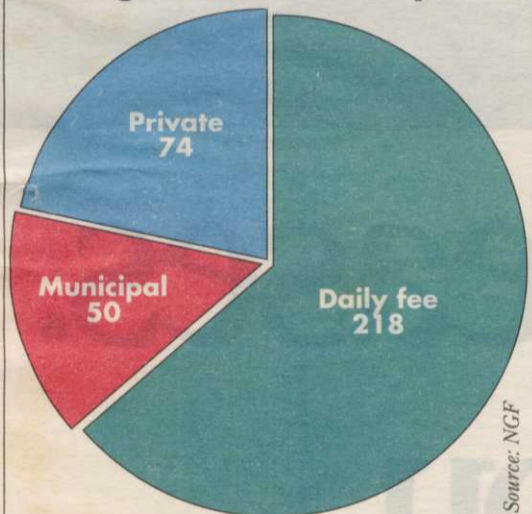
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1991 golf course development



Golf course openings in 1991 totaled 342, according to National Golf Foundation statistics. That compares to 289 in 1990.

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Bloch vows research to continue

By Mark Leslie

The new president of the United States Golf Association confirmed the organization will remain dedicated to turfgrass and environmental research, and predicted a wide range of results exciting to the industry.

Stuart F. Bloch, an investment broker in Wheeling, W.Va., who has a long history of involvement with the agronomy of golf courses, said: "The

Executive Committee is behind this research 100 percent. We make a lot of money in the U.S. Open and I think, what better way to spend it than research?"

Bloch, a golfer for 49 years, was green committee



Stuart Bloch

chairman at his club for 18 years and has served as a USGA board member.

The successor to C. Grant Spaeth of Palo Alto, Calif., he said he has gotten "a lot out of golf... and not many people get the chance to put as much back in the game as you do when you get involved like this. And when you get to be president, then you've really got the ultimate experience."

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From wetland to country club, American architect Gary Roger Baird made magnificent use of his design skills and the construction know-how of developers of The Royal Gems Golf and Sports Complex in Bangkok, Thailand. An 11-foot-high levy needed to be built around

the property and the land was drained before construction could begin on the \$100-million project. Baird said 75 laborers worked four months hand-laying the stonework in the double-tiered sand bunkers.

Photo courtesy of Gary Roger Baird Design International, Ltd.

EPA not doing enough to curb pesticide use, advocate says

By Peter Blais

The Golf industry and federal government are not doing enough to keep pesticides off golf courses, according to the head of an anti-pesticide advocacy group.

Jay Feldman, national coordinator of the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides, made that charge during last month's Golf Course Superintendents Association of America International Conference and Show in New Orleans.

Joining Feldman on an environmental panel were Victor Kimm, the Environmental Protection Agency's deputy assistant administrator for

pesticides and toxic substances, and ABC Television's John Stossel, news analyst and environmental reporter on the show 20/20.

THE CASE AGAINST PESTICIDES

The environmental community's long-term goal is to work together with the golf industry and EPA on pesticide use, Feldman said. But in the short term, EPA Programs are inadequate, he added.

Over 600 potentially active ingredients, many of which are found in golf cure pesticides, have not been adequately tested by the EPA, Feldman said.

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Wetlands expert advises: Use common sense

By Peter Blais

With revisions to the federal wetlands laws still months away, golf course developers need to follow some common sense guidelines when building near the environmentally sensitive areas, according to a landscape architect.

The Army Corps of Engineers will evaluate proposals with two criteria in mind, according to Barbara Beall of The LA Group in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., who spoke at the recent Golf Course Superintendents Association of America International Conference and Show in New Orleans.

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Shields is TPC's Super of the Year

By Peter Blais

Tighue Shields of the Tournament Players Club of Scottsdale near Phoenix has been named the TPC system's Superintendent of the Year.

Shields, 41, has worked in course maintenance 22 years,

including 15 at Arizona Country Club. He worked briefly at TPC at Star Pass in Tucson before taking over at Scottsdale in 1989.

"Tighue is one of the best managers in our group," said Cal Roth, director of maintenance

operations for the TPC network's 12 courses and PGA Tour Investments. "He runs a truly professional operation. The course is immaculate every day. He is organized and his crew is motivated and well

Continued on page 4



NEWSPAPER

Kimm defends EPA's position while Stossel

Continued from page 1

Inert ingredients, metabolites and contaminants also found in pesticides are potentially dangerous to the environment and human health, he added.

Agriculture uses far more pesticides overall than the golf and lawn-care industries, Feldman acknowledged. But golf courses use four to seven times as much pesticides per treated acre as most farms. For example, golf courses average 18 pounds per acre of pesticide compared to just 2.3 pounds for soybeans.

"In terms of potential exposure and environmental contamination, we have to look at rates of application," he said.

Yet no EPA mechanism exists for reviewing information on the harmful effects or risks of pesticide use on golf courses, Feldman said. Ten of the 34 major turf pesticides have been associated with cancer in animal studies, he added.

The EPA is charged with weighing the risks against the benefits of using pesticides, Feldman noted. Yet EPA does not require routine efficacy studies to determine if new golf course pesticides are effective, he said. Such studies are only done if it becomes obvious there is a problem.

"You (superintendents) are the benefit decision makers out there," Feldman said. "You buy the pesticide. The EPA assumes it works, otherwise you wouldn't buy it."

When EPA reviews a chemical, it simply looks at the economic cost of replacing it with another chemical, instead of also examining alternatives to chemical treatments, such as Integrated Pest Management strategies, Feldman said.

"We are saying that we should ask 'What are the most appropriate alternatives?' What benefits are being derived that can't be reasonably achieved through some other method," Feldman said.

"For turf, we're saying look at grass varieties that are suitable for local conditions. They may not be the prettiest and they may not be the ones you want to use in your area. But let's take a look at them.

"We need to look at heterogeneous lawn culture, high organic matter, proper soil pH, mowing height, infrequent watering and monitoring.

"Many of you say 'Well, I do all that. I spray pesticides and I have my pesticide counts down 50 percent from what they were five years ago.' We want to see more than that. We want to push you. Our goal is to get to cultural practices that eliminate (pesticides) where possible."

Eighty percent of Americans identify themselves as environmentalists, Feldman said. To implement those environmentalist beliefs will require re-evaluating pesticide production, application, disposal and storage, he added.

The potential for accidents, spills and misapplications of pesticides must also be factored into any risk assessment, the advocacy group leader said. The EPA doesn't take those possibili-

ties into consideration, he added.

"We cannot rely on the EPA registration number. It doesn't assure us of safety. The EPA needs to come up with a checklist of the least-toxic criteria and we need to make management decisions that identify the least hazardous of the arsenal of materials available. Your trade association (GCSAA) should be helping you come up with this list," Feldman concluded.

THE EPA'S RESPONSE

The EPA's goal is also to reduce golf course pesticide use, countered Kimm.

The federal agency is currently re-registering many chemicals. In fact, more EPA testing of pesticides is taking place than ever before, the 21-year agency veteran said.

What concerns Kimm is the "widespread" migration of pesticides into ground water. EPA nationwide studies revealed pesticides in 10 percent of public wells and 4 percent of domestic wells. That means traces of pesticides can likely be found in hundreds of thousands of wells throughout the United States, he said.

But the same studies "rarely" show pesticides occurring at levels that present health risks, he added.

"We are not looking at a major health risk. But we are looking at an emerging problem. It is important that the agency and the states get serious about pesticide use so we don't get into much more serious problems down the road," Kimm said.

How is EPA dealing with ground water contamination?

The primary focus is on prevention, keeping pesticides out of ground water before they pose sig-

nificant risks, Kimm said.

Second, how and in what quantity contamination occurs is such a localized issue that it needs to be addressed in different ways, ranging from outright pesticide bans to reduced application frequencies to increased use of biologicals, Kimm said.

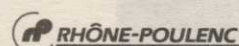
Third is the need for flexibility. EPA realizes the different circumstances in different regions of the country and is turning power over to the states to determine how to deal with pesticides through State Management Plans.

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CIRCLE #138

explains media's role in environmental issues

The EPA will recommend that chemicals having significant leaching potential not be used in states without sufficient State Management Plans.

"We believe this is the appropriate way of dealing with the long-term problem," the EPA administrator said.

The chemical reregistration process is well underway. Public concern is generating much new information about pesticides. Manufacturers have been very cooperative about sharing that information, Kimm said.

A safer pesticides policy is being issued for public comment, Kimm added. IPM, biological controls and judicious pesticide use are being encouraged to reduce overall chemical applications.

As for the State Management Plans, many states have received EPA seed money to begin the process and 61 states and other government entities are developing such plans, Kimm said.

The short-term impact of these changes on golf will probably be the limiting or restriction of some products, Kimm said.

The long-term impact should be increased public confidence concerning the safety of pesticide use, he added.

"This fading public confidence in government across the board, EPA in particular, state and local governments, and institutions like golf course managers (superintendents) is something we all need to be conscious of and deal with in the future," he concluded.

THE MEDIA'S ROLE

The general concern surrounding golf courses and pesticides seems to boil down to whether "Left to your own devices, you (superintendents) would poison your customers and kill the town," Stossel said, with a trace of sarcasm. "But with the regulator and the advocacy group, hopefully you won't."

Stossel did a story three years ago on lawn-care chemicals that included a piece on Navy Lt. George Pryor, who couldn't figure out why he kept getting sick after playing golf. Unknown to Pryor, his course used the fungicide dachonil, which contains cyanide.

Pryor got sick. His skin began falling off in pieces the size of legal pads, his wife said. In 10 days, he was dead. Although Stossel reported many people play on courses that used dachonil and did not get sick, what people remembered was Pryor's skin falling off.

"Some of that is unavoidable. It's the nature of news to focus on the dramatic and the negative. If Victor says playing golf is safe, it's not news. But if Jay says, 'You play golf you're going to die,' it's more likely to be covered."

With golf course pesticides, the argument generally evolves into risks versus benefits, Stossel said. What is the potential risk of using chemicals and does it outweigh the benefit?

Pesticides suffer from being relatively new products. Older ones, like natural gas that kills 400 people per year, or swimming pools that claim 1,000 lives annually, might not be approved in today's regulatory climate.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

But people accept the risks because they are older, traditional products, Stossel said.

"Our (media's) job is to protect people by giving them information. That's different from the regulator who says 'yes' or 'no.' We have a press that says 'Here's some advice. Here's what the experts say. It's good or it's bad. You make the choice.' That works better," he said.

Providing that information helps the marketplace police itself, which is often more efficient and less expensive than having the government do

it through regulation, Stossel said.

Still, some regulations may be necessary in areas like the environment, Stossel said. The person applying dangerous chemicals today could be long gone when the water supply is contaminated 10 years from now.

"Certainly, in environmental areas, a good case can be made for regulation. How much is another question," he said.

In Lt. Pryor's case, his wife argued that signs should have been posted after chemical applications. He might have connected that with

headaches he felt before he died and stayed away from the course on those days, she said.

"I understand some of you are now putting signs up," the Emmy Award winner said. "It seems to me that is the way many of these troubles could be managed.

"It is true that today we are exposed to more dangerous-sounding things than ever before—pesticides, fungicides, lawn chemicals, food additives, pollution. The result? We're living twice as long. We forget that 100 years ago most people were dead

by the time they were my age (early 40s).

"What gave us this longer life span is technology. If someone I love dies, it's natural for me to say I want more protection, I want these people put out of business, I want a layer of lawyers to keep this from happening.

"But we don't get that extra protection for most people by adding that layer of government. We get it by giving information and letting the technology happen. I hope the lawyers in this country allow us to keep making that bet."

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