SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Lawn Institute to reestablish seal of approval

By MARK LESLIE

Indications are the Lawn Institute will rescind its seal of approval for turfgrass seed.

Before the annual meeting Oct. 31, in Kansas City, Lawn Institute Executive Director Jim Brooks said: "We're confident we will move ahead on the seal."

Once the seal of approval is given the go-ahead, the institute will write a new set of minimum standards for turfgrass seed. Brooks will try to get the seal on this season's crop, which will be packaged from November through January.

"We still have to manage the standards," he said. "They will ensure good quality seed. The seal, which has been used on and off by lawn-care companies, has previously mandated 100 percent of one variety, but the industry is going more and more to blends. Basically, we're saying at least half a mixture has to be an improved variety... The Lawn Institute role would be one of a standards guarantor."

— Jim Brooks, executive director of the Lawn Institute

Ohio voters tackle warning label issues

By MARTHA LAYNE

An initiative on the Ohio ballot this November was considered by many small businesses to be more important than the presidential election.

Ohioans considered State Issue Five, a law which would require warning labels on consumer products sold in Ohio that contain chemicals known to put people at risk of cancer or birth defects. Products would need to be labeled if they contain one of 458 chemicals which, in high doses, have been shown to cause cancer or reproductive harm in rats. A substance is included on this list if it has caused one case of cancer or reproductive risk in an exposed population of one million.

At press time, polls showed the measure held a fifty-two percent approval rate, down from earlier estimates. Late advertising blitz by the measure's opponents is likely to decrease voter support even further, leaving the issue too close to call.

If passed, the regulation would seriously affect golf courses, not to mention consumers, farmers, food producers, manufacturers and retailers.

Golf courses using substances which contain any amount of the listed pollutants would need to post notices listing the pollutants and warning those on the premises. If exposures were likely to occur beyond the business premises, leaflets or letters would need to be sent — by direct mail — to all who reside or work within a two-mile radius of the exposed area. Notifications and leaflets would be required to read, "Warning: This area contains one or more hazardous chemicals known to cause cancer (or birth defects or other reproductive harm)."

Businesses not in compliance would be subject to fines and criminal penalties, and a reward would be offered to citizens who report them.

The measure exempts state and local governments.

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C-G promotes Towne, Watson

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Owen Towne has been named manager of international turf and ornamental products at Ciba-Geigy. Formerly product manager for fungicides in the U.S. Turf and Ornamental Products group, Towne will be responsible for establishing worldwide markets for Ciba-Geigy Turf and Ornamental Products.

Towne, who will be based in Paris, assumed his new duties in mid-September.

Towne joined Ciba-Geigy in 1985 as a market researcher with the Agricultural Division. He has been product manager for fungicides in Turf and Ornamental Products since 1988.

Dr. Eileen Watson has been named Towne's replacement in the U.S. Turf and Ornamental Products group. Watson, who holds a doctorate in plant pathology, has been with Ciba-Geigy for 10 years. She joined the company's Agricultural Division as a research specialist and has worked as a state registration specialist.

Ohio Issue Five

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"badly flawed." Other opponents on record include the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, The Director of the Department of Agriculture, and the Food Industries Center. The group Ohioans for Responsible Health Information also opposes the measure, saying that it is one thousand times more stringent than current measures, ten times more stringent than the California law, and that it is likely to scare consumers, produce unnecessary warnings, and seriously harm Ohio's business climate.

The initiative is sponsored by the Nader-affiliated group Ohio Citizen Action. Ed Hopkins, environmental policy director, said a similar California law has been successful in reducing exposures to toxic substances by encouraging manufacturers to replace toxic ingredients with those which do not require a label.

Buying habits

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know, some guy who shows up once a year at budget time," said Fears. "It behooves the sales rep to be more knowledgeable and it behooves the sales person to educate the superintendent. That develops trust. It'll pay off in the long run."

Said Hiers: "There are salesmen who can really help you — what's working and what's not working. Who's been using a product and where to find him. I'll buy from that guy."

On the advertising side, superintendents said they looked dimly on the testimonial genre. Ads should be short, attention-grabbing and to the point, said Stewart.

Other subjects of discussion during the two-day conference included:

• An in-depth portrait of new product development (Poly-S technology) from marketing executives at O.M. Scott.

• Advertising and direct mail "dos and don'ts" from telemarketing consultant Mac McIntosh.

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Turf researchers have long known the benefits of polymer coatings on fertilizers. But, until now, that performance came at a premium price.

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Poly-S technology offers a superior alternative to SCU fertilizers, with extended release, excellent flexibility in release rates, and more predictable response. Each Poly-S fertilizer is a dry, dense, free-flowing, physically homogeneous product specially designed for use with a broadcast spreader.

With Poly-S technology, there's minimal potential for leaching, runoff and volatilization. And its "efficiency" of release results in a significant reduction in clippings.