

TURFGRASS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM 1996 UPDATE**Gregory T. Lyman****Department of Crop and Soil Sciences****Michigan State University****East Lansing, MI**

From Michigan's turf environmental perspective, 1996 was another exciting and productive year. The mission of this program is to advance the environmental stewardship of Michigan's turf industry through education and proactive involvement in current issues and the laws and regulations affecting the industry. The program is funded by industry support through seminar fee's and grant-in-aid projects. Through your support in 1996, the mission of the Turfgrass Environmental Education Program along with the turfgrass industry continued to advance the mission. Thank you for your support.

There were several educational seminars conducted throughout the state in 1996. They were the "Pesticide and Nutrient Fate Seminar", the "Pond Management Seminar" and the "Microscopic ID of Turfgrass Diseases". There were three schools conducted in 1996. The first was the "School of Turfgrass Management - Interactive TV" which was presented at MSU and transmitted simultaneously to Petoskey, Livonia, Saginaw, Grand Rapids, and Kalamazoo. It featured classes that were three hours each and was presented throughout the month of March. I am currently planning to present the class again in 1997. The week-long "School of Turfgrass Management" was also conducted in November of 1996. It continues to be a popular choice for turf and allied industry managers and sales representatives. A new school was launched in 1996 called the "Advanced Golf Turf Management School". It was a two-day school that focused on disease management. The speakers were Dr. J.M. Vargas Jr. of MSU, Dr. Eric Nelson of Cornell University, and Dr. Bruce Clarke of Rutgers University. The advanced school will be held again next year and a new topic will be chosen.

The buzz on the laws and regs scene this year involves a new federal law called the "Food Quality Protection Act of 1996". It sets into motion a brand new system for setting tolerances for pesticides on our food products. The extent to which this has an impact on the turf industry could be very interesting. First let's back up a bit and discuss the major changes to pesticide use on foods. You may recognize the name "Delany Clause" because it was in the news throughout 1996. This "clause" declared that any substances known to cause or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health problems could not be allowed in *any* detectable amount on food. This clause was regarded as outdated and difficult to enforce because of the increased ability of technology that can detect chemical substances in very small amounts. The new law has refined the stance to set tolerances in food to assure "reasonable certainty of no harm". This is most likely to be an additional risk of 1 in 1 million risk of cancer in a lifetime from exposure to pesticides. The potential impact on the turf industry is the manner in which exposure to a pesticide will be calculated. The manufacturer will be required to calculate the amount of pesticide present on a particular food product, but will also have to assess the likelihood of exposure from all other uses of the product and compare that amount to the tolerance. For example, if a fungicide that is under close scrutiny is used on fruit and is also used on turf, all potential exposures must be "added" together and then compared to the tolerance levels. The potential conflict is that a manufacturer may be forced to cancel labels for certain crops if the total exposure exceeds the tolerances. Potential conflicts are pure speculation at this point because the system has never been tested and few understand how to accurately calculate exposures from turf and ornamental use. The most likely areas of interest will be the chlorothalonil and EBDC fungicides and the organophosphate and carbamate insecticides.