Over the last several months, the Sports Turf Association has joined other industry associations to form the IPM-PHC Council. While this group is newly formed, there is much activity and energy going on at this time.

The mandate of this group is to encourage the responsible use of pesticides and the promotion and implementation of IPM strategies. An IPM Accreditation Program that would be industry wide is the primary goal of the IPM-PHC Council.

Ideally the IPM Accreditation Program would be at the provincial level under provincial regulation. The IPM Accreditation process will help reduce reliance on pesticides through the application of Integrated Pest Management and Plant Health Care principles, with particular emphasis on:

- Cultural practices that promote optimum plant health
- Pest prevention
- Application of pesticides only when necessary
- Use of reduced risk products

Members of the Council include the Professional Lawn Care Association of Ontario, Landscape Ontario, Ontario Parks Association, Ontario Vegetation Management Association, International Society of Arboriculture, Structural Pest Management Association of Ontario, Ontario Golf Superintendents Association and Hydro One, to name a few.
The IPM Accreditation accredits companies and/or organizations that demonstrate commitment to the principles of IPM. The IPM-PHC Council will set standards for the accreditation procedure and make decisions on conferring and revoking accreditation privileges.

The IPM-PHC Council has met as a united group on several occasions and a great deal of the work is being undertaken by Landscape Ontario, most specifically by Ken Pavely. Governance issues such as bylaws and a constitution are currently being finalized for approval at a future meeting. Each association will be able to have two representatives attend IPM-PHC Council meetings, but each association is entitled to only one vote.

The IPM-PHC Council would self regulate the industry by engaging third party auditors such as the Canadian Environmental Auditors to perform both desktop and site inspections and audits. It is intended that the auditor would report directly to the province (i.e. Ministry of Environment).

The program would be self-funding with industry members contributing license fees, audit fees and exam fees. Companies that fail to meet the criteria established for IPM strategies, reduction targets, education outreach, and marketing would be disciplined and ultimately could lose their operators license. It is intended that employees of industry companies and municipalities can become IPM Accredited through passing an exam. The Council is entertaining the option of having Ridgetown College operate the IPM Accreditation Program with the IPM-PHC Council being an advisory board.

At this point, the IPM-PHC Council is a work in progress, but it is very important the group stay united and vigilant in its fundamental goal of IPM Accreditation at the provincial level. The STA, like many other industry groups, strongly advocates the responsible use of pesticides and IPM. Being a member of the IPM-PHC Council is aligned with the STA position in terms of supporting a stewardship of industries and partnerships.

As the IPM-PHC Council proceeds, we will continue to keep you informed. Please feel free to visit www.planthealthcare.ca or contact the IPM-PHC Council at 905-875-1805.

Editor's note: Ken Pavely will discuss the state of IPM Accreditation and other items relating to the pesticide issue at the Ontario Turfgrass Symposium on Thursday, January 23, 2003.

Gone Walking...
by Michael Bladon

Well, it’s that time. Time to go walking. As a founder of the Sports Turf Association, I have been involved since its beginnings in 1987. I have also been editor of the Sports Turf Manager on and off for nine years. It has been an adventure in faith — that such an association was needed, that it be professional in every way, that it educate the sports-related public, and always keep the athlete and his/her well being in the forefront. The Association has done all of this through seminars, field days, an annual conference, check lists and, of course, the Sports Turf Manager.

Guided by talented boards and much appreciated support from suppliers and distributors, plus the hiring of an executive manager, the STA has grown considerably. All of this in keeping with a vision that there was not only a need, but also that it would be affordable to the hands-on people in the industry.

So as I step down, I step out again in faith to “Realize the Dream by 2015” as a representative with the Bruce Trail Association. I challenge both the board and you our members to not sit on your laurels but be innovative and diligent in continuing to provide the best playing surfaces for the athlete at your venue.

I will still be around to help where needed and am still very interested in the Association’s future. But, excuse me, I have to put on my hiking boots...