Liability insurance rates jump

If you apply pesticides and haven’t received a liability insurance bill recently, be prepared for a shock. Negative publicity about pesticides and falling interest rates are causing insurance companies to increase premiums, in some cases doubling or tripling them.

Large corporations, such as ChemLawn and Orkin, have developed self-insurance programs. Small companies, on the other hand, find it virtually impossible to develop sufficient reserves in case of a serious mistake and lawsuit.

Some pesticide applicators are opting for higher deductibles to moderate liability insurance premium increases. Others aren’t worried as much about higher premiums as they are about availability of coverage in the future. A structural pest control operator said he could get by if insurance premiums increased from one percent of sales to five percent, but without insurance he would have to close his doors.

Smaller applicators should explore group plan options. Then, perhaps, they could develop self-insurance reserves like the big firms.

Reentry period for granulars eyed

Post-treatment reentry period differences between liquid and granular pesticides could cause a shift to liquids, Stanley Sweir, turf entomologist for the University of New Hampshire said in that state’s Turf Talk newsletter.

Sweir said the Environmental Protection Agency is looking closely at liquid and granular formulations of Ciba Geigy’s Triumph for reentry period differences. The agency, according to Sweir, is considering a 14-day reentry period for the granular and ‘until dry’ for the liquid applied formulation.

Delays longer than a few minutes or hours are impractical for commercial applicators. If EPA persists in sticking granulars with reentry periods, Sweir questions whether any new granular formulation will ever be approved for turf.

Baby boom to create a golf boom

As baby boomers reach the 35 to 54 year age group, they will swell the lines at first tees across the U.S., predicts Joe Beditz, National Golf Foundation Director of Research.

Beditz is predicting a 75 percent increase in middle-aged golfers by 2000.

“Our statistics tell us the greatest potential market is with the relatively young adult age group,” says NGF President David Huebner. “If the percentage of players in that group could be increased over the next five years, it could generate a substantial multiplier effect as golfers move into the older age categories.” NGF is planning promotions to increase the number of golfers to 21.2 million by 2000.