



Letters to the editor are always welcome. They should be signed and carry the writer's address and telephone number. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, clarity, label and good taste. Please send letters to: The Editor, Greenkeeper International, 13 Firle Close, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2HL

Letters

Green issues contained ■ New course was 'great' ■ Saw point...

■ We write concerning a green issue which has come to our attention over the last few years, that of the use of plastic containers for the storage of organic based foliar feeds. As an eighteen hole golf course, we use 90 or more of these 25 litre drums each year, which we think could be refilled and used again by the manufacturers. It is an environmentally unsound practice to have to burn or dump the containers after use when they are perfectly capable of being used again.

We feel the sports turf industry should be setting standards for other industries to follow, for even our local council recycles plastic, glass, paper, etc. – and in this day and age every effort counts. We would welcome any comments from manufacturers, such as Farmura, or any greenkeepers that have views as strong as our own on the subject of the environment.

CONCERNED GREENKEEPERS

West Sussex GC, Pulborough

• Greenkeeper International asked Farmura for their comments, which are published below:

As a company manufacturing environmental products we share the concerns expressed by West Sussex – clearly a different attitude towards packaging has to come.

For a number of years we have from time-to-time refilled customer's drums and we would be pleased to publicise and extend this service to other Clubs. I would stress at this stage that this is a refill service and not an exchange – a trace of the wrong contaminant could do serious damage.

Apart from the 25 litre containers a cost effective option is the 210 litre drum which, apart from being refilled, can be sold as a water butt – have you seen what they cost in garden centres! These can be refilled but physical handling considerations need to be taken into account. Finally, on-site refilling of 1,000 litre mini-bulk tanks is another option we could offer.

With co-operation, a great deal can therefore be done, and with drum allowances refilling can also be cost effective as well as environmentally friendly.

We would be pleased to hear from anyone who is interested in discussing the above in more detail.

JONATHAN HARMER

Managing Director, Farmura Environmental Products, Ashford, Kent

■ Fellow greenkeepers and all who are concerned with pesticides use and application take note. I and four other BIGGA members attended the first of what I certainly hope is not the last course on pesticides. The course was presented to the highest professional standards and Mr Jon Allbutt, our lecturer, left us in no doubt as to our responsibilities toward those around us. We were groomed and manoeuvred in the direction of our certification in PA1 and PA2A with authority, care and

consideration. All five of us passed!

All this in the wonderful, relaxed atmosphere of Aldwark Manor, where food is a culinary delight... I digress.

I owe a debt of to the organisers – namely David Golding, Neil Thomas and, of course, Jon Allbutt. Thank you.

J STEWART MACINTOSH

Golf Club Beuerberg, Germany

■ I was privileged to be part of a team of five who were the guinea pigs on the first one week pesticide spraying course at Aldwark Manor. As one of those guinea pigs I would just like to say 'well done BIGGA' – you have come up with an other great course. Not only was the course excellent but the results at the end of it were equally so, for we all came away having obtained our PA1 and PA2A certificates.

I would just like to say a special thank you to Jon Allbutt, our lecturer for the week, who made it so interesting and enjoyable. I would also like to thank all the lads on the course; because the high morale and the team work certainly gave me the confidence to obtain my certificates. I would certainly advise any greenkeeper who is un-certificated (and I'll bet there's a few out there) to go on this course. What a week, well done BIGGA.

DON J WILSON

Dyrham Park GC, Barnet, Herts

■ Was I competent to use pesticides? I was not. But I found someone who was – Jon Allbutt!

In March I set off to Aldwark Manor with some trepidation to join other greenkeepers I had never met before, to take part in a course for the safe use of pesticides and to take the exams PA1 & PA2. These four men were just as dubious about the course and were to become my partners and friends in the week which followed.

Then it was our privilege to meet our tutor, the man who was going to get us through our 'exam' (a term we were to hear quite a lot during the week). Not only did Jon Allbutt get us through, but he opened up a whole new way of thinking and was a true professional.

After three days of doing everything together (well, almost everything) we walked into the exam room armed with ten times the knowledge we needed to pass the tests – and we all passed and received our certificates from Neil Thomas.

David Golding sat with us and asked us to look back over the week to see if we might change anything to improve the course. We all agreed that it had been first class, was fine as it was and was probably the best course we had attended and we had a lot of fun doing it.

My thanks to my greenkeeping partners, to David Golding for setting up the course and many, many thanks to the professional – Jon Allbutt.

PHILIP TAYLOR Alwoodley Golf Club, Leeds

■ The Royal Burgess GC took delivery of two Ransome 'GT' Classics last year and have been very pleased with their performance over ten months of cutting. We did, however, have a problem with the grooved rollers, which would collect grass from a dew soaked surface and therefore affect height of cut.

After much debate and several attempts at scrapers, the suppliers (not Ransomes) fitted scrapers that have so far proved to be the answer, keeping the grooves free from debris.

We would be interested to know if other 'GT' users have experienced the same problem, and if so, what was their remedy?

STAFF OF ROYAL BURGESS GC

Edinburgh

• Greenkeeper International asked Brian Mitchell, General Manager – Engineering, Ransomes, to comment: "Ransomes do have plans to develop a suitable scraper for grooved reels but these are not available at present. We are, however, aware of the needs for these in certain cutting conditions."

■ As we begin another season, how many greenkeepers, I wonder, have been using chainsaws throughout the winter without supervision and correct safety equipment? I am a head greenkeeper in Leicestershire and have just completed a two-day chainsaw course given by the Agricultural Training Board at Rothly Park, providing the student with valuable experience in both safety and correct usage.

It is very important to know your saw – inside and out – and our first task was to strip down the saw and get to know each part before putting it back – without any parts left over! The next session consisted of sharpening and the safety aspects of the guide bar, ie. maintenance properly carried out, which can save time and money.

Our second day consisted of on-site work, but before we could begin to saw, our safety equipment was inspected. I have to admit mine was pitiful: a pair of steel capped boots, a safety helmet and the all-important first aid kit. To continue the course I needed the correct equipment and this was hired from the examiner for a small charge.

On-site, the work consisted of felling trees some 20-25 feet high and 5-10 feet apart. This is where skill, expertise and experience comes into its own. Most important of all, however, was ensuring the safety of ourselves and others. The course was valuable experience and we all passed the examination successfully.

If and when the law changes concerning chainsaws and equipment, the careless user and his Club may face fines of up to £2,000. Can they afford this?

GAVIN ROBSON

Lingdale GC, Woodhouse Eve, Leicestershire

■ I wish to congratulate all those involved in the National Education Conference at Cirencester: not only to the speakers, but → 37