

# THE MODERN SUPERINTENDENT

By DAN JONES

Late one afternoon while sitting at my desk reflect in on the events that had taken place that day on the golf course, the door to my office opened and in walked a man with a briefcase. This is what transpired.

Salesman — I am looking for Mr. Smith.

Smith — I am John Smith.

Salesman I am John Doe from the ABC Chemical Company. I have some products that can really help you (he hands me a lucite paperweight with 5 coins embedded in it and starts opening his briefcase).

Smith — I am not interested (I hand the paperweight back to the salesman).

Salesman — May I ask why?

Smith — Because your products are over priced for what you get.

Salesman — I am a new salesman with the company. The old salesman didn't treat you right. Let me prove that I can save you money. What products do you need?

Smith — I am just starting my weed program. How much is 2,4-D?

Salesman — What quantity?

Smith — 30 gallon drum.

Salesman — These prices are not for you. No sir. You get a real special price (he starts writing a lot of figures on a piece of paper). How does \$6.48 a gallon sound.

Smith — Good, I am paying \$7.15 a gallon from XYZ Company.

I am going to stop the conversation here to illustrate a point. Which company would you buy from? ABC? Sounds logical doesn't it. The cost per gallon is 10% less. That will really help you control your budget (the manager has been on your tail lately about costs) which is running considerably over. Should a superintendent place an order at this point? Let's listen to the rest of the conversation to find out.

Salesman — How many drums should I send out?

Smith — How many pounds of 2,4-D are in a gallon?

Salesman — Ah — Let's see — It will cover 10,000 square feet.

Smith — I don't care about your recommended rate.

How many pounds of active ingredient per gallon?

Salesman — (Looking at sample label) 10,000 square feet sure is a lot for one gallon.

Smith — There it is at the bottom of the label:  $\frac{1}{4}$  pound of 2,4-D per gallon. The product I am buying from XYZ Company has 4 pounds per gallon. That means your product costs 16 times more. (See figure I.)

Salesman — How about liquid fertilizer. I can let you have it in 55 gallon lots for \$6.50 a gallon.

Smith — I use liquid fertilizer on my golf course and I'm paying 50c a gallon for it. Now if you will excuse me I am very busy.

Salesman — But my product covers 25,000 square feet.

Smith — I said I am very busy. Good day.

Has this ever happened to you? Sure it has, we have all experienced this situation. How do you stand up to these salesmen? How can you be sure which salesman to buy from?

First, do not accept "free" gifts from salesmen. Do not deal with any company that will not give you a catalog. Do know how to read a label (both chemical and fertilizer) and insist on seeing the label before purchasing. **Do not purchase** if the concentration of active ingredient is not listed on the label. Compare prices of 2 or 3 companies before purchasing.

Lastly, always consider service and reputation of the supplier. Deal with good reputable companies that belong to the South Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association. They support our organization financially, we should support them with our business.

During these troubled times, management is looking to the golf course superintendent to give him the best golf course for least dollar. Can we fill the role?

I would like to leave you with this one thought. Are you ashamed to have other superintendents look in your chemical room?

## ANALYSIS OF CHEMICAL PRODUCTS

	2,4-D	
	Company XYZ	Company ABC
Pounds Material/Gallon .....	4.0	0.25
Cost Per Gallon .....	\$7.15	\$ 6.48
Cost/Pound Active Ing. ....	\$1.79	\$25.92
Cost/Acre ( $\frac{1}{2}$ pound) .....	\$ .89	\$12.96
Difference Cost/Acre .....	—	1600%