

Clippings

Pesticides said to pose little danger

Editor's Note: This didn't make page one like the unfounded scare with Alar on apples, but I did find these results and recommendations from a panel of cancer experts on page 11 of the Nov. 14, 1997 Orlando Sentinel. Post it and share it with your co-workers and club members.

ATLANTA (Associated Press)—The trace amounts of pesticides on fruits and vegetables pose practically no risk of cancer to people, an expert panel says.

In fact, the danger was found to be so small that it would actually be riskier to stop eating fruits and vegetables.

"A diverse diet that has plenty of fruits and vegetables is very important in reducing cancer," said Dr. Clark Heath of the American Cancer Society. "Compared to that, the risk of cancer from man-made chemicals is negligible."

Pesticides are thought to be toxic to people in large and frequent doses, but most people are exposed to them only in tiny amounts in fruits and vegetables.

Nonetheless, public fear prompted the panel of cancer experts to form in 1994 and review at least 50 published studies on pesticides to find out whether there was cause for alarm. The studies were published between 1981 and 1996.

For the average person, there's nothing to fear, the panel said in a published in the journal *Cancer*.

The American Cancer Society recommends people eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day to help reduce their risk of esophagus cancer by 90 percent, their risk of colon cancer by 50 percent and their risk of breast cancer by 27 percent.

Quote

"Competitive golf is played mainly on a 5-1/2 inch course, the space between your ears." -

Bobby Jones

Viewpoint...

Lack of environmental information can make you surprisingly gullible

BY DAVID B. LONG, CGCS

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As a golf course superintendent, I like to think that I'm doing my part to protect the environment. We have worked hard to change the image of the "greenskeeper" and to educate people about what it takes to be a golf course superintendent.

Our job is more than growing grass. It's our responsibility to protect golfers, animals, watersheds and trees. We need to think what the land we care for will be like when we leave it.

New laws change our working conditions almost daily. New products and chemicals hit the market almost as fast. Do you take time to educate yourself about new products? Have you overheard someone say a particular product or chemical is bad for the environment, and before checking it out or researching the product, you just agree and discontinue its use? It's our goal — and our duty — to protect the environment as much as we possibly can. Part of this duty is staying informed. I ran across a story (author unknown) that illustrates this point so well I thought I would share it.

A freshman won first prize at a city science fair last spring. He was attempting to show how conditioned we have become to the alarmists practicing junk science and spreading fear of everything in our environment. In his project he urged people to sign a petition demanding the strict control or total elimination of the chemical "hydrogen hydroxide." The chemical:

- Causes excessive sweating and vomiting
- Is a major component in acid rain
- Causes severe burns in its gaseous state
- Kills when accidentally inhaled
- Contributes to erosion
- Decreases effectiveness of automobile brakes
- Has been found in tumors of terminal cancer patients

The student asked 50 people if they supported a ban of the chemical. Forty-three said yes, six were undecided and only one knew what the chemical was.

The title of his prize-winning project was, "How Gullible Are We?"

He believes the conclusion is obvious. So, 43 of 50 people polled wanted to ban hydrogen hydroxide. I believe we would be in a lot of trouble if we decided to ban or discontinue the use of products or chemicals just because their names sound terrible or we have failed to do our research. Where would we be if we banned hydrogen hydroxide? We'd be without water. It makes you think, doesn't it?

Editors Note: This Viewpoint column from the November 1997 *Golf Course Management* magazine was just too good to pass up. It relates directly to the concerns in the cancer risk article and the scare tactics of environmental extremists.