

# Washington county enacts burning law

While turfseed growers struggle against field-burning opponents in Oregon, the county of Spokane in Washington State puts a strict field-burning law into effect this year.

The Spokane County Commission established a tough new law that seed producers fear may spread to neighboring counties and the state of Idaho.

Doyle Jacklin, vice president of marketing for Jacklin Seed in Post Falls, Idaho, said the Spokane County law "does not affect Idaho or the surrounding counties but it's only a matter of time before those counties probably adopt the same rules."

"It definitely is a worrisome factor. It will affect us. And it appears there will be a gradual phaseout of burning in the Northwest."

The Spokane County law limits the number of "burn days" to 14 and they must be consecutive. "If rain comes and you can't burn, then that's tough," Jacklin said.

The law "also places a cap on the number of acres, and, in essence, says that existing acres can be burned but newly seeded acres cannot," he said.

A group called the Clean Air Coalition has been formed in Jacklin's home state of Idaho to oppose field-burning.

Jacklin said its members claim "burning could cause cancer because they don't know what toxins could be emitted by fields that have been treated by herbicide or insecticide. Well, in the first place they are very short-lived chemicals that are biodegradable and they don't even exist when we burn. If they did exist, burning would turn them to carbon dioxide and water."

"But they have raised the issue in the media as if it could be a cancer-causing process."

Jacklin guessed that in Idaho

## Field-burning

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problems than the field-burning, because "the residue doesn't go up in smoke but just lays on the ground."

He said: "A lot of growers are just plowing up the fields. But where they've done that, it's like a dust bowl."

Mike Robinson, president of Seed Research of Oregon, said the initiatives' failure "has made the growers and state agencies realize that something really has to be done. I think we'll see more effort into research. The farmers are doing more on their own to reduce burning."

"I think eventually within 10 years we're going to have to phase out field-burning."

Robinson said propane burning could be the answer, but burning foes include it in their call for a ban.

"If it's properly done, there's very little smoke produced, and that's ideal," he said.

the question of burning will be one or two years behind the states of Washington and Oregon, "but it will fall into line, and we'll have to deal with it in the same way as they have."

In the meantime, private companies are researching the subject, and the state has funded \$350,000 this year to the Department of Ecology to study to discover the effects of burning; if any toxins are emitted during the process; and the best climatic conditions to burn in.

## Field days show industry progress

Record, even international, attendance was reported at the seed industry field days held this summer in the Northwest, the capital for turf seed.

Since the first field day, held eight years ago by Turf-Seed in Hubbard, Ore., the events have been growing in popularity and attendance.

Jacklin Seed Co. in Post Falls, Idaho, and Turf Merchants in Tangent, Ore., are also now holding annual field days.

Many seed distributors are turning the field days into a one-week tour of the region. This year, Jacklin hosted its "Discovery Tour" on Monday and Tuesday,

Turf-Seed held its event Thursday and Turf Merchant closed the week with a Friday presentation.

"We had an excellent turnout. Just under 200 (wholesale distributors and media people) attended," said Doyle Jacklin, vice president of marketing for Jacklin Seed.

Jacklin said his firm set a different sort of agenda this year, its third. It spent time on its "burn trials" which tested 90 turfgrass varieties on 40 acres for their production when the field is not burned.

The company also took people on a tour of its greenhouse, research laboratory and condition-

ing plant.

Jacklin said a separate tour will be scheduled, if needed, for sod growers and golf course superintendents.

Tom Stanley said 500 attended Turf-Seed's event, equaling 1989 when the American Seed Trade Association Conference was held in Seattle, Wash.

Sod producers, golf course superintendents, landscapers, university professors and most of the firm's regional seed distributors attended the session.

"It was truly an international event," Stanley said, referring to guests from Finland, Japan, Australia.

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