

**S**how me the money!" What a great line and scene from the movie "Jerry Maguire," as the sports agent (Tom Cruise) and his client, Rod Tidwell (Cuba Gooding Jr.), come to an understanding over their working relationship, while Cruise tries to salvage his client list. Well, sports fans, if you want to salvage your list of pesticides and water use when contested by regulators, "Show me the data!"

At the 2005 Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Chapter Delegates meeting in Kansas City, Mo., Dr. Clark Throssel and Greg Lyman unveiled a baseline data collection initiative that had its genesis as part of the discussions concerning the mission of the newly created Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG). This is a monumental step in the right direction to help superintendents provide regulatory agencies with real-world information when they deliberate the fate of pesticide products and water consumption on golf courses.

If you don't participate in this project as individual members or local associations, you are missing a great opportunity to provide facts and figures that will help you and the industry to protect the future use of some of our critical products and have access to the amounts of water you need to manage acceptable and competitive playing conditions on your course.

This baseline data collection initiative was first brought up by the Strategic Planning Committee that helped define the mission of the newly formed EIFG a few years ago. There is a lot of valuable research data on the fate of pesticides conducted by our leading universities. The only thing missing is the real-world data on how turf managers actually use the products. And isn't that the bottom line? When regulators make a ruling, we clamor, "Show me the data!" We often feel they succumb to politics instead of science on some of their decisions.

If you don't participate in the process and provide accurate, meaningful real-world facts and figures, then the results will be as good as the information they do use to construct their computer models. And given that most are still based on agricultural field crop applications,

## Resist Politics and Show Me the Data

BY JOEL JACKSON



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chemical use is often grossly exaggerated. I know that from firsthand experience.

I worked on several state and federal task groups during the re-registration process of Dursban and Namacur, and I am involved in the discussions surrounding the golf course use of MSMA and its possible contribution of arsenic levels in groundwater. In every one of those cases, supplying basic data on product use, such as amount, location and frequency, led to a better understanding of the issue by those conducting the review. Lacking good data from actual golf courses, regulators were assuming maximum rate and frequency applications to the total acreage of a golf course property. We know that isn't the case, but if you don't get involved as end users and stakeholders, how are regulators going to ever learn about what we do?

There's another line from "Jerry Maguire" that speaks to GCSAA's baseline data initiative — "Help me help you!" You can help by participating in the baseline data surveys that will be coming in the near future. They will be kept as short as possible. They will be kept confidential. They will give us a track record of progress and credibility in our environmental stewardship claims. Your help will allow GCSAA and local associations to speak with authority about golf course management issues.

We have lots of great basic and applied scientific research from university test plots in the database archives. Now what we need is grassroots input of how you actually apply products, manage irrigation, and follow integrated pest management and best management practices across a large population of golf courses. In other words, "Show me the data!"

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