

Here is a brief collection of statements and observations that speak to the frustration, heartburn, high blood pressure and gray hairs that many of us in the golf industry have experienced or are enduring as we try to make sense of some of the environmental nonsense that goes on around us:

"The broad-based risks from contaminated fast-release fertilizer, including harm to intergenerational health and welfare, make it imperative that the law does not leave control of hazardous substances in fertilizer to discretionary or voluntary industry measures."

This was a statement contained in a Crystal River, Fla., city resolution and became a focal point in Citrus County's proposed regulation of fertilizers. What in the Sam Hill are "contaminated fertilizer and intergenerational health and welfare?" And why would we leave control of hazardous substance in the hands of politicians?

"To protect our springs and rivers we are proposing a ban on soluble fertilizers."

Somebody please tell them that all nutrients have to be soluble for plants to absorb them, even "organic" fertilizer.

"Once political action is mandated by pressure from the activists and media, even if you have a scientifically defensible position, they don't want to be told they are wrong."

This was a quote from a senior Florida Department of Environmental Protection official at a Fertilizer Association meeting. So they are going to make a law that addresses an emotional issue but has no basis in fact, no effective practical solution, is largely unenforceable but will make them look really environmentally responsible at election time?

"We are proposing a ban on the use of phosphorous in (our town or county — take your pick, there have been several). Agriculture is exempt from this ban."

There are 154 million tons of fertilizer applied in the United States annually. One million tons has been attributed to lawn fertilization. I'm really not picking on agriculture. I like my safe, low-cost food, but isn't somebody missing the elephant in the room?

Trying to Make Sense of Nonsense

BY JOEL JACKSON



WHAT IN THE SAM
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A fertilizer manufacturer claims that the red tide algae blooms in the Gulf of Mexico are being fueled by runoff of nutrients from home lawns, and he's sick and tired of it. So if the county will mandate using only his slow-release fertilizer just twice a year, the problem can be solved.

I was in Naples, Fla., for a meeting this past spring, and as I took a cup of coffee down by the shore, I watched several flocks of seagulls (close to 40 to 50 birds in each group) land on the beach and strut and squirt their guano on the sandy beach. Their deposits were just waiting for the high tide to claim them or for the sun-bathers and castle-builders to lay and play in them.

And offshore a large squadron of pelicans made a bee line for an inlet just up the beach and as they paddled and pooped waiting for the outgoing tide to bring them baitfish I wondered how many times this same scenario was taking place up and down the coastline. Meanwhile, somewhere inland some evil golf course or sadistic homeowner is spreading fertilizer on turfgrass.

A couple of years ago, I took our Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association table-top Golf & The Environment display to a tournament put on by the Everglades GCSA and Bonita Bay Properties to raise environmental education funding for a local ecological watershed preserve area. I didn't play in the event but I had a nice, informative conversation with the preserve's director, her assistant and the Bonita Bay environmental liaison person. After the post-tournament reception and the presentation of the \$9,000 check, I followed the woman out of the club and watched her get into her super-sized SUV and drive away. I got into my four-cylinder Toyota and pondered the meaning of life.

Joel Jackson is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.