

## Off The Fringe

# A Day on the Hill

### GREEN INDUSTRY PLEADS ITS CAUSE TO LEGISLATORS REGARDING H-2B ISSUE

By Daniel G. Jacobs

**T**here's reason for hope. Green Industry executives from around the country descended on Washington D.C. in July to let their legislators know how they feel about a trio of key issues — H-2B visa cap extension, water and association health care. Some met with the congressmen directly while others expressed their viewpoint to aides.

The 21-member Ohio delegation met with aides for senators George Voinovich (R) and Sherrod Brown (D). Voinovich supports the H-2B visa cap extension while Brown opposes it. The delegation wanted to express its gratitude to the senior senator and do what it could to convince his colleague across the aisle to change his thinking.

How important is the issue? Steve Pattie, president of The Pattie Group, says that he had 30 workers delayed for two weeks because of the backlog of applications at the U.S. consulate and lost \$200,000 in business. Losing the extension (allowing H-2B workers from the previous three seasons not to be counted against the cap of 66,000 H-2B visas) would hurt not only his businesses but many others. Wayne Impullitti of Novelty, Ohio-based Impullitti Landscaping lost \$100,000 in business for a similar reason: He did not have access to workers.

The group met with Sherrod Brown aide David Hodapp who initially conveyed the senator's belief that there are Americans willing to take the available



jobs based primarily on the senator's office getting more than 1,000 letters a month decrying the lack of jobs in Ohio.

Only slightly tongue in cheek, Phil Fogarty of Weed Man said, "Send their resumes to us."

The delegation explained that many young Americans don't like the seasonal work but are seeking year-round jobs. Also, the hard physical labor dissuades many from applying.

Despite the initial skepticism from the aide, there may be reason for hope from Brown's office. It was learned that Brown's office would review the Save Our Small and Seasonal Business Act of 2007. He requested information on how the 66,000 visas are distributed. He was specifically looking for ideas on how to improve the system so Ohio businesses get a greater share of the seasonal guest workers.

On the other side of the aisle, the delegation also met with Doug Dziak, counsel with Voinovich's office. Voinovich has been a friend to the cause and is an original co-sponsor of Maryland Senator Barbara Mikulski's bill to extend the returning worker provision of the H-2B. That provision is scheduled to sunset Sept. 30.

Mikulski's bill extends the three-year returning worker provision, which does not count those workers against the 66,000 visa cap. Without a change, many Green Industry entities, including golf courses, might have difficulty finding workers. ■

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the company's continued research investment for new molecules, new formulations, and innovative active ingredient combinations. Urbanowski said generic products are driving the value down in the pesticide segment, adding that it's getting more costly to develop new active ingredients.

"Many of our industry's products have come out of our agricultural business," he said. "As that business tends to go more into the biotechnology arena, there may not be as many active ingredients coming out of that pipeline. The cost to develop a new active, because there are less of them, will escalate."

The Dow AgroSciences staff also discussed the company's new EcoZome technology, which was introduced in February. EcoZome is a formulation system that consists of very small droplets — about 150 nanometers to 200 nanometers — of active ingredient dispersed in water and stabilized by a lamellar liquid crystal coating. Dow AgroSciences has filed for a patent covering the technology for use with pesticides.

According to Dow AgroSciences, some attributes of EcoZome are:

- alternative water-based formulations that reduce the use of aromatic solvents and thereby minimize volatile organic compounds (VOC);
- reduced odor versus EC/EW (emulsion concentrate/emulsions in water) formulations.

EcoZome allows Dow AgroSciences to improve existing active ingredients after they come off patent. Urbanowski said Dow AgroSciences has already talked with competitive basic manufacturers about licensing them the EcoZome technology for their own products.

Was EcoZome developed to combat generic manufacturers? "I wouldn't say it was developed for that, but I think ... it fits very well with that," Urbanowski said. "We're constantly looking to improve what we have for multiple reasons." ■