

The Future of Fertility Rests on Our Advocacy

An article regarding Chesapeake Bay restoration just caught my attention. The health of the Chesapeake Bay has been a concern for more than 25 years. Past regulations have made some progress, but they have apparently not been aggressive enough. It was announced that new legislation is proposed that would expand the federal resources to put all necessary measures into place to achieve a healthy, restored Chesapeake Bay. The legislature would set a legally binding deadline of 2025 for states within the watershed. It also stated that this is the most significant advancement on the Chesapeake Bay in 20 years. Is this the future of fertility?



By Mike Stegmann

The turf industry has been working hard to educate the public and get credit for its environmental stewardship efforts, but the time for increased regulation is quickly approaching. Unfortunately, the trend is that well-intentioned voluntary initiatives are turning into strict regulations. The proposed Chesapeake

Bay legislation is a great example.

Another good example is the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI). Through this new initiative, Natural Resources Conservation Service and its partners will help to implement voluntary conservation practices in select watersheds. In turn, the participation in such practices will lead to a payment. In the future, these voluntary initiatives such as the MRBI may eventually be replaced with regulations that won't have payment incentives, but legal ramifications for noncompliance.

So what can we — the collective members of the turf industry — do to address this growing national trend? For starters, we can take a more active role in voluntary initiatives when they develop in our own backyards, keeping up with proposed legislation and proposed changes. In addition, we can stay active in the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and involve ourselves with local chapters, so we can serve as advocates of the golf course indus-



try, serving as experienced educators to the general public.

This is why we, AGROTAIN International, makers of UMAXX, UFLEXX and HYDREXX, are working closely with government regulatory agencies and the research community to provide guidance and education regarding the benefits of our products. The philosophy behind our products is to improve the efficiency of nitrogen fertilizer and provide a product that is economical and environmentally stable, while providing proper plant nutrition. We take great pride in the extensive research that has gone into creating our product line as well as the continuous efforts to improve our product technology for the environmental benefit of the future.

Our unique stabilized nitrogen technology provides a solution for many concerns about nitrogen. Products that contain stabilized nitrogen technology, like UMAXX, UFLEXX and HYDREXX, represent the fertilizers of the future. They are user-friendly, economical, environmentally stable, and provide consistent color and fewer clippings.

In fact, the USDA is conducting research regarding greenhouse gas emission and our products are an integral part of this continuous five-location study. Three years of this research has been completed and the results show adding stabilized nitrogen to your fertility program improves nitrogen efficiency by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

But replicated research such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture greenhouse gas emissions study is just one data source that should properly influence future regulations. In states such as Florida, regulations are being written on a grassroots level, sometimes without the guidance of research and end-user expertise.

As a superintendent, you're a proven steward of the land and have expansive knowledge regarding what is best for turf. Now is the time to use your influence by participating in voluntary initiatives to ensure future regulations include best management practices that you can utilize. ■

Stegmann is president of Lange-Stegmann Company and AGROTAIN International.