

Going Through the Motions!

Attendance at legislative meetings in Madison can sometimes be an interesting experience. I was at a public hearing before the Assembly Environmental Protection Committee on January 12, 1978.

The hearing was scheduled to receive testimony regarding AB 1093 which would ban the use of the herbicide, 2, 4, 5-T in the State of Wisconsin.

Apparently, the principal author of the bill,

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Wisconsin. As you may know, Assembly Bill 347, introduced in March, 1975, called for the prohibition of all phenoxy-type herbicides including 2,4-D, 2,4,5-TP [Silvex] MCPA and 2,4-DB. Fortunately with the assistance of WGCSA's testimony, the bill was defeated. However, it did show some opposition to the use of herbicides in Wisconsin.

It is, in part, a Golf Course Superintendent's responsibility to voice his concern over such matters as AB 1093 and AB347. At this point, I urge all WGCSA members to write to their



respective representatives and senators to express this concern.

Not to "change horses in midstream", a remark by State Representative, Lawrence Day from Marathon County at the same hearing, does merit special attention. Representative Day, speaking in opposition to AB 1093, contended that a ban on 2,4,5-T was unnecessary because Wisconsin's pesticide applicator's training program was in effect. If current federal EPA action against the herbicide produced the anticipated results, it would be a restricted material further limiting its use. According to Representative Day, current training offered by the State of Wisconsin will go a long way in solving the problems of pesticide use and abuse.

These opinions were echoed by Wisconsin's Deputy Secretary for Agriculture, Trade Consumer Protection, Kurtz whose contention was that the only problems with the program were questions regarding future enforcement. His implication was that the program is satisfactory because it conforms to federal guidelines.

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Going through the Motions continued...

Frankly, I find these declarations somewhat incredulous. Having participated Phase I of the pesticide applicator's training program, I found it simplistic and fail to see it's value. Success in Phase I consisted of attendance at a seminar where sample questions were worked out by instructors as well as passing an open book "True False", "Multiple Choice" examination. I doubt that Phase II will be any more tasking.



I cannot understand how such sophomoric training will increase anyone's understanding or awareness of pesticides and their judicious use. For the examination of Agricultural Pest Control Advisers in California it is up to the individual to acquaint himself with the information. The pesticide safety manual produced by the California Agricultural Extension Service contained over one hundred and fifty pages of information as opposed to forty two pages in the federally approved booklet used by the State of Wisconsin. California's exam was a three and a half hour closed book affair while in Wisconsin the open book test took most participants no more than an hour.

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I would feel much more confident about my ability to handle pesticides by passing California's standards than I would by simply "going through the motions" as is apparently the case in the State of Wisconsin. This is not to imply that a PHD in Agricultural Engineering or Environmental Sciences should be required to apply pesticides, but I do feel that more stringent educational requirements should be adopted.