



Editorial

PREPARE TO FIGHT THE BATTLE AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND

By Thomas R. Parent

The fight against excessive pesticide regulation has been going on for many years. The conflict between environmental groups and users of agricultural chemicals is a struggle those of us in the golf course industry will probably always be faced with. The fight for continued use of pesticides in this country will be fought in the courts and legislative bodies at all levels of government. Those of us who use pesticides must be prepared to defend our rights to use these products. We must make it clear that the use of pesticides is one of the most important factors responsible for the quality of life we've enjoyed since World War II.

The extensive use of pesticides has helped make us the most healthy and prosperous nations in the history of mankind. Appropriate use of pesticides elevates quality of life for everyone, with little risk to the environment. Abuses of these products, brought about by ignorance and poor management, has strained their reputation. These abuses have triggered an emotional response based on isolated incidences and fear. Fear is a powerful weapon which can only be overcome by education of the public. Our job is to do just that — educate the public, the courts and lawmakers on the positive aspects of pesticide usage.

Penicillin is an example of a pesticide which has saved countless lives. It can also kill the few who are allergic. No one is suggesting a ban on penicillin. We must compare this example with the use of herbicides or insecticides in this country which have saved millions from starvation around the world. The use of sterilents, rodenticides and insecticides is probably as important to the health and quality of life of our citizens as the advances in medicine.

In the turf industry, we also use pesticides to improve the quality of life for the people we serve. For the golfer or home owner, enjoyment of well maintained turf can only add to mental health. To escape the pressures of urban life on a beautiful golf course or lawn must be a factor in our defense. It's up to us to defend the use of these products. No one is going to do it for us. Further restrictions on the use of pesticides is not only unnecessary, but could be very costly. Legislation proposed in Madison last fall would have driven the lawn care industry into financial trouble and possibly out of the city.

Actions such as those proposed in Madison would have taken the application of pesticides out of the hands of trained and certified professionals, resulting in a larger number of people exposed to the same products at higher rates.

We must strengthen our unity as an industry. The state has two groups that do an outstanding job in protecting our rights — the Wisconsin Agribusiness Council and the Forestry/Rights-of-Way/Turf Coalition. We must give them our support, not only on the Association level, but also on the individual club level. These organizations work to quench the public's fear of pesticides through the educational process. We must make it clear that, like penicillin, the benefit of proper pesticide use far outweighs the risk.

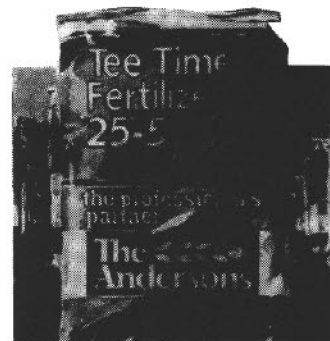
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