



Fair Treatment

By Monroe S. Miller

One of the things most of us involved in managing golf courses around the country will remember about 1988 is that it was the year that Daconil 2787 was found innocent of any involvement in the death of a golfer in Virginia. We are probably among the few Americans who are aware of the outcome of the case. Yet **everyone** knew of the indictment.

And why shouldn't everyone who has a television or reads the news magazines know about the charges made against this key material for plant protection in turf disease control programs. You couldn't help it unless you spent the entire year overseas or in a cave. Dan Rather and the CBS News made a **big** deal of it and practically found Diamond Shamrock (manufacturer of Daconil 2787 at the time) guilty of murder.

The gossip journal *People* magazine did a three page piece under their **controversy** department. The title? How does "A Golfer's Mysterious Death Suggest That Lawn Care May Be Hazardous To Your Health" grab you? It sort of suggests that for the pesticide industry it is guilty until proven innocent. There were similar

stories in other magazines and on other news programs, all reported with about equal neutrality.

Any open-minded person, even one with no knowledge of or experience with pesticides could tell that these stories and reports were terribly biased against 2787. No lab reports, no blood tests, no data. That's usually the case in sensational stories like these. You know the kind of story the *People* one was when you see the quotes by Sam Epstein, a pseudo-expert on pesticides who probably thinks pure spring water is not good for your health. To me, he's a real environmental extremist who has spouted off so many times with so little evidence that he's lost the little credibility he once may have had.

As we all know, the case went to trial. On May 9th of last year, almost five years after the incident, Daconil was cleared of any complications in the unfortunate death of the golfer. The judge dismissed the \$16 million lawsuit.

After all the sensational coverage prior to the trial, the decision wasn't to be found anywhere except in our trade journals. Dan Rather said nothing of the innocent verdict. Nor did *People* magazine. Nor did anyone else in the

popular literature. I had to get the news myself first from the July 1988 issue of *Landscape Management*.

The conduct of the news media in this country shouldn't surprise us. They love bad news, sensational news and spectacular stories. It's called the rating game and circulation game, I guess. Although we may be frustrated by it, that's the way it is. For us to get fair treatment we are going to have to demand it.

The news show 20/20's John Stossel, who admits to being more conservative than most news people, says we have a situation where the general conditions are simply and typically stacked against any real positive stories.

"That's what you are fighting in this business," Stossel says. "And if you've got a safe product that improves yields a little bit, you're going to have to be very articulate in enforcing your right to keep using it in the future. As long as you stand up and say the truth, I think it will work out. You need to stand up and speak up for what you believe in."

John's right. Fair treatment will have to be earned and demanded.

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Silica Sand Top Dressing Screen Analysis

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