

UPDATE ON PESTICIDE LEGISLATION -- AN INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

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Senate Bill 730

SB 730 was introduced in 1984. This was the first piece of legislation that really caught the eye of the lawn care pesticide user. The primary issues addressed in the bill were: written notification to all residences within a 1000 foot radius of each application site at least 24 hours prior to the application of agrichemicals by lawn-care operators. The arguments in favor of the bill primarily dealt with the presumed effect of lawn chemicals on sensitive residents living in the vicinity of treated lawns. Senator Fessler, introducer of the bill, stated that he was acting on behalf of numerous constituents claiming to be adversely affected by materials applied by lawn-care firms. His position was that something had to be done to protect petrochemical-sensitive people wherever and whenever lawn spraying operations were conducted and that his bill was simply one alternative for effectively dealing with the problem.

SB 730 received attention through a public hearing on November 14, 1984. Both sides of the issue were well represented at the hearing. The bill died in committee.

Michigan Department of Agriculture, Regulation 637

MDA 637 was written as a response to SB 730. It specifically addresses three things.

1. If protective clothing is not specified by the label, the applicator or pesticide loader shall wear appropriate personal clothing which will cover the torso, arms, and legs to reduce exposure through inadvertent skin contact with the pesticide.
2. Assure the removal or protection of children's toys, outdoor furniture and other non-target items before pesticides are applied. This would include such things as swing sets and other fixed playground toys.
3. Avoiding spray applications during periods of temperature inversions, lapse, or wind velocities in excess of 12 miles per hour which might result in drift from the target area and cause adverse effects to the environment.

Since the presentation of this report at the conference, this regulation failed to make it past the Joint House Rules Committee. Defeating this regulation is a major victory and can be contributed to the fact that many people worked very hard to write their rational reasons against it.

A Strategy for Improved Pesticide Management in Michigan -- A Report to the Governor's Environmental Cabinet Council

The recommendations presented in this report represent statewide pesticide resource needs for addressing research and enforcement monitoring activities. These recommendations incorporate the requirements of the various state agencies charged with responsibilities for pesticide control. The areas of concern that were addressed in this lengthy document are:

1. Environmental Monitoring
2. Integrated Pest Management
3. Hazardous Waste Generation/Disposal
4. Worker Protection
5. Registration of Chemical Hypersensitivity
6. Sign Posting After Treatment
7. Prenotification
8. MDA 637
9. Etc.

MTF wrote opinions and made written recommendations on the entire document. Many of the recommendations were very acceptable in their presented form, others required extensive rewriting.

Summary

The evidence clearly shows that the public's interest in the pesticide issue will remain a very influential factor in the future of our businesses. I believe the professional turf industry must collectively work to promote pesticide safety.