



## The big unstated issue

by Christopher Sann

**U**NSTATED BUT, NEVERTHELESS, quite clear in "What do we mean by 'patch disease'?" (*see page 8 boxed article*)—and virtually every article in this publication—is a fundamental issue that needs airing. Who determines which questions are researched and which ones are left unanswered? In other words, the issue is whose perspective is more decisive in today's turfgrass industry:

- **PRODUCT END USERS**, including both professional turfgrass managers and their customers and people who care for their own lawns.
- **"PURE" ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS**, whose primary goal is to expand the boundaries of biological knowledge.
- **PRODUCT MANUFACTURERS** and the researchers whom they directly employ or at least fund
- **THE LEGISLATORS AND REGULATORS** who promulgate and enforce everything from health and safety related rules to the rules governing advertising and claims about product efficacy and labeling.
- **AND, FINALLY, THE GENERAL PUBLIC**, many of whom may not even have a lawn, but who, nonetheless, do have a say in the regulatory process. The general public—even the inactive portion of it—also plays a variety of significant roles in the turfgrass market.

First of all, I am not trying to begin another acrimonious them versus us debate. Quite the contrary. The future of the turf grass industry depends on how well the give and take between all of these different perspectives is managed.

Currently, the perspective of the manufacturer-sponsored researcher virtually dominates today's turfgrass industry. There are several reasons why this is so. The relatively young age of this industry—combined with the fact that the industry has little or no formal educational structure—has left the manufacturer/researcher as the dominant sources of "hard" information. This, in turn, has lead to a system where most of the information that is available is generated at the behest of the manufacturing sector and is predominantly product oriented.

The industry's regulators have had a modifying effect, but not enough of one to change the basic dynamics of the system or its dominance by product manufacturers.

Only a very small portion of available research moneys actually go to "pure" research. Unfortunately, this leaves a situation where a relatively few individuals, companies, and organizations exercise quite a bit of control over the genera-

## REGULATORY WATCH

### Feds crackdown on "haphazardous" waste reporting

THE E.P.A. AND SEVERAL STATES have begun identifying, citing, and fining hazardous waste generators, who have failed to comply with RCRA regulatory reporting requirements. Fines have totaled more than \$20 million to date, and in some cases the agency has brought criminal, as well as civil, prosecutions against offending companies.

### New regulations cover storm water run-off

THE E.P.A. IS IN THE PROCESS of implementing new regulations on storm water discharge from commercial sites. The regulations are designed to control the "non-point" discharge of pollution into storm water systems. Under these regulations, some fertilizer and pesticide manufacturers now come under the revised Clean Water Act. Two groups in the turf industry may come under the regulations:

- **FIRMS ENGAGED PRIMARILY IN MIXING** fertilizer materials
- **FIRMS THAT PRIMARILY FORMULATE** and prepare pesticides.

For additional information, interested companies should contact their nearest E.P.A. office or call the E.P.A. Storm Water Hotline at 1-703-821-4616.

### Well water survey continues

THE E.P.A. RELEASED the second phase of its National Survey of Pesticides in Drinking Water Wells. The results support the conclusions that were reached in phase one of the study: pesticides and nitrogen residues found in drinking water do not pose a serious health hazard.

The residues found in phase one were lower than established limits and the number of pesticides found was relatively low. With the exception of atrazine, a warm-season turf herbicide, no residues of turf-applied pesticides were found. Atrazine is extensively used in agriculture. ■

tion of information. The profit motive is an effective force only when it is coupled with a recognition of market needs. Advertising muddies the situation, because its persuasive power can create, distort, and even destroy the perception of real needs. For that reason information that is primarily motivated by the goal of selling products has never been a leader—rather it has been, and will always be, a follower.

Frankly, despite these limitations, the profit motive of generating information and effective products has helped this industry mature out of its infancy. This maturation is an ongoing process that probably would not have occurred without the input and dominant perspective of the manufacturer/researcher.

However, most of the easily garnered information has

— continued on page 13