

Environmental regulations and related trends: Who's affected and how?

EVERYONE HAS BEEN AFFECTED by environmental trends, but the impact has varied from sector to sector. Here is a summary of likely trends for 1993 and beyond:

Turf grass management operations

- Increased compliance efforts and costs related to changes in field procedures and office practices.
- Increased composting and other alternatives designed to reduce or eliminate the landfilling of yard wastes.
- Increased recognition of the positive business opportunities presented by ongoing changes in environmental regulations.
- Increased emphasis on worker training and certification.
- Continuing efforts to minimize the number of pesticide applications, to adjust expectations to reflect a "reasonable" performance standard, and increased market demand for safe, cost effective alternatives.
- Shake out of marginal operators and organizations due to escalating requirements.
- Lobbying all levels of government.
- And increased community outreach and attention to posting and notification requirements.

Manufacturers

- Continuing efforts to adjust to new legislative and regulatory changes, to have a voice in the direction of those changes, and to avoid involvement in costly related court actions, such as the Benlate fungicide contamination case in which the DuPont Co. is currently embroiled.
- Increase in number of more "environmental" products to meet market demand by requiring or allowing:
 - lower or less frequent application rates,
 - less rigorous worker safety precautions,
 - and easier clean-up.
- Flattening of pesticide market and gradually lowering of the number of companies involved, resulting in growth in market share for remaining big players. (The top six companies now have nearly a 70% share of the market.)
- Probable elimination of some products (primarily for agriculture) or increased restrictions on use.
- Continuing public outreach and research efforts by chemical companies, product manufacturers, and trade groups.

Government

- Increased enforcement, most likely in areas reporting higher levels of violations and in particular states with stiffer standards and higher commitment to enforcement.
- Promulgation of new rules as the legislative, judicial, and regulatory processes continue.
- Increased effort to get word out about new regulations and how to comply with them.
- Increased dialogue between state and federal regulators and decreasing numbers of local alarmist initiatives and ordinances as issues are sorted out.
- Less emphasis on monitoring lawn care advertising, since violation data indicate a low level of problems.
- Continuing water use controversies in areas with chronic water shortages and stiffer competition for the remaining scarce resources.
- Continuing debates and actions related to waste disposal and management.
- Increased training for regulators/enforcers.

Media and public opinion

- Continuing high level of media and public interest in regulatory confrontations, controversies over the impacts of new rules, and related court cases, studies, and research findings.
- Continuing debate on issues of risk management.
- Continuing efforts by environmental groups to influence public debate and government actions regarding use restrictions, record keeping requirements, enforcement actions, and notification rules.
- Increased awareness of turf as separate from agriculture.

Research

- Increased amount of data available on key environment and regulation-related subjects from:
 - funding of studies by government, industry, and trade associations,
 - state inspection and enforcement activities,
 - and ongoing academic research.

Bottom line

- Improved risk management of all potentially hazardous materials and practices.
- Improved effectiveness as individual company's recordkeeping generates data useful for assessing the effectiveness of applications and other turf management products and techniques.
- Reduced potential for liability crisis as hazardous practices and inadequate record keeping are reduced. ■