

Turf Grass TRENDS



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Environmental regulations

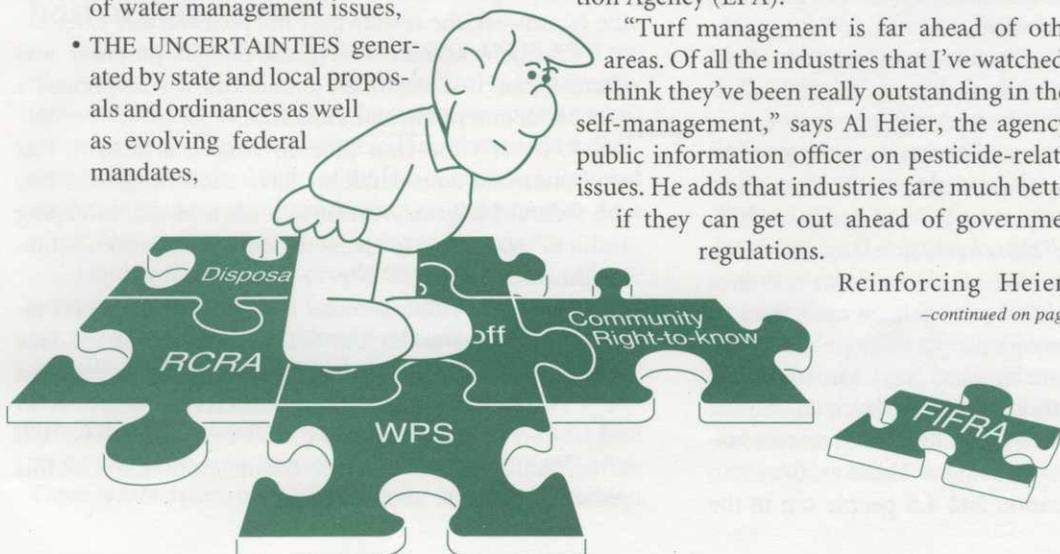
Lean and mean 80s give way to clean and mean 90s

by Russ McKinney

TURFGRASS MANAGERS were more focused on new products, equipment, and production standards in the 80s. Now they see environmental issues as their greatest concern. The big questions are: How clean? And how mean?

The growth of regulations over the last 25 years has been controversial, and shows no signs of abating. The regulations have produced some desirable results—such as increased sensitivity to the obvious shift in public attitudes and the risk reduction achieved through compliance—but a combination of factors has made the environment a number one worry. They include:

- THE SHEER NUMBER AND SCOPE of areas impacted, from the handling of pesticides and the availability of some products to right to know rules, the disposal of yard wastes, and a variety of water management issues,
- THE UNCERTAINTIES generated by state and local proposals and ordinances as well as evolving federal mandates,



- AND CONTINUING DISAGREEMENTS over the scientific issues involved.

The regulatory development process has been helter skelter, because of the impact of headline-making incidents and other shifting currents in the marketplace and in government priorities. However chaotic the process has been to date, the bottom line is that America is becoming a more planned, more data-driven, and more regulated society. Turf grass management and a long list of other products are tested, measured, analyzed, and tested again and again. In fact, the same exact science that has given turf management an unparalleled host of effective products and equipment has given society, in general, new ways of detecting minute residues and assessing the associated risks and costs. Unfortunately or not, the scientific and regulatory controversies involved are complicated by alarmists on all sides.

Turf looks good

Enforcement evidence, detailed on pages 6 and 7, suggests that most turf grass managers are bringing their operations into compliance. In fact, the environmental record of the turf grass industry, in general, and golf course superintendents, in particular, have won some hearts and minds—even at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

“Turf management is far ahead of other areas. Of all the industries that I’ve watched, I think they’ve been really outstanding in their self-management,” says Al Heier, the agency’s public information officer on pesticide-related issues. He adds that industries fare much better, if they can get out ahead of government regulations.

Reinforcing Heier’s
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