

Facts About The "Greens"

By Richard Lavine

The following article is based on articles in the May/June issue of "Green Section Record" titled, *The Greens Against The Greens*, by Michael Fumento, and the editorial in the May issue of "Western Turf and Landscape Press" dealing with work of Dr. Bruce Ames from UC Berkeley. I strongly urge anyone who has these issues to read these articles.

FACT: In the US, we spend 150 Billion dollars per year on environmental compliance.

FACT: 150 Billion dollars is more than the national budget of all but a few countries worldwide.

FACT: The US government spends 10 Billion dollars per year on medical research.

Do these statements seem as mind boggling to you as they do to me? Are we receiving more benefit out of \$150 billion in environmental compliance than we get out of \$10 billion in medical research? Is our environment that bad? Well, we

probably all know the answers to these questions.

The public is driven by the fear of CANCER. Mention cancer, and inevitably someone will think of pesticides. Pesticides on your fruit, pesticides in your water, and pesticides on your golf course, yet there is no scientific proof that a lifetime of exposure to any of these chemicals is sufficient to cause cancer. Fumento points out that on the average, lab animals are given 280,000 times the dose that a human would face in a lifetime. He also points out that fully one-third of the time, cancer causing dosages in rats don't cause cancer in mice, and vice-versa. What does this say about the carcinogenic effect in humans?

Are golfers really at higher risk of cancer? You've no doubt heard of the four LPGA cancer cases. That sounds pretty risky until you know that in that sample size of 200 golfers, scientists would expect 20 cases of

breast cancer. Clearly, increased cancer risk from golf course exposure is not the factor here.

Are environmental problems really so bad? Over 300,000 lives have been lost to obesity, and 21% of our teenagers are obese. Where is the anti-obesity faction? Tobacco and alcohol are known killers of thousands each year. Why aren't these products more heavily regulated? "People are living longer and getting cancer because they are living longer," says Dr. Bruce Ames.

According to Dr. Ames, mice live about two years, and monkeys live about 20 to 30 years. About one third of both species have cancer at death. Humans live about 80 to 90 years. About one third will have cancer at the time of death. "When people only lived to their 40's, there was not much cancer.

Dr. Ames contends that people are living longer healthier lives because of

pesticides. Pesticides make fruits and vegetables cheaper to produce and purchase. Studies show that people who eat recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables show a two to three fold reduction in almost all types of cancer. Smoking, dietary imbalances, chronic infections and hormones are the main causes of cancer. Industrial or synthetic chemical pollution is the cause of less than one percent of all cancer today.

So what does all this have to do with me? How is this information going to help me to do a better job on my golf course? It's time for all of us to speak up. Answer the anti-pesticide charges with FACTS. If you see a misleading article in print, write to the editor and the author and correct it. It's too easy to criticize but not lift your pen. That time is past. If we don't start speaking up, we all might be regulated out of existence

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have a much greater impact on the future of our profession. One only has to look back 5 years to notice the dramatic change in the public perception of golf courses. If we fail to take action now, what changes will we be forced to endure as a result of future public and legislative pressure?

How do we initiate a change in the public perception of golf courses? We must begin by developing an awareness of the need to project a responsible and positive image in everything we do. Furthermore, before we can begin to advocate the positive aspects of golf courses, we need to make sure our house is in order. For

example, have we reduced water use or utilized effluent sources for irrigation, have we put programs in place to minimize our reliance on chemicals, how are we dealing with hazardous materials, have we reduced environmental risks by installing aboveground gas tanks, pesticide storage containment units, or closed

system wash areas, have we effectively increased, or protected wildlife populations on the golf course by the creation of natural habitats, or the participation in the Audubon Sanctuary Program, do we recycle green waste or pesticide containers?

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Par For The Course (Cont'd)

Please check your local listings for exact time and channels.

The goal of the program is to inform and entertain golfers and, in the process, enhance the public image of golf courses and superintendents. If successful, the program may help to redefine the way golfers view superintendents and the golf industry.

The producers of **Par For The Course** need your help. If you have stories or topics which you would like to see covered, call the Par hotline 24 hours a day at (913)832-4460.

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Initiating Change

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The first step then, in our campaign to change the negative perceptions of golf courses is to examine each of our maintenance procedures and note examples of how we are already operating in an environmentally responsible manner. If we've fallen short in some areas, we need to, with the resources available to us, look for ways to make improvements. Once we are confident that our operation is functioning in a manner which is environmentally responsible, we are ready to spread the word. Next month I'll discuss the variety of public relations options which are available to do just that.

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