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## Self Protection

Scientific advances are accelerating at an unprecedented pace, including the development of ultrasensitive devices that detect the most minute pesticide residues in food, soil, and water. A recent news story heralded the development of a device so sensitive that it can determine the presence of as little as eight billionths of a gram of some phosphorus insecticides!

While we cannot but hail this scientific achievement, we wonder how really significant this instrument is to the commercial applicator. Ever since man has learned how to use chemistry to prolong life, he has used minute quantities of highly toxic materials to improve our health and the food we eat.

At the recent International Shade Tree Conference, Louis A. McLean, secretary of Velsicol Chemical Corp., said, "Unfortunately, through recent history of pesticide detection and controversial materials, rules of the game changed as each new and more accurate instrument was developed. The objective has always been safety, not useless exercises in mathematics."

The National Academy of Sciences suggests that "zero" tolerance should mean "negligible" and "permissible" residues to assure adequate food supply and health protection.

While the controversy continues, however, spraymen everywhere must safeguard themselves against the possible adversity that might occur if someone, at some later date, determines an application might have caused a newly detected "harmful" residue.

With the increased emphasis on preventing pesticide residues in food and feed crops, it is more important than ever to keep accurate records of all pesticide applications. Besides allowing the operator to make sound management decisions and help him avoid waste, they also protect him if the question of pesticide residues occur.

Records should indicate the name of the pesticide used, amounts used, rates of application, and when, where, and how it was applied. Environmental circumstances such as weather and soil conditions during application, labels from pesticide containers, and date sprayer or application equipment was calibrated should also be noted.

Accurate records may keep spraymen from being involved in a lawsuit. It's a matter of self protection.

WEEDS TREES AND TURF is the national monthly magazine of urban/industrial vegetation maintenance, including turf management, weed and brush control, and tree care. Readers include "contract applicators," arborists, nurserymen, and supervisory personnel with highway departments, railways, utilities, golf courses, and similar areas where vegetation must be enhanced or controlled. While the editors welcome contributions by qualified freelance writers, unsolicited manuscripts, unaccompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes, cannot be returned.