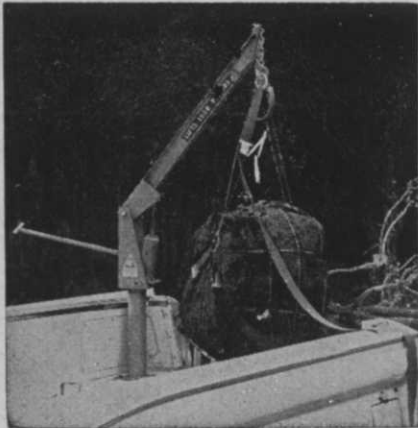


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## Incident in Vermont

Pick up almost any magazine these days that is even remotely related to vegetation control, and you will find numerous admonitions for safe herbicide usage. Turn to page 22 of this issue, and you will find the following reminder: "Read the label. Observe all precautions and use herbicides wisely."

Almost every day, we receive quantities of news releases pertaining to chemicals and their application. Many, if not most, bear statements similar to the above. The few releases, which space limitations permit us to publish, usually have such precautions deleted in the process. Not because we don't believe in them, but because they're everywhere—and too often ignored. If repetition could assure their being followed, everyone who uses herbicides would be thoroughly indoctrinated by now.

We've all heard of the Mississippi fish kill and the dark forebodings of "Silent Spring." These constitute the more dramatic evidence of pesticide troubles. Frankly, we've heard too much of them, and have to admit to a preference for such "backwater" cases as the following, which recently came to our attention:

It happened in Vermont, where a dairy farmer sued a tree company for damages because the company had contaminated his waterhole by mixing herbicides uninvited. The farmer won a substantial judgment. And that is the substance of the entire case. Nevertheless, the suit made the *N. Y. Times*, which quoted this from Circuit Judge Harold R. Medina's appeal ruling:

"It seems to us to be just a bit silly to try to convince a jury of hard-headed Vermonters that it is perfectly all right to put a combination of chemical weed killer and No. 2 fuel oil into a farmer's water supply."

We think this summarizes the case quite well, and while hardly a dramatic occurrence, it does illustrate several very important points. One, it emphasizes the amount of publicity being given to chemical misuses. Two, it shows that people, whether sophisticated urbanites or Yankee dairymen, will not quietly tolerate such misuses. And, three, it underlines the adverse publicity and substantial damage claims that responsible parties leave themselves wide open for.

We offer no admonition. We only remind the few applicators who are tempted to employ unsafe chemical practices of this Vermont incident.

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.