

**Concerned About Editorial**

I am concerned over your editorial "Incident in Vermont" appearing in the January 1967 issue of WEEDS TREES AND TURF. To many of us this is not a "back-water" case. Any case of this nature is serious because of the precedent it may set. It should, therefore, be carefully researched and the true facts determined before it is given national publicity.

During my presence at the trial, no one tried 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 farmers water supply." On the contrary, a considerable amount of testimony was given to show why the chemical could not have gotten to the water supply. First, it was not mixed at the water hole. There was no reason to use water since the brushkiller was to be applied as a stump spray in a fuel oil carrier. Second, the material was applied to stumps at a considerable distance from the water hole and the stream leading to it. Third, the amount applied to the treated area was less than three quarts of the brushkiller diluted in 15 gallons of fuel oil. This was a summer stump treatment. Conditions were ideal for rapid breakdown of the 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T contained in the brushkiller by soil bacteria.

The farmer claimed that two of his cows were killed and the entire herd affected by the chemical-fuel oil mixture. No autopsy had been performed and no evidence was presented to show that the amount of chemical and fuel oil in question could kill a cow. Much testimony to the contrary was given by two university weed scientists.

I cannot agree that this case illustrates a chemical misuse or an unsafe practice as your editorial implies. Stump sprays of 2,4-D/2,4,5-T brushkillers have been applied to right-of-way brush in this manner for 20 years. To my knowledge there has never been a case of herbicidal poisoning of livestock from this technique. It is one of the safest that can be employed and is widely recommended by weed scientists and extension personnel all over the world.

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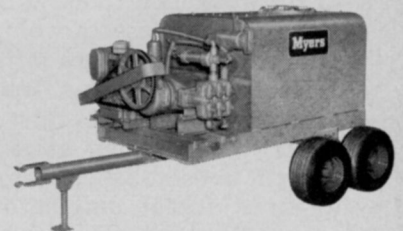
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