

Government News

Anti-spill regulations of the Environmental Protection Agency will name 300 major chemicals, many of which are pesticides and herbicides used in the green industry. Under the soon-to-be-published regulations, penalties for spills or discharges of the chemicals "in harmful quantities" (in some cases a pound or less) would subject companies to heavy civil fines.

The federal Japanese beetle program will terminate in October if not reinstated; funding for the program was not included in the latest federal budget. Basically, this reasoning seems sound to some because this pest has about reached its geographical range. However, others feel the program was discontinued because of the banning of control materials by the Environmental Protection Agency, and that within two to three years there will be losses due to Japanese beetle grubs and other subterranean insects which have not been a problem since the 1950s. These persons feel that when these problems become extreme once again, that pressures will force federally financed studies aimed at control.

Most economists believe the economic recovery is real and are scaling their projections upward. And experts predict this favorable forecast: The median price of a new home is 20 percent cheaper than it was in 1970 when related to disposable income. This, plus declining mortgage rates, will result in 1.6 million new homes this year and two million next year -- good news for landscapers, sod growers and other related green industry persons.

Another salvo in the chlordane and heptachlor fight -- this time from Velsicol Chemical Corp., Chicago. In a recent letter to Environmental Protection Agency administrator Russell E. Train, Velsicol charges that a recent EPA request for recall of all stocks of chlordane and heptachlor is illegal. The letter says in part: "As you are aware, there is no authority in the law for recall of products which have been suspended...these suspension orders contain absolutely no provision for recall of these products. As you are also aware, although certain registrations have been suspended, none has been cancelled and the cancellation proceedings for heptachlor and chlordane still are pending and unresolved." Velsicol claims that although the EPA letter is phrased as a "request" since it comes by certified mail from the government, there is obvious official pressure, and registrants will be misled into believing they have to comply.

Insurance companies are seeking to become partners with the federal government in a booming line of insurance. That line is insuring the nation's farm crops against all risks, including so-called "acts of God," such as flood, frost or drought. At present, most of this insurance is written by the United States Department of Agriculture's Federal Crop Insurance Corp. Last year the government's premium volume grew to \$73.6 million, up 36 percent from 1974 and double the volume of a decade ago. Is there room here for insurance for green industry crops?

The postponement for a year the requirement for certification of pesticide applicators has not resulted in any noticeable delay in states' training and certification efforts, the Environmental Protection Agency reports. 25 of the 54 states and territories that need approved state plans for applicator certification now have EPA-approved plans or ones the agency considers approvable.