

GOVERNMENT

UPDATE

EPA officials to see arborists work

A special demonstration, arranged by the National Arborist Association for EPA enforcement officials, will take place in Rockville, Md., on June 7. NAA Executive Secretary Bob Felix said other industries have performed such demonstrations to eliminate any misunderstandings about the application of potentially toxic materials by professionals.

Environmentalists focus on cities

Barbara Blum, deputy administrator of EPA, has challenged the environmental movement to focus on the nation's cities. Speaking to the Sierra Club in Berkeley, Ca., in May, Blum said, "It is the urban environment and urban people who are our most endangered species." Blum recommended the creation of 100,000 new environmentally-related jobs to work on sewage, air pollution, and other city projects. What effect this could have on city landscaping projects and minority business project awards is yet undetermined.

Labor act now up to Senate

Debate on the labor reform act began in the Senate in mid-May, and its effect on the industry at that time was mixed; the bill retained an exemption for agricultural employers, meaning that employees of plant growers, such as those who work growing trees and shrubs, are not allowed to join a union. The negative effect, however, was a fear that other businessmen, such as landscapers, would be much more vulnerable to union-organizing efforts if the bill passes.

Senators opposing the bill were attempting to filibuster and prevent a floor vote when debate began. The bill has passed the House of Representatives, 257-163.

The major concern of industry officials is that, if the bill passes, employers with just a few employees will be the targets of organized labor.

"They (organized labor) are interested in organizing the 'Mom and Pop' shops," said Bob Lederer, executive vice president for the American Association of Nurserymen. Lederer backs up his contention by saying that more than 2,000 union elections in 1976 involved firms with less than 10 employees.

The proposed revisions in the law require employers to hold union elections 15 days after the employees ask for it. Currently, there is no time limit. If the employer fails, the National Labor Relations Board would hold the election.

The proposals call for back pay if a worker is punished for union activities and penalties for employers who violate the orders of the court or labor relations board.

Two maybes, one yes against 2,4-D

EPA officials have indicated that there is little doubt that fetotoxicity is a valid trigger for a RPAR against 2,4-D. Teratogenicity and carcinogenicity are "definite maybes". Conflicting reviews of a study, "Chronic Toxicity of 2,4-D in Rats and Dogs", leave some doubt as to carcinogenicity. The EPA's Carcinogen Assessment Group (CAG) has not reviewed the study, but a consultant has and indicates some positive evidence. The National Cancer Institute found the study did not present convincing evidence.

Roy Beattie, public relations director for Jacobsen, said the impending sale would not effect golf car or other turf equipment sales and service.

TURF

Still no pact on seed burning

No decision has yet been announced on the amount of land that grass seed growers in Oregon will be allowed to burn this year for their 1979 crop.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's regional office in Seattle is trying to determine if the growers can use up to 180,000 acres, the amount they have used in previous years. Environmental groups have opposed that figure, saying particulates from the burning fields create health hazards in Eugene and Springfield and violate the federal government's Clean Air Act.

Dave Nelson, executive secretary for the Oregon Seed Council, has predicted that the quality and quantity of seed for next year will decrease if strict limits are imposed. He has said, however, that the council will take their battle to court if the EPA's decision does not meet their needs.

LAWN CARE

Manufacturers invited to Chicago by group

More than 2,000 lawn and garden manufacturers have been invited to an introductory meeting of the newly-formed Lawn and Garden Manufacturers Association on June 19 and 20 at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare Hotel in Chicago.

A director's reception will be held at 6:30 p.m. June 19. The following day, speakers will give an industry perspective of the association, hear a trade press representative, and talk about the definition and scope of the industry. A three-year plan to develop the association and other long-range goals will be discussed by Sanford J. Hill, the association's executive director.

Some charter members of the new group are Nursery Specialty Products, Seaboard Seed Co., Heston Manufacturing, Melnor Industries and Plant Marvel.

Association headquarters is at 111 E. Wacker Dr., Chicago, Ill. 60601. The phone number is 312/644-6610.