

GOVERNMENT

UPDATE

by William Hoffman

Office supplies act blasted by IPA

The Interior Plantscape Association has released a "White Paper" on a Congressional bill intended to control office machine dealers, which could limit the number of plant dealers.

The Retail Dealers Agreement Act (S. 1256), introduced in May, requires suppliers to notify current dealers of plans for new dealerships in their market area, defined as a 20-mile radius of a dealer's primary place of business.

Upon receipt of notice, the existing dealer may seek an injunction in federal court against the establishment of a new dealership in his market area. The court would then determine if such a new dealership was warranted and the supplier would carry the burden of proof.

The IPA paper says, "Growers and brokers will be restricted in their ability to make marketing decisions based on current conditions and needs, unable to change or expand their retail distribution channels in response to demand."

The Act has the potential to restrict expansion by any type of supplier to for the office environment. IPA encourages everyone to write representatives as soon as possible about this "anticompetitive" legislation.

Organic agriculture is on collision course.

The White House and the Congress are on a collision course in regard to the role of organic farming in the nation's agricultural system. In 1980 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), under a 1977 directive from the Congress, completed a study on organic farming and assigned a research employee to the activity full-time.

John R. Block, Secretary of Agriculture, in the Reagan Administration, has opposed any new bills in the Congress that call for more research on organic farming. He stated that this is the wrong time to introduce new farm programs and new federal spending. Congressional proponents argue that this might be a way for farmers to cut their costs and to protect their land from overcultivation. USDA estimates that about 2% of the nation's commercial farmers use organic techniques and that more have asked for information. However, USDA earlier this summer assigned their one researcher new duties that take about one half of his time and in a surprise move in late August included this scientist among the 600 potential employees who might be ruffed in FY 1983. Congress is up-in-arms.

Ozone layer not at peril from fertilizer

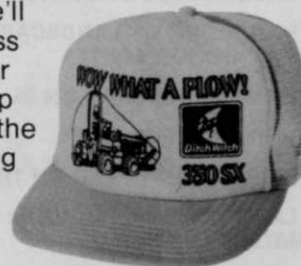
Research scientists from the U.S. Department of Agriculture have shown that less than 2% of nitrogen fertilizers applied to crops escapes from the field as nitrous oxide and are not the danger to the Earth's ozone layer as earlier predicted. This layer screens out harmful ultraviolet radiation, which, in excess, can increase incidence of skin cancer.

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