

STEPS takes leap to calm pesticide furor

STEPS is off and running.

The Society to Educate Pesticide Safety, a group of six Ohio-based lawn care, pest control, tree care and chemical company professionals, is trying to nip in the bud the pesticide hysteria caused by what one member terms "environrads"—radical environmentalists.

The group is confronting the issue of public pesticide safety head-on in the hopes that clarifying issues and educating the public on the safe use of pesticides will drive away alleged scare tactics and anti-pesticide information being disseminated by certain special interest groups and "misinformed individuals."

"We are trying to get the truth out on what they (PCOs and LCOs) are really using and that this industry is already regulated enough," said George Gossett, an account manager with Dow Chemical and a member of the STEPS executive committee. He, along with Bob Holt of Davey Tree, Nate Robinson of Leisure Lawn, Ray Gibson of Ohio City Communications and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America and Lauren Lan-



STEPS members meet to discuss strategy.

phar of Forest City Tree Protection, hope to induce a groundswell of support in the state of Ohio to light the fire under other PCOs and LCOs so that individuals in other states will start similar groups.

STEPS' first order of business is educating the media on some of the misconception about chemicals.

Recently, the group hosted Dr. Carl C. Smith, professor of environmental health and pharmacology at the University of Cincinnati and a toxicologist at the Kettering Institute; Dr. George Fischer, head of the entomology department at the University of New Hampshire; and Dr. Wendell Mullison, a retired chemical researcher who holds a number of 2,4-D process and formulation patents. He is currently a private consultant in the areas of agricultural pesticides with a specialty in herbicides.

The three scientists visited a number of Cleveland newspapers and radio stations last month dispelling myths about chemicals and their effects on humans and other animals.

STEPS, since its inception in August, has already attended many local city council meetings trying to answer citizens' questions and concerns about lawn care company spraying. Some northeast Ohio communities have entertained legislation trying to limit spraying.

"Sometimes they're willing to listen, other times we have a hard time even getting on the (council) agenda," Gossett told WT&T.

Lanphear, who is an arborist, says the lawn care industry should not be left fighting the battle alone.

"This problem, while this year may be targeted at lawn care companies, is an industry-wide problem. If lawn care gets regulated, it's only a matter of time before the other industries using pesticides are targeted for similar restrictions."

He emphasized the importance of other states addressing the problem before it gets to the panic stage and "stressing the benefits and safety of proper pesticide use."

TURF

Warren's axes Wisc. sod production

Warren's turf nursery will no longer grow sod at its Sullivan, WI, nursery.

"The decision to redeploy the significant assets in use in Wisconsin to other areas of the country is a corporate management decision aimed at maximizing return on investment of our stockholders," said General Manager Mike Holmes.

He said the Sullivan, WI, location is ideal for producing sod, but is well over 100 miles to the primary market of Chicago that it serves.

"This extra delivery cost put us at a significant cost disadvantage as compared to several good competitors in the very price-competitive Chicago market."

Holmes said even though seedings have stopped, a good supply of bluegrass sod should be available through July-August 1985.

Warren's plans to continue marketing its proprietary line of turfgrass seed through its dealer/distributor network in Wisconsin and Illinois.



Award Winner

WEEDS TREES & TURF Executive Editor Bruce Shank accepts a plaque from American Society of Business Press Editors' Vice President Bob Boggs at the recent ASBPE National Meeting in Boston. Shank accepted the award for the August, 1983 cover of WT&T which was a graphic representation of insect resistant turfgrass. The cover first won in the local Cleveland chapter and went on to compete nationally in Boston. ASBPE is an organization for professionals in the business and trade press fields.

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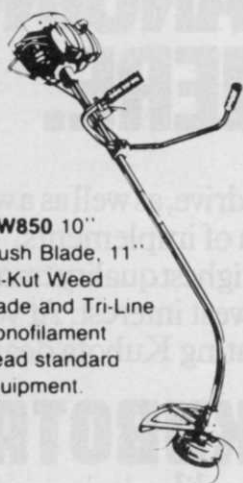
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ACQUISITION

Seats Inc. buys Columbia Car Corp.

Columbia Car Corporation, producer of electric and gas golf cars, has been acquired by Seats, Incorporated, and will now be known as Columbia Par-Car Corp.

The newly-created corporation will operate as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Seats, Incorporated, Reedsburg, WI.

W.R. Sauey, chairman of Seats, Incorporated, said, "We will continue in the tradition of manufacturing quality and efficient golf cars under the Columbia name. We have an enthusiastic group of operating and managerial personnel, along with an effective dealer organization. Our plan is to provide strong support to our current dealers so vital to this industry. Special emphasis will be placed on establishing a dealer network throughout the United States that supports the sales and service capabilities now in place."

Seats, Inc. will inject Columbia with capital and manufacturing and marketing skills. Said Sauey,

"It is our initial plan to restructure the operating and marketing functions into a lean and effective group that is the history of 37 years in the manufacturing of varied industrial and consumer products."

Seats Incorporated is a manufacturer of heavy duty seating for trucking, off-highway and recreational vehicles.

CHEMICALS

Diquat cleared of EDB hazard charges

After a three month study, three Florida state departments and two independent laboratories have determined that ethylene dibromide (EDB) levels in Ortho Diquat Herbicide H/A used in non-potable waters do not pose a significant environmental danger or human health hazard.

As a result, the Florida Department of Natural Resources has rescinded its March 1 requests to discontinue use of all Diquat products and to suspend future issuing of permits for using Diquat.

Beginning in March, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Department of Environmental Regulation began to monitor field test sites and Diquat containers for hazardous EDB levels.

An analysis of samples taken from

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these sites lead to the conclusion that EDB levels in Diquat used in non-potable water are not a significant threat to human health or the environment.

Florida aquatic herbicide permit holders will now be allowed to use Diquat in non-potable waters at rates which do not exceed two gallons per acre. Applicators denied a Diquat use permit during the 90 day study may now reapply for a use permit through their regional biologist. Those already holding a use permit may continue using Diquat under the guidelines of the use permit and the product label.

SEED

Jacklin builds seed warehouse in Idaho

The Jacklin Seed Company's Nezperce, ID, facility sports a new 22,500-sq-ft, steel and concrete warehouse finished late this summer. "The new building will help provide warehousing for seed to be marketed throughout the world," Duane Jacklin, general manager, said.

Jacklin Seed, Post Falls, ID, has marketing arrangements with a number of European countries, several Asian nations, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, plus countries in South America, Central America, and the Middle East.

Future plans call for a two-story, 3600-sq-ft office facility inside the new warehouse, and the addition of a mill line for seed conditioning.

"It is our intention to work closely with our Pacific Northwest producers to help make grass seed production as profitable as possible," Jacklin noted. "We're exploring markets in every corner of the world to help make that happen."

TURFGRASS

Two Lofts ryegrasses get PVP certificates

Palmer and Prelude turf-type perennial ryegrass varieties, developed jointly by Lofts and Rutgers University's New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, recently received Plant Variety Protection (PVP) certificates. Each of these varieties has been on the market for only one year.

Lofts claims both varieties display improved mowability, tolerance to drought and heat, dark green color, good winter hardiness, improved resistance to crown rust and brown patch, and fine-leaved, dense growth.

UPDATE

Applicator in '86 may have to wear both gloves and respirator

EPA will release this spring proposed Worker Protection Standards for pesticide applicators which include gloves and respirators as required protective clothing. The proposals will face hearings before they are enacted sometime in 1986.

The scope of pesticide applicators has been broadened to include greenhouse, golf course, and other non-agricultural areas, as well as those who mix, load, apply or handle pesticides. The proposals stress the need for protection upon reentry of a treated area and include provisions on posting and other warnings.

Panel zeroes in on 'inadequacies' of pesticide applicator supervision

An EPA Administrator's Pesticide Advisory Committee discussed last month the lack of adequate supervision of uncertified applicators of restricted-use pesticides. The committee, discussing possible amendments to FIFRA, implied changes to the meaning of direct supervision and improvement of applicator training were possible in future regulations.

An early victory of commercial and agricultural applicators was the acceptance by EPA of direct supervision by telephone. In this way, an uncertified applicator has been able to apply restricted-use pesticides as long as he can reach a certified applicator by phone. The panel seems to be leaning toward either requiring all applicators of restricted-use pesticides be certified or narrowing the meaning of direct supervision.

Pesticide applicator training is also being studied by the panel for changes. A training requirement for uncertified applicators may provide room for compromise with the all certified applicator proposal.

EPA explores risk fees to pay for 'safer substitutes'

A 'per-pound fee' is being considered by an EPA advisory panel to pay for development of 'safer substitutes'. High-risk products or those with missing safety data would be charged a higher rate than less risky products or those with complete safety data on file with EPA.

The idea is already termed "dramatic" by panel members and others and is bound to face extreme counter-pressure by chemical companies. EPA is trying to make it financially unfavorable to either produce higher risk products or delay submitting safety data.

The Office of Pesticide Programs has set 1985 as a goal for gathering all missing data. Implementation of such a proposal would not take effect until 1986 at the soonest.

INDUSTRY

Amfac sells units to Tri-West Inc.

An employee group headed by John F. Mendez, former executive vice president at Amfac, purchased all the assets of Amfac's three horticulture units this summer. The new company, known as Tri-West Inc., is based in San Mateo, CA. Terms of the sale were not disclosed.

Involved in the sale were Amfac Garden Perry's, a ground cover and bedding producer, Amfac Garden Cal-Turf, and Jenco Nurseries, a horticulture wholesaler in the Southwest. Combined revenues for the units in 1983 were \$25 million.

Amfac will use the proceeds from the sale, which were substantially in cash, to reduce its short-term borrowings.

Amfac spokesperson Gwenly Carrel said the decision to sell the horticulture units was made in January after an exhaustive reevaluation of the entire company. She said it was Amfac's goal to divest itself of businesses "that have shown losses or low returns in recent years. Horticulture was one of the areas we identified as not meeting our goals."

Depressed housing starts during 1981 and 1982, resulting in poorer performances than anticipated in the nursery business, figured into the decision to sell, she told WEEDS TREES & TURF, along with the belief that some of Amfac's smaller businesses were not "conducive to effective corporate management."

PEOPLE

Names in the news

A new group of leaders head the American Association of Nurserymen (AAN) following that organization's recent convention in San Antonio, TX. **Lawrence W. Bachman**, takes over as president of the AAN. He goes back a long way in the Green Industry. In 1938 he began the landscaping and garden store divisions of Bachman's, a Minneapolis firm which now has five garden centers and two nursery/landscape outlets. Bachman's celebrates its 100th anniversary in 1985.

The new AAN president is the former director of AAN's Region IV and was elected to the AAN board of directors in 1979 (serving as vice president in 1983). Replacing Bachman as director of Region IV is **Steve Driftmeier**, president of Wilmore Nurseries, Inc., Wheat Ridge, CO, and Little Valley Wholesale Nursery, Brighton, CO.