

Safer than table salt doesn't work anymore

It's true. Many of our pesticides are less toxic than table salt. But, like the DDT cocktail swallowed by scientists in safety demonstrations across the country, these declarations of safety aren't enough to counteract the intense pressure being placed upon pesticide users today.

Only the user really determines the fate of a pesticide. The safest, most effective chemical can be struck down by the anti-pesticide lobby when major misuse is uncovered and broadcast to a distrustful nation.

We can beat our heads bloody fighting each government agency, one at a time, proving to each that pesticides are a worthwhile risk considering the benefit.

The BIG GOAL should be to regain the trust of our customers and the public in general. This will take a major effort by both manufacturers and users, an effort equal to or greater than the legal defense of pesticides in federal, state and local courts.

We need an offense as well as a defense. We should be extremely responsive to customer concerns. We should work with those proposing legislation in the areas of prenotification, licensing, and waste disposal. We can be a step ahead of anti-pesticides rather than spending all our efforts fighting each skirmish they create.

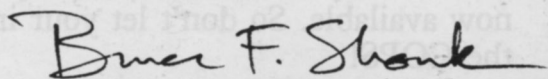
The industry can't merely declare itself innocent and sue everyone who says otherwise. It has to recognize public concerns and work with the public to reach compromises BEFORE legislation reaches the voting stage.

The only way this can happen is a massive, unified effort between users and manufacturers to establish listening posts in every city and suburb in the U.S. This can only work if we act as a group and not as factions. Associations should join together to represent all users, not just their own. And, users should not assume association staffs can do all the work.

The structure for this listening post system has already been established. If you combined the listening system of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America and the government expertise of the American Association of Nurserymen and the National Arborist Association, you have a foundation for a major project to restore public trust.

Assuming users and manufacturers dedicate themselves to such an effort, success will still depend upon a responsive, concerned posture rather than a totally defensive one.

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by Bruce F. Shank, executive editor

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