



Is it time to weed out drug users?

As we embark upon the 1990s, the green industry can feel confident of having made its voice known in the battle for fair pesticide application laws. Though regulatory problems continue, this start of a new decade could be the perfect time to take an industry-wide, active stance against drug abuse.

"One company can make a difference; many companies can have a major impact," says Jerry C. Moland of TurfScape Landscape Care, Chandler, Ariz.

Moland speaks from experience, having last summer begun a substance abuse program that includes the following policies:

- Prospective employees are required to submit to drug tests.
- Continuing employees are subject to random drug testing.
- A drug treatment program is available for interested employees.
- "Casual users" are no longer tolerated.

"Everybody in the industry is scared to death of losing people," Moland notes. "They're not sure how to deal with what could be a massive turnover. There were times I wavered, too."

Though eight good employees—one out of three—were initially lost, TurfScape's workforce has since grown from 24 to 30. And Moland is ecstatic with worker performance.

"All new employees possess better skill levels and more experience, and perform much higher quality work," he notes. "All are at TurfScape because of their desire to work in a drug-free environment."

There are other positive results of the company's new anti-drug policy: greatly reduced turnover, no accidents, no in-house thefts, no excessive damage to equipment, lower tardiness and absenteeism, good public relations.

And—oh yes—"the highest possible morale anyone in our industry could expect."

Moland sees this policy as a small though not insignificant step that could eventually help rid the country of its drug problems. "All small businesses working together can make a far bigger difference," he observes. "If users can't find work, they can't buy drugs. If the customers dwindle, watch the dealers go away."

TurfScape's credo, not surprisingly, is "TurfScape Truly Cares."

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