

NRVMA learns how to play it safe



The National Roadside Vegetation Management Association isn't standing still when it comes to dealing with environmental and regulatory issues.

At its September annual meeting in Albuquerque, topics for discussion included:

- "Roadside Management During the Nineties;"
- "Environmental Issues that Affect Roadside Management Programs;"
- "Update on Pesticide Regulations."

Instead of taking a strictly defensive stance against herbicide and pesticide regulations, NRVMA is doing its best to tell its side of the story. It's keeping abreast of what's happening, and working for compromise with legislators.

Granted, many of the people against control products are misinformed, and in many cases operate on double standards. They cut their conscience to match the latest trendy concerns. One year it's Ice Age, the next year it's global warming. But the power of the bleeding hearts can't be denied. That's why NRVMA is taking action to inform lawmakers, citizens and the mass media about the safety of carefully researched and tested products.

Four years ago, only the Pacific Northwest had problems with environmental activists. Now it's everybody's problem.

"There's not a highway department that I know of in the U.S. that hasn't had to deal with environmental issues," says Tom Hoogheem, manager of environmental issues for Monsanto.

"It's time that we get smart," says Hoogheem. "Vegetation management in this country is under attack. We've got to get serious with the issues, we've got to know how to address the issues and we have to do it right now!"

The best example of NRVMA's concern is its applicator training program, being finalized by Dr. Harvey Holt and various associates. The program is being developed at Purdue University, but Holt is quick to mention that input for the program's content came from professionals across the country.

With the applicator training program, NRVMA hopes to eliminate what is a leading cause of activist zealotry: the mistake.

"I firmly believe, that where there has been environmental impact, 99.9 percent of it has been through misuse," suggests Hoogheem, who says applicators must "...do it right, or we'll lose the right to use the products."

The NRVMA applicator training program covers every base of applicator safety. It's a great step forward for NRVMA, and the association deserves credit for thinking ahead, and for taking appropriate action.

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