

# HOT TOPICS

## Pesticide critic a hot item on winter turf programs

**WASHINGTON**—Jay Feldman says many professional pesticide users focus on profits and expediency, and disregard customer safety.

He also says the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's pesticide registration mechanism is a hopeless failure. Hardly any of the pesticides being used on turf have been adequately tested for their long-term health affects, he claims.

Feldman is the keynote speaker at the Rocky Mountain Turf Conference in Denver on Wednesday, Dec. 4. On Friday, Feb. 14, 1992, he speaks about urban pesticide use at the International Golf Course Conference in New Orleans.

This is a far cry from when only the representatives of industry or industry trade groups pow-wowed (usually discreetly and to little purpose) with Feldman over his unending criticism of the pesticide industry.

Feldman is national director of the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (NCAMP), an advocacy group that works out of modest offices in a residential neighborhood of Washington D.C. Since NCAMP's founding in 1981, Feldman has built himself into an outspoken and accessible—at least to the capital's media and politicians—critic of pesticide use.

This past spring, before a U.S. Senate subcommittee, Feldman ripped the specialty chemical industry, attacking everything from pesticide safety testing protocols to the U.S. EPA registration process, to the health hazards of actual applications.

Although Feldman's efforts in Washington D.C. reap him a surprisingly large soapbox, it's his and NCAMP's spiderweb of activist contacts in communities across the country, and the possibility that



**Feldman: will his message be welcome?**

they might become a spark for a rash of local regulatory brushfires, that most concerns industry.

Feldman, through these supporters, has been pushing for more local control over pesticide use laws. In light of a U.S. Supreme Court ruling this past June and some recent

"how-to" information from NCAMP, it's likely a lot of town councils will be debating the pros and cons of pesticide use this winter and spring.

Although some industry spokespeople question Feldman's appropriateness as a "keynote speaker" at a turf conference, even a regional one, they concede that he's somebody they'd now better, at least, pay attention to.

## USGA looks at guidelines for sand analysis

**FAR HILLS, N.J.**—The United States Golf Association's Green Section is considering guidelines that include organic analysis of sand for golf course greens construction.

"We're investigating that right now," says Green Section executive director Jim Snow. "Dr. Norm Hummel from Cornell University is on sabbatical, working with us to standardize lab procedures.

"We all agree that it's something that needs to be addressed. But it's not that easy to address."

Mark Altman of Altman & Altman Consulting, Marshall, Minn., says he's seen real problems on greens which arise from the organic analysis of their sand content.

"The sand makes a lot of difference in



**Mark Altman**



**Jim Snow**

the green's performance," he says. "Carbon-to-nitrogen ratio is the most important thing in evaluating organic matter."

Altman, whose company specializes in golf course and athletic turf management,

says the sand's organic content affects turf health via percolation rate, cation exchange and water-holding capacity.

"I'd like the Green Section to take the science of greens management one step further," Altman says. "The USGA doesn't have to endorse a product, just give superintendents guidelines so they can make an intelligent decision."

Snow says there is "no doubt" the Green Section will come up with guidelines for superintendents. "We might try to rank—in general terms—the sorts of organic amendments," he says. "We'll have a certain set of parameters to put in our specifications for greens construction."

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