

HOT TOPICS

Good argument for pesticides: we're living longer than ever

'I just hope the lawyers allow that technology to happen.'

—John Stossel

NEW ORLEANS—If ABC-TV environmental reporter John Stossel were a golf course superintendent or landscaper or lawn care operator, here's what he'd tell his customers:

"We are exposed to more dangerous chemicals than ever before. The result? We're living twice as long...as (we were) 100 years ago! And what gave us this longer lifespan? Technology. I just hope the lawyers allow that technology to happen."

Stossel tried to put everything in perspective following presentations by Jay Feldman of the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (NCAMP) and Victor Kimm of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), at the annual GCSAA conference here last month.

"When is something too risky?" Stossel asked. "Old technologies we seem to accept. Natural gas kills 400 people a year, home swimming pools kill 100 people a year.

"Sixty people a year die fishing," he continued. "Should we outlaw fishing? Should the regulators decide? I think you should give people information and let



Victor Kimm of the EPA (left) and John Stossel of ABC-TV (right) confer while Jay Feldman of NCAMP (not pictured) calls for more strict federal legislation to regulate pesticide use in the United States.

people decide."

Feldman addressed the overflow session first. He pretty much went by the book—his book—in citing what he considered to be problems with pesticide use in this country:

- 602 of 620 pesticides slated for EPA re-registration still haven't been reassessed.
- Studies in Nebraska and Kansas, and the National Cancer Institute's study on dogs, point to a relationship between certain pesticides and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.
- Pesticides in groundwater: "The more we look, the more we find."

Feldman admitted he has little confidence in the EPA.

"The EPA assumes a perfect world," he noted. "We cannot rely on the EPA because it doesn't assure safety. We need to question the benefits of pesticides. We've assumed the benefits are there."

Kimm observed that NCAMP and the EPA "share the goal of becoming less dependent on pesticides."

"There are more tests on pesticides going on today than at any point in history," he said. "It is absolutely certain in my mind that some of that testing is going to show us new perceptions of risks about chemicals. We will then be able to change,

alter or eliminate those risks that constitute unreasonable risks.

"Some of the current pesticides are likely to see their uses limited or restricted over the short term. Over the long term, you are likely to see increased public confidence in our efforts to protect the nation's environment."

The EPA will decentralize as much as possible, Kimm noted:

"The heart of our plan is state control. We're anxious to see states develop management plans that are constantly under scrutiny. This is the only applicable long-term strategy."

—Jerry Roche

ELSEWHERE

**Ecolab to sell
Chemlawn division,
p. 52**

**Writers question
product claims,
p. 52**

**Effluent great
for turf,
p. 56**

**More contractors
rent equipment,
p. 56**

Would ChemLawn, by any other name, still be ChemLawn? Stay tuned.

'EcoScape' tag is spanking new; owner by mid-year likely will be new, too.

■ The 1992 lawn care season will be business as usual for ChemLawn, except ChemLawn will:

- probably have a new owner;
- likely have a new name on the side of its trucks—"EcoScape by ChemLawn."
- attempt (again) to offer a more comprehensive package of lawn/landscape services.

Ecolab Inc., which bought ChemLawn in 1987, announced early this past March that it will sell most of its subsidiary and take a \$275 million fourth-quarter bath.

Ecolab's decision to put the "For Sale" sign on ChemLawn does not surprise many people in professional lawn care, or in the investment community, either.

Financial analysts say Ecolab spent too much for ChemLawn to begin with.

The St. Paul, Minn.-based maker of cleaning and sanitizing products paid about \$370 million for ChemLawn in 1987. This was about \$100 million more than Waste Management, Inc., the huge Chicago-based waste hauler, had initially offered in February 1987. (WM did, later, sweeten its offer.)

The Ecolab/ChemLawn marriage was not a good one.

As ChemLawn remained the most visible provider of professional lawn care, it likewise retained its uncomfortable role as lightning rod for anti-lawn-care, anti-pesticide criticism.

Moreover, the company's management changed substantially since lawn care's halcyon years in the early and middle 1980s.

But most significantly, sales stayed flat; ChemLawn couldn't add to Ecolab profits despite the synergy Ecolab felt would develop between the cleaning and sanitizing services it offers to commercial/institutional clients and lawn/landscape ser-

Ecolab's decision to put the "For Sale" sign on ChemLawn does not surprise many people in professional lawn care, or in the investment community, either.

vices. Competition is, if anything, as intense in big-acreage accounts as it is for home lawns, Ecolab discovered.

In 1989 ChemLawn showed a \$42.7 million operating loss (\$34 million from a one-time charge), and in 1990, with net sales of \$383.9, a \$2.45 million loss. *The Wall Street Journal* reported in March that ChemLawn will post a \$10-\$15 million loss for 1991.

Apparently in an effort to present a new face, this past February ChemLawn provided 140 company-owned and 50 franchisees with ads offering up EcoScape, a new name for an expanded lawn, tree and shrub service.

Many ChemLawn trucks got a new paint job too with the name EcoScape prominently displayed. The name, and the new service offerings it represents, will be introduced to the public through "slow, steady marketing," said a ChemLawn source.

ChemLawn seeks to boost sales of add-on lawn and landscape services; this while it preserves its position as the nation's most recognizable residential lawn care provider.

"Options range from landscape installation to controlling weeds in flower beds," said ChemLawn President David L. Siegfried. Lawn aeration, renovation, mulching and pruning: these are services of EcoScape too.

In mid-March, Siegfried also announced that ChemLawn's company-owned branches would offer an all natural organic fertilizer as an option in 1992. An organic-based program launched by ChemLawn during the 1991 growing season captured few people's attention, including customers.

According to Ecolab, the company hopes to have a buyer for ChemLawn by mid-year. Stuart Pulvirent, an analyst with Shearson Lehman Brothers, said the price tag would be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$100 million, reported *The Wall Street Journal*.

Pierson M. Grieve, Ecolab's chairman, president and chief executive officer, said that the divestiture of ChemLawn "focuses all our (Ecolab's) strategies on our strong world-wide cleaning and sanitizing business opportunities."

—Ron Hall

Green media is 'ho-hum' on environmental claims

Writers believe they should keep readers informed.

■ So, who believes the hype anyway? Not the media, or so it appears.

When 503 garden writers responded to a recent survey, only 14 percent were con-

vinced that products described as environmentally correct were what they claimed to be.

Furthermore, the respondents—all members of the Garden Writer's Association of America—split down the middle over the use of terms like "environmentally correct" or "environmentally friendly" to market products. Only 30 per-

cent approved the use of the term "environmentally preferred."

Nine out of 10 of the garden writers surveyed, however, said "yes" they did have a responsibility to inform their readers about environmental issues and water conservation.

The survey was conducted by Hinsdale Marketing Services, Oak Brook, Ill., on behalf of Aquapore Moisture Systems, Phoenix, Ariz. Aquapore, which manufactures soaker hose and other water-saving products, was not identified in the survey as the sponsor.

Effluent great for turfgrass, study contends

TUCSON, Ariz.—After more than three years of study, University of Arizona agricultural scientists believe that municipal effluent is ideally suited for turf irrigation. The water is safe—for the turf and groundwater—and effectively produces golf course fairway-quality grass.

At the Arthur Pack Golf Course and Ocotillo Golf Course here and in Chandler, soil scientist Ian Pepper and plant scientist Charles Mancino proved that effluent irrigation must be managed differently. Higher levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium in wastewater can reduce reliance on commercial fertilizer, particularly in the summer.

"Daily applications of effluent offer a built-in advantage," says Pepper. "It's like spoon-feeding nitrogen to the turfgrass."

He and Mancino compared soil samples

taken at depths of two and three feet on plots irrigated with effluent and potable water. They found that levels of nitrate-nitrogen, ammonia (which also contains nitrogen), potassium and phosphorus remained uniform, showing they posed no problem to groundwater.

In soil irrigated with effluent, sodium and phosphorus reached levels that warrant different management practices than customarily used. For example, reducing phosphorus fertilizer applications would allow the grass to use the nutrient contained in the effluent. And applying calcium sulfate or sulfur would reduce the sodium in the soil.

Mancino says turfgrass turning yellow (chlorosis) in the summer is the greatest problem resulting from effluent irrigation. An application of foliar iron takes care of

the chlorosis, but that's expensive. "It's an expense that municipal golf courses might not be able to carry," Mancino says. "Resort-owned courses should have no problem."

Except for its cost, municipal effluent is ideally suited for irrigating turf, Mancino and Pepper believe. "Irrigating turfgrass with effluent is an advantageous way to go, with good management—except for the high cost," Pepper says.

Most golf courses have their own wells, and irrigation water costs between \$40 and \$150 per acre-foot in this part of the country. In Tucson, buying effluent carries a price tag of about \$400 per acre-foot, and using drinking-quality water costs \$440.

For more information on their research, contact Mancino at (602) 621-1851 and/or Pepper at (602) 621-7234.

More contractors are renting equipment

CHICAGO—Since the 1986 tax reform and the loss of the Investment Tax Credit, construction contractors who use heavy equipment have increasingly turned to renting their machines.

Heavy equipment studies conducted in 1986 and again in 1990 by the market research firm of MacKay and Co. found that the number of owned and leased machines at work in the U.S. increased just 3 percent from 1986 through 1990. Rental machines more than doubled in number during the same period.

The survey was sponsored by Construction Equipment magazine, whose

editor Kirk Landers notes, "When investment tax credits were wiped out and

Heavy equipment trends

33 types of paving, lifting and earthmoving equipment

	1986	1990	%change
Rented	58,834	123,565	+110%
Owned/leased	643,496	660,210	+3%
Total machines	702,330	783,775	+11%

Source: MacKay & Co.

depreciation allowances reduced, the cost of owning high-ticket capital equipment went up substantially.

"When ownership costs go up, so does the liability for an under-utilized machine. From 1986 to 1990, a lot of equipment users just said 'no' to more liability. They made short-term rental commitments instead of long-term purchase or lease commitments."

Some of the machine types that are essential to the country's efforts to rebuild its transportation infrastructure have also aged since the tax reform.

"The average wheel loader in a highway fleet is more than eight years old," says Landers. "In 1986, a wheel loader that old would be scrapped or put into backup work. Today, the contractor replaces or rebuilds the machine's key components and tries to keep it working."

B&G'S NEW KP-4

Strap on the comfortable, lightweight KP-4 Knapsack Sprayer and enjoy the convenience and mobility it affords. Designed for a multitude of uses, the KP-4 is tough enough for all sprayable solutions.

Easy to use with the lever-operated high pressure continuous action pump. Only minimal effort is required to maintain effective spraying pressures. The generous 4 gal. high density polyethylene tank allows for an extended application period.

For more information about the KP-4 Knapsack Sprayer or to inquire about all your spraying needs, call 1-800-544-8811.

B&G[®]
EQUIPMENT COMPANY
P.O. BOX 130, PLUMSTEADVILLE, PA 18949



Chemical resistant and heavy duty construction features include:

- All soft parts, gaskets and seals, superior quality.
- Unit converts for right or left hand operation.
- High pressure piston pump up to 90 psi, 48 in. hose.
- Discharge valve with screen and lock-on clip.
- 18 in. angled extension with pin to cone spray pattern tip.



OPTIONS

- Brass extensions.
- Fan spray pattern tips, brass and poly.

HOT STUFF

Turf at the Olympics

ACWORTH, Ga.—The Georgia Turfgrass Association will help beautify the 1996 Summer Olympic Games.

The association has agreed with Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson and the Office of

Olympic Coordination to design and beautify a public site to be used during the Games. The specific site is yet to be determined.

When the site is selected, a five-year beautification plan will be developed which

should bring the site to peak beauty for the Games. Following the Games, the site will be turned over to the city for continued maintenance.

AmeriFlora opens soon

COLUMBUS, Ohio—The AmeriFlora '92 exhibition begins here on April 20 and runs through Oct. 12, the 500 anniversary of the date recognized as the founding of America by Christopher Columbus.

One of the first exhibits to be completed, a display garden, was installed by O.M. Scott & Sons. "The Scotts World of Grasses," is a 55-foot-wide map of the world with continents created with different turfgrass varieties.

For more information about AmeriFlora '92, write 1995 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH 43209 or phone (614) 645-1992.

Supers packed show

LAWRENCE, Kans.—A standing-room-only crowd of 2,200 heard a panel session on pesticide use (see accompanying story), an event that was the highlight of the 1992 International Golf Course Conference and Show in New Orleans two months ago.

More than 15,000 superintendents, turf professionals and suppliers attended the week-long conference, according to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. A record 593 exhibitors showcased their products and services during the three-day trade show, which covered nearly 172,000 sq. ft.

Almost 1,600 registrants representing 44 foreign countries attended.

Terry Bradshaw, the former Super Bowl quarterback for the Pittsburgh Steelers, was keynote speaker at the opening session. Other key sessions were held by the USGA, the Golf Course Builders of America and the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

William R. Roberts was elected 1992-93 president; Randy Nichols was elected vice president and Joseph G. Baidy was appointed secretary/treasurer.

Golfer Tom Watson received the Old Tom Morris Award at the closing banquet. Next year's conference and show will be held Jan. 23-30 at the Anaheim (Calif.) Convention Center.

WANTED



for impersonating an expensive fertilizer

Natural organic **Terrene**, with its slow release, non-burning properties is showing up on turf professionals' "most wanted" lists everywhere.

The specialized Turf and Greens grades of new **Terrene** can be custom tailored to fit into any fertilizer program. Whether you're in lawn and turf care, golf course or landscape maintenance, nurseries, or any other related business, you'll profit from **Terrene's** growth potential.

For Distributor information call 1-800-452-1922

Produced and
marketed by
Enviro-Gro
Technologies
a JWP Company

Terrene™

P.O. Box 5036
Lancaster, PA
17601-0036

Circle No. 113 on Reader Inquiry Card