

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**