HOT TOPICS

Pesticide regulation 'partnership' lauded

WASHINGTON—H.R. 3850 is the "Federal and State Pesticide Regulation Partnership Act of 1991." If passed, it would prohibit local regulation of pesticides.

Congressmen Charles Hatcher (D-Ga.) and Ron Marlenee (R-Mont.) introduced the bill to the U.S. House of Representatives on Nov. 22. By month's end, 28 other members of the House Agriculture Committee had also signed on.

The bill is supported by most segments of the green industry, specifically by The Coalition for Sensible Pesticide Policy, a group of almost 160 state, regional and national trade associations whose members support uniformity of pesticide regulation.

Notes Warren Stickle, president of the Chemical Producers and Distributors Association (CPDA):

"Cong. Hatcher and the other sponsors have demonstrated their commitment to securing a uniform system of pesticide regulation which will insure that the American public continues to enjoy the benefits of tested and effective pesticide products.

"This legislation will offer protection against the crippling consequences which would ensue if a patchwork of confusing and often conflicting pesticide regulations is allowed to proliferate unchecked nationwide."

Stickle notes that H.R. 3850 addresses the June, 1991 Supreme Court decision in the case of *Wisconsin Public Intervenor v. Mortier*.

Allen James is executive director for Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE), which also supports H.R. 3850. He tells LM readers: "Congress has adjourned until Jan. 20, (so) you may wish to contact your congressman now to urge action on this bill."

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WISCONSIN CONTROVERSY

1981
Town of Casey, Wisc. prohibits pesticide use on public lands and highways

1984
Casey modifies its law to include private lands open to public use, and aerial applications

1988
U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals voids Casey law

1990
Circuit Court of Appeals decision upheld by Wisconsin Supreme Court

1991
APRIL: U.S. Supreme Court hears *Wisconsin Public Intervenor vs. Mortier*
MAY: Green industry interests campaign in Washington, D.C. for practical pesticide regulations before a Senate subcommittee
JUNE: U.S. Supreme Court overturns Wisconsin decision; rules localities can regulate pesticides

Texas homeowners to hear ET reports

COLLEGE STATION, Texas—Tune into the TV weather report in certain Texas cities this summer and jot down today's ET as you review the liklihood of the next rain.

ET? What the devil is that?

ET is short for evapotranspiration, the combined loss of water by evaporation from the soil surface and by transpiration from plants. In this case we're talking about turfgrass plants.

Texas A&M turfgrass expert Dr. William Knoop thinks many homeowners will be glad to get a daily ET report because it will help them know when to water their lawns.

The daily ET report will be part of the Texas extension service's experimental Water Smart program.

"We feel most people overwater their lawns," says Knoop. "A lot of the folks in Texas have moved down from the North and don't understand bermudagrass. They tend to water it like Kentucky bluegrass."

The Water Smart program follows in the footsteps and complements Knoop's and the extension service's enormously successful "Don't Bag It" program to discourage homeowners from bagging and dumping grass clippings into community landfills.

In 1991, more than 100 Texas cities participated in "Don't Bag It." And, with grants exceeding $100,000, Knoop says "there's not going to be a town in Texas that doesn't learn about 'Don't Bag It'."

Texas may be big, real big, but the state also has over 800 extension agents scattered among its 252 counties. Even so, educating the public about ET may not be as easy as convincing it that landfills are no place for grass and leaves.

ELSEWHERE

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Unwatered lawns result in fires, page 52

Group certifies hort pros, page 55

Too much tall fescue, page 55

Finally, a scientific look at chemicals by U.S. students?

BERKELEY, Calif.—Mr. Professional Applicator, you're not the only person troubled about how grade school students view the role of chemicals in today's society.

Many others, it turns out, are similarly concerned judging by the growth of the Chemical Education for Public Understanding Program (CEPUP).

CEPUP, headquartered at the University of California, Berkeley, develops and offers supplemental science programs for grade school students. One of its primary focuses is to educate students about chemicals.

Last year it reached almost 600,000 students in 40 states, says its director Herbert Thier, Ed.D.

"Citizenship requires an understanding of science," says Thier. "It is absolutely a requirement to participate in a democratic society in an effective way."

Thier explains that CEPUP, presented in hands-on packages of information, hammers away at the process of scientific inquiry. Ultimately, it presents the concepts of risks and benefits.

"An understanding about chemicals and how chemicals interact with people and the environment is essential to an informed citizenship in our society," adds Thier. "It is not productive to have people react only on an emotional basis."

So far, CEPUP has developed supplemental science programs for students from the fifth to the ninth grades. It also sponsors several community education programs dealing with chemicals and chemical use.

Funding for CEPUP is provided by the National Science Foundation and private industry.

"You (professional applicators) are seen by some people in your communities as someone who wants to spread poison," adds Thier. "Obviously, there is an educational problem here."

For more information contact: CEPUP, Lawrence Hall of Science, Univ. of California, Berkeley, CA 94720; (510) 642-8718.

Herbert Thier says students can't become good citizens without a basic knowledge of science.

Dry California lawns contribute to fire losses, say Beard and Fender

ROLLING MEADOWS, Ill.—Reduced outdoor watering and smaller sized lawns contributed to the overall devastation caused by the fires in Oakland and Berkeley, Calif., according to Dr. James Beard of Texas A&M University.

"When the fires began, they were fueled by dry landscape plants, many of which replaced turfgrass because they were viewed as water-saving," says Beard.

"Turfgrasses are about 70 to 80 percent water by weight, and even a moderately maintained lawn can serve as a fire barrier. The loss of lives and property is tragic, but it should now be obvious that Californians and others need to take a close and careful look at the benefits turfgrass can provide," Beard observes.

Douglas Fender, executive director of the American Sod Producers Association here, adds:

"Too often, turfgrass is viewed as an aesthetic feature of the landscape, not as the practical environmental tool it really is. The benefits of grass far outweigh their water requirements, especially when people learn how to properly care for their lawns."

Beard is a turfgrass researcher with nearly 30 years experience.

"(Turfgrasses) aren't the useless, wasteful water-hogs some people say they are," he concludes. "They can, in fact, save lives, with minimal amounts of supplemental water."

NEXT MONTH:

LM Reports: Irrigation equipment
Preparing golf courses for special events
Selecting hand sprayers
Spring fertilization tactics
Renovating athletic fields
Dealing with the public and media
Soil testing and its benefits

Fescue, blue, *Poa trivialis* make news

PACIFIC NORTHWEST—Seed experts in Idaho, Oregon and Washington predict a sizeable cutback in 1992's turf-type tall fescue production, to remedy a glut in the species.

Gayle Jacklin, director of marketing for the Jacklin Seed Co., says inventories of turf-type tall fescue might not reach "acceptable levels" until 1993.

Dave Nelson

Dave Nelson of the Oregon Fine Fescue Commission estimates that about 30,000 to 50,000 tall fescue acres will be converted to wheat production, which represents a decrease of 10 to 15 percent.

Dr. Jerry Pepin

"We overproduced it," admits Dr. Jerry Pepin of Pickseed West.

"Five years ago there weren't even 25,000 acres in production," says Pepin. He agrees that it will take at least one season to correct the situation.

"We concentrated so heavily for the last 10 years on turf-type tall fescue, and it grew to more than 80,000 acres," says Nelson.

At the other end of the spectrum, Nelson says bluegrass prices have risen in price due to inadequate supply.

"The dryland areas in southeastern Washington did not yield what was hoped for," says Nelson, resulting in a price increase at season's end.

"(The price of) common Kentucky bluegrass has gone up about 25 to 30 percent," says Doug Toews, director of marketing for International Seeds. "And as far as name brand proprietary varieties, they're stable and/or going up."

Compounding the problem is the increased price of wheat.

"When wheat prices jump up like they did—from between $2.75 and $4 a bushel—it gives farmers an alternative to back some ground out of grass seed production," Nelson explains.

Nelson says the bluegrass price increase should raise the price of other varieties.

In other seed news, *Poa trivialis* overseeding is becoming more popular on southern golf greens.

"This gives us an opportunity to diversify the production base," says Nelson.

"It's going to be a hot one, but in limited supply for the next two or three years," says Toews of *Poa trivialis*'s growing popularity, which is reportedly due to better shade tolerance, and because the poa is easier to transition out in the spring than a straight perennial ryegrass overseed.

—Terry McIver

HOT STUFF

Group to certify hort pros

DENVER — A group with the acronym ARCPACS will soon be the official certification board for horticultural professionals, according to its chairperson.

ARCPACS stands for the American Registry of Certified Professionals in Agronomy, Crops and Soils. It has been in existence for more than 14 years.

In preparation for its new duties, ARCPACS added a six-member sub-board of horticulturists during its annual meeting here in October. The board now has subboards in horticulture, agronomy, crop and soil science.

The six new board members, according to ARCPACS chairman Dr. Ricks Pluenneke, are: Dr. J. Benton Storey of Texas A&M University, Dr. William L. Hagan of San Leandro, Calif.; Dr. Cyntia D. Fellman of Frank's Nursery and Crafts, Detroit, Mich.; Dr. George Fitzpatrick of the University of Florida; Dr. Terry G. I Ferriss of the University of Wisconsin/River Falls; and Dr. James S. Kamas of the Cornell University Cooperative Extension Service.

Another neem on market in 1992

NEW YORK—Another natural insecticide will be on the market by the 1992 growing season, according to a recent report in the *New York Times*.

The product is an extract of seeds from the neem tree, a tropical mahogany.

W.R. Grace, which developed the product, will sell a patented concentrate as "Margosan-O" to the professional horticulture market, the *Times* reports.

"Greenhouse and field tests have shown that (the) liquid spray, applied to plant leaves, controls about 170 types of insect pests, including beetles, caterpillars, fruit flies, crickets, locusts, aphids, weevils, gypsy moths and mosquitos," the *Times* article notes.

There may be turf and forestry applications, the article also says. A relatively short residual, though, may mean several applications during the growing season.

Jacklins might acquire Medalist

POST FALLS, Idaho—The Jacklin brothers—Don, Doyle and Duane—have issued a letter of intent to acquire the Medalist Turf Seed Division of Northrup King Lawn & Garden Company. The buy would be made independent of the Jacklin Seed Co., and includes Medalist's varieties, sales staff, and its Oregon and Nevada branch operations.

The Medalist Division would be renamed Medalist America and would operate independently, supplying grass seed to its existing professional and dealer network.

The purchase would give the Jacklins an entry into the consumer market with smaller, retail packaging. Northrup would benefit from the Jacklins' reputation as leaders in seed research.

Andrea Mackin, Jacklin spokesperson, says Medalist America would retain a separate sales and marketing staff, and its center of operations would remain in Minneapolis.

Jacklin would also acquire use of Medalist's Oregon research facility.