

Although Aidala says the green industry and its critics seem to be approaching common ground on posting and chemical registries, preemption will be difficult to pass this year.

Last year, industry's lobbying effort to get federal preemption legislation ran out of time.

The 102nd Congress ended before the full House Agriculture Committee could act upon a bill to prevent local governments from regulating the use of pesticides. Almost 100 cosponsors in the House and 22 in the Senate had signed onto the "National/State Pesticide Regulation Partnership Act of 1991" which also set strict standards for certification and verifiable training.

Most green industry associations willingly supported the proposed bill's certification and training provisions.

Although legislation for federal preemption could get another legislative push this year, "it's not the sort of thing that's going to get worked out easily," warns Stan Ray, staff director for The House Department Operations and Nutrition House sub-committee.

"Preemption is going to be the one issue where members divide," adds fellow staffer Aidala, "It will get swept up in larger politics, especially agricultural uses of products."

Although 12 states passed new preemption legislation in 1992, industry suffered setbacks in Maryland, Kentucky and Washington. This year could see Alabama, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Texas consider the issue also.

On another front, Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) will "probably be reintroducing" his "Notification of Chemical Application Act of 1992," says top Lieberman aide Sara E. Walzer.

Although no lawn care hearings had been planned as of mid March, Walzer said hearings will take place as the bill goes through committee.

Posting, notification and registry provisions in Lieberman's newest proposal are toned down from the Senator's first effort in 1990. Even so, industry remains uneasy with its intent.

Lieberman's proposed amendment to The Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act sets stiff fines and jail terms for lawn pros who willingly don't notify—also, homeowner posting.

PLCAA, for its part, has its own "lawn care bill" which it threatens to push should Lieberman's bill surface.

—Ron Hall

LC pesticide advisory board gave industry and its critics their say

■ We may not have the LCPAC to kick around much longer.

LCPAC? Few turf/landscape professionals know of the Lawn Care Pesticide Advisory Committee (LCPAC). Ostensibly, its purpose has been to explore ways "to reduce the public's risk to exposure by lawn care chemicals," said Vic Kimm of the U.S. EPA. But, in reality, it's been a protracted debate with representatives from specialty chemicals and allied user groups versus pesticide critics, with the EPA and regulators acting as referees.

Indeed, the LCPAC itself hasn't agreed on whether its deliberations are fueled by safety concerns, a view sought by anti-pesticide members of the board but hotly denied by industry.

"People continue to buy and use our products," said William Chase, Jr., a LCPAC member representing Chevron Chemical. "The sales information sends us a positive message that there's no overwhelming concern by the public."

The LCPAC, formed by the U.S. EPA last spring, has met twice near the capital. It's advisory. Its charter expires in May.

Some of its 28 members represent the chemical and lawn care industries. Others represent public interest groups that seek stricter regulation and less use of pesticides.

continued on page 22

A plan to save our world

■ Vice President Albert Gore would save the world.

He would start by mobilizing the world's governments to cooperatively attack the earth's environmental woes, he writes in his book, "Earth in the Balance, Ecology and the Human Spirit" (Houghton Mifflin Company). The United States will spearhead this environmental crusade to save society from its headlong rush to ecological suicide.

Of interest to anyone involved with ag or specialty chemicals: somewhere among the ecological ills—and apparently down the list since Gore mentions it only in passing—is modern agriculture's profligate use of pesticides.

"The huge amounts of fertilizer and pesticides now routinely used in agriculture frequently drain off into the groundwater beneath the fields, contaminating them for many centuries to come," he says.

This is the kind of generalization that Gore, a former newspaperman, likes to lean on throughout the book. There are many others.

"Earth in the Balance..." is a call to

action. Indeed, it covers a lot of real estate, an entire global environmental rescue plan in just over 400 pages.

Gore wrote the book while he was Sen. Al Gore from Tennessee, and after he'd failed in his 1988 Presidential run. It appeared on bookstands during 1992 when Gore was again blistering the campaign trail. The book takes some sharp jabs at former-opponent and former-president George Bush and his environmental policies.

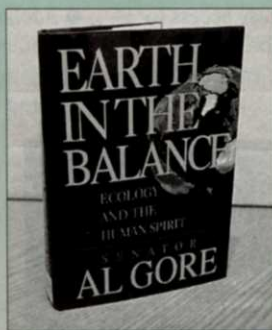
(Who cares now?)

Political jabs aside, Gore's oft-repeated bigger message is the listing of the Earth's largest environmental catastrophes-in-the-making. Then he tells how to solve them.

Gore's book is earnest and his concerns seem genuine. But, he stretches a little bit of science over an awful lot of ground. Even that little bit of science is hotly disputed.

For better or worse, Gore, as vice president, probably won't get a chance to reshape modern civilization in 1993.

—Ron Hall



Over/under billing: how to do it, and how to do it easier

Here's a tool that identifies the difference between amount billed and actual monthly costs.

by Kent Miller

■ Usually, construction projects do not start at the beginning of the month or end on the last day of the month. When construction is under way on one or more projects that cross into the next month, it is important to be able to allocate earnings on the monthly income statement accurately.

Larger projects can run for months or years before reaching completion and acceptance. Billing cycles and conditions may also vary from billing the whole project before the work is started, to no billing at all until the job is done and accepted.

Regardless of the billing techniques, the monthly income statement should indicate some earnings.

We use a program called "over/under," a simple Lotus spreadsheet that assists us in determining what amount to chart as income each month.

We begin by entering the contract amount, estimated direct costs and estimated gross profit anticipated. As the work progresses, we identify all of the costs incurred during the month through job costing. At the end of the month, those costs are plugged into "costs to date."

Using the estimated gross profit anticipated, we apply the same gross profit to the costs we incurred that month to derive our amount earned. The amount earned is compared to the amount billed and the dif-

ference is typically over-billed or under-billed.

A simple example—Let's use an example using simple values. A construction project has a value of \$500,000 with direct costs of \$400,000. That leaves \$100,000, or approximately 20% as a gross profit. During the first month of construction, the job incurred total costs of \$80,000. With a 20% gross profit, income for the first month would equal approximately \$100,000. If no billings were made for that month, we'd be \$100,000 under-billed. We would then add \$100,000 to our monthly income statement for that month.

If we had billed the same project \$150,000 for that month, we still would have only earned \$100,000, so we would be \$50,000 over-billed for that month. In that case, we'd reduce our monthly income statement by \$50,000.

When you have several projects on this worksheet, the total entered in "Over/Under Billed" is the result of the whole, and that amount is added to or subtracted from your monthly statement.

Exceptions—There are some instances when this approach will need some adjustment to accurately reflect your earnings. An example would be if you use the multiple overhead recovery system (for estimating, labor, equipment, materials), and subcontractors are marked up at varying percentages, providing an overall mark-up on

the entire project.

Assume the first \$80,000 in costs was a subcontractor you only marked up 10%: your actual earnings that month would be less than the overall mark-up. So this gives you an average mark-up over the course of the construction, and not a specific mark-up on the actual costs incurred.

Now let's assume that you're two months into the construction project when you realize it's going to take another \$50,000 in additional costs. In this instance, we would enter \$50,000 to the column "Additions to Cost," which revises our cost in the "Total Revised Cost" to \$450,000. It adjusts our "Gross Revised Percentage" to 10%. The shock comes when you have to pay back the gross profit you should not have taken in the first place.

I use this program to measure anticipated gross profits. I'm quick to identify "Additions to Cost" so I don't take profits too early and then have to pay them back. Adding costs to the "Estimated Cost to Complete" column lowers the "Percentage Gross Revised" and reduces the amount of gross profit earned each month. This is also a good column to use to provide for plant replacements and other warranty-related items that might linger before they actually become a cost to the job.

When the job is done and all the costs are in, adjustments may be necessary in the "Additions to Cost" column to have "Over/Under Billed" equal \$0 and then earn the gross profit you didn't want to take until completion. At this point, the final gross profit obtained is in the "Percentage Gross Revised" column.

Simply stated, our program assists us in identifying monthly income based on the costs we've incurred.

—Kent Miller is vice president of The Groundskeeper, an employee-owned company in Tucson, Ariz.

Washington from page 11

Four U.S. EPA officials, two state regulators, and two legislative staff members round out the committee.

The LCPAC has met three times, most recently in Alexandria, Va., on Feb. 25-26. Meetings last 1-1/2 days.

Points aren't conceded easily. Disagreements between members sometimes, but not often, cause sharp exchanges.

Even so, most members of the committee agreed, at least broadly, on these points at the February meeting:

Posting: signs consistent with what most states do now, 4x5 inches and in contrasting colors. Posting at common points of entry; more than one notice may be needed in some situations.

Notification and Registries: open registries with limits on the number of addresses one wants to be notified about, and annual

fees to pay for the notification program. In the case of hardship the fees can be dropped. The addresses one wants to be notified about must be supplied by the person joining the registry.

EPA says it's determined to write guidelines covering posting, pre-application notification and registries. Even the development of guidelines was debated.

"EPA's issuance of guidelines signals there is a problem, at least a consensus by this group that there is a perceived problem," said Chevron's Chase.

Public Citizen's Patti Goldman, took the opposite view. She said the EPA shouldn't be drafting guidelines but rather lawn care regulations.

February's meeting of the LCPAC meeting may have been its last. It's charter expires this spring.

—Ron Hall