

## LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

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705-9898.

**Golf Course Superintendents Association of  
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KS 66049-3859; (913) 841-2240.

**International Society of Arboriculture, P.O.**  
Box 908, Urbana, IL 61801; (217) 328-2032.

**International Turfgrass Society,** Crop & Soil  
Environmental Sciences, VPI-SU, Blacksburg,  
VA 24061-0403; (703) 231-9796.



**National Arborist Association,** The Meeting  
Place Mall, P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH  
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**National Golf Foundation,** 1150 South U.S.  
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**Ohio Turfgrass Foundation,** 2021 Coffey Rd.,  
Columbus, OH 43210; (614) 292-2601.



**Professional Grounds Management Society,**  
120 Cockeysville Rd., Suite 104, Hunt Valley,  
MD 21031; (410) 584-9754.



**Professional Lawn Care Association of  
America,** 1000 Johnson Ferry Rd., NE, Suite C-  
135, Marietta, GA 30068-2112; (404) 977-5222.

**Responsible Industry for a Sound  
Environment,** 1155 15th St. NW, Suite 900,  
Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 872-3860.



**Sports Turf Managers Association,** 401 N.  
Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611-4267; (312)  
644-6610.

**Turf and Ornamental Communicators  
Association,** 8400 Normandale Lake Blvd.,  
Suite 500, Bloomington, MN 55437; (612) 832-  
5000.

## AS WE SEE IT

JERRY ROCHE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



### This blow to pesticide registries goes almost unnoticed by media

When Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) first chaired a Senate subcommittee on lawn care pesticides, his witnesses testified that the pesticides had caused them excessive physical distress. Some claimed they were inflicted with a disease, multiple chemical hypersensitivity, better known to Sen. Lieberman and his staff as MCS.

The national media readily picked up the testimony of this small group of one-issue crusaders.

The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), we hear, now officially disputes the integrity of some of this testimony. It says the witnesses may indeed be sick—but not necessarily with MCS.

The ACOEM, which is composed of 5,300 physicians, wrote a letter to Chuck Charlow of Lieberman's staff. The letter said the ACOEM "concluded that (MCS) is an unproven hypothesis that requires further credible scientific research."

This conclusion, incidentally, is the same one reached by the American Academy of Allergy and Immunology in 1986, the American College of Physicians in 1989, and the American Medical Association in 1992.

The ACOEM's opinion doesn't preclude the existence of MCS, but the letter to Lieberman's staff *did* say this:

"ACOEM opposes an open national registry program for persons with potential or alleged sensitivity to lawn care pesticides. Although there may be anecdotal reports...this type of information cannot be used to prove the existence of a condition or determine the magnitude of any problem—if one exists [*italics mine*]."

"There is no evidence that establishing an open registry will aid persons who might have such a sensitivity. Such an open registry would include persons with a wide array of health problems, including psychological disorders. Participation in an open registry could have a negative

impact if participation was perceived as a validation of a diagnosis of chemical sensitivity, even though an individual's symptoms could be due to some other factor."

Of course, the people who claim to have MCS probably don't care much what the ACOEM thinks. Most probably don't trust the medical community very much. In our opinion, however, two key observations were made in this letter:

- 1) MCS is an unproven hypothesis; and
- 2) ACOEM specifically opposes establishing open registry programs as proposed by Lieberman.

Fifteen states already have pesticide registries or are considering them. But the bigger questions are:

- Should some lawmaker who knows little about either chemicals or exposures be drawing lines in the dirt at the feet of the lawn care community?

- Isn't it about time the rest of the U.S. Senate and the voting public become disillusioned with Lieberman's continued campaign against lawn pesticides? After all, the issue hasn't ever gotten out of subcommittee; and when New York Attorney General Robert Abrams used the controversy in his re-election campaign, he was met with a big yawn from the public.

- And isn't it time the national media, flaming liberals and sentimentalists that they are, realize that news value also exists in a letter from a highly-regarded medical organization to a senior U.S. Senator?

Earlier this year, Lieberman announced that he plans to introduce another strict piece of pesticide regulation legislation during the 103rd Congress.

Sometimes, it makes you wonder.