

HOT TOPICS

Sandoz/Gallup poll finds industry becoming safer

'Partnerships' between end users and manufacturers of pest control products are key to public education.

WASHINGTON—A national Gallup Poll commissioned by Sandoz Agro reveals that green industry professionals who apply pest control products are using safer products and application practices.

More than 59 percent of the respondents in all groups applying the products said they are doing things differently compared to five years ago, and increased public concern is one of the main reasons.

The poll surveyed more than 2,000 users of pest control products, including 200 lawn care companies and 200 golf course superintendents, nationwide. Also included in the poll were small animal veterinarians, farmers, structural pest control operators, mosquito district managers and roadside vegetation managers.

"It's pretty clear that these professionals share the public's concerns and are interested in developing partnerships with the public to further improve safety to people and the environment," says David Whitacre, Sandoz's vice president of development. "They're listening and responding, sometimes in ways that go beyond what is required by law."

Other statistics from the survey:

- More than 67 percent said the safeguards in place are sufficient to ensure safety to the environment, the public, animals or wildlife, and product users. They said overwhelmingly that education is the best way to reduce the public's concern.

- Approximately one-fifth of all respondents (except veterinarians) always notify their neighbors when applying products. And almost half believe it is a good idea.

Max Larsen, executive vice president of the Gallup Organization in Lincoln, Neb., sees a common thread running through the survey. "They believe manufacturers have primary responsibility for educating the public and fixing environmental problems, but they see themselves as partners in the process. They want to do the right thing."

The telephone survey was conducted in December, 1993. Results of some questions posed to the lawn care and golf segments of the survey are reproduced here.

SANDOZ NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLL

| QUESTION | LAWN | GOLF |
|--|------|------|
| 1. What is the most serious issue associated with the use of pest control products in your industry? | | |
| SAFETY | 32% | 33% |
| ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT | 21% | 29% |
| PROPER APPLICATION | 18% | 12% |
| PUBLIC PERCEPTION | 20% | 10% |
| EFFECTIVENESS | 4% | 5% |
| REGULATIONS | 16% | 8% |
| 2. In comparison to five years ago, is there more, less or about the same amount of public concern over pest control and the environment? | | |
| MORE | 71% | 77% |
| LESS | 6% | 1% |
| ABOUT THE SAME | 20% | 18% |
| 3. What is the most common complaint you hear from the public, your neighbors or customers relating to pest control products? | | |
| QUESTIONS ABOUT SAFETY | 24% | 9% |
| ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN | 9% | 5% |
| EFFICACY | 4% | 0% |
| SMELL/ODOR | 14% | 15% |
| LACK OF INFORMATION | 6% | 3% |
| 4. Who do you think has primary responsibility for correcting problems associated with pest control products? | | |
| MANUFACTURERS | 31% | 37% |
| USERS/APPLICATORS | 24% | 28% |
| GOVERNMENT | 26% | 21% |
| CONSUMERS | 3% | 1% |
| 5. Has your personal concern associated with pest control increased, decreased or stayed the same over the past five years? | | |
| INCREASED | 51% | 47% |
| DECREASED | 6% | 4% |
| STAYED THE SAME | 43% | 49% |

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| QUESTION | LAWN | GOLF |
|---|------|------|
| 6. Why has it increased? | | |
| PERSONAL AWARENESS | 36% | 32% |
| PUBLIC AWARENESS | 21% | 17% |
| SAFETY | 12% | 7% |
| ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT | 11% | 15% |
| MORE GOV'T. REGULATIONS | 4% | 11% |
| INCREASED USE | 3% | 6% |
| 7. Do people in your industry use safer pest control products when available? | | |
| ALWAYS | 50% | 70% |
| SOMETIMES | 37% | 27% |
| NOT USUALLY/NEVER | 3% | 3% |
| 8. Do people in your industry wear protective clothing? | | |
| ALWAYS | 50% | 65% |
| SOMETIMES | 36% | 33% |
| NOT USUALLY/NEVER | 11% | 1% |
| 9. Do people in your industry dispose of containers properly? | | |
| ALWAYS | 62% | 78% |
| SOMETIMES | 26% | 20% |
| NOT USUALLY/NEVER | 7% | 0% |
| 10. Do people in your industry follow labels closely? | | |
| ALWAYS | 71% | 93% |
| SOMETIMES | 23% | 6% |
| NOT USUALLY/NEVER | 4% | 1% |
| 11. Do people in your industry attend educational classes? | | |
| ALWAYS | 55% | 59% |
| SOMETIMES | 33% | 36% |
| NOT USUALLY/NEVER | 8% | 3% |
| 12. How important is it that people near the application area be informed, if the products are applied properly? | | |
| VERY IMPORTANT | 26% | 29% |
| SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT | 26% | 35% |
| NOT VERY IMPORTANT | 26% | 17% |
| NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL | 16% | 12% |
| DEPENDS ON PESTICIDE | 4% | 4% |

| QUESTION | LAWN | GOLF |
|---|------|------|
| 13. Compared to five years ago, are you making fewer applications? | | |
| YES | 72% | 67% |
| NO | 26% | 30% |
| 14. Have you used an integrated pest management (IPM) program? | | |
| YES | 77% | 77% |
| NO | 23% | 23% |
| 15. Compared to five years ago, what are you doing differently regarding the use of pest control products? | | |
| USING SAFER PRODUCTS | 33% | 37% |
| BETTER APP. METHODS | 20% | 16% |
| USING LESS PRODUCT | 30% | 33% |
| PROTECTIVE CLOTHING | 3% | 7% |
| EDUCATING CUSTOMERS | 5% | 3% |
| DISPOSING/STORING PROPERLY | 4% | 5% |
| ENCOUNTERING REGULATIONS | 7% | 2% |
| GETTING BETTER TRAINING | 7% | 2% |
| NOTIFYING THE PUBLIC | 5% | 6% |
| 16. Do you think some products are knowingly applied improperly? | | |
| YES | 58% | 39% |
| NO | 38% | 53% |
| 17. If yes, do you think this occurs frequently or occasionally? | | |
| FREQUENTLY | 35% | 9% |
| OCCASIONALLY | 62% | 90% |
| 18. What area should be regulated more to prevent unsafe practices? | | |
| APPLICATION | 29% | 21% |
| HOMEOWNERS | 28% | 21% |
| EDUCATION | 5% | 8% |
| ENFORCING REGULATIONS | 3% | 4% |
| DISPOSAL | 1% | 5% |
| 19. Do you feel that the safeguards already in place are sufficient to ensure safety to the environment? | | |
| STRONGLY AGREE | 20% | 24% |
| AGREE | 56% | 65% |
| DISAGREE | 18% | 7% |
| STRONGLY DISAGREE | 4% | 1% |

Researchers now naming endophytes

SANDUSKY, Ohio—Dr. Rich Hurley of Lofts Seeds says researchers are getting so familiar with endophytes they're starting to select and name specific types like the Rose City endophyte from Oregon.

Hurley described endophytes as "true biological insect control" to almost 100 lawn-/landscape managers here, wrapping up a three-city tour with Dr. A.J. Powell of the University of Kentucky and Dr. Ed McCoy of Ohio State University, this past February.

An endophyte, said Hurley, is a fungus that lives within the tissues of certain crops and plants. Starting just over a decade ago, breeders also began incorporating them into turfgrass seed to give cer-



Dr. Hurley: hunt continues for endophytes in Kentucky bluegrass

tain varieties of turfgrasses increased insect resistance. Actually, the endophytes themselves don't control insect pests, it's the alkaloid toxins the endophytes produce. The fungi, found in leaf sheaths and lower crown areas of turfgrass plants, have yet to be discovered in turfgrass roots.

That's why the fungi control above-ground insect pests and not grubs.

"So far we've done the easy stuff in just finding and identifying endophytes," said Hurley.

In answer to a question from the floor, Hurley cautioned anyone still holding 1993-crop turfseed with endophytes to use it this spring. Its effectiveness decreases with time, he said.

Also, he said that dollar spot control in high-endophyte fine fescue is now documented.

Work on endophytes, including efforts to find them in Kentucky bluegrass, will continue, Hurley said.

—Ron Hall