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American Association of Nurserymen (National Landscape Association), 1250 I St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 789-2900.

American Sod Producers Association, 1855-A Hicks Rd., Rolling Meadows, IL 60008; (708) 705-9898.

Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, 1421 Research Park Dr., Lawrence, 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 03031-1094; (603) 673-3311.

National Golf Foundation, 1150 South U.S. Highway One, Jupiter, FL 33477; (407) 744-6006.

Olio Turfgrass Foundation, 2021 Coffey Rd., Columbus, OH 43210; (614) 292-2601.



Professional Grounds Management Society, 120 Cockeyville 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

TERRY McIVER, MANAGING EDITOR



2,4-D's stamina proves that truth is stronger than fiction

The scientists who concocted 2,4-D 46 years ago deserve a debt of gratitude that extends well beyond their scientific achievement.

Thanks to them, thousands of others have found a cause, have "gotten a life," so to speak: to ban the production and use of the most well-known, highly-praised, bitterly-reviled and hotly-disputed herbicide.

Many of these crusaders are themselves scientists, who might like nothing better than to say they helped ban this solitary product. That would be a grand achievement, because—like health care "reform"—we don't need to do it, but it would be big news if it ever happened.

If 2,4-D were a living patient, it would have croaked years ago from the rigors of the exam. It's opened wide and said "ahh" more times than a room full of measles-infested kids.

"There are 94 epidemiological studies we're aware of that are pertinent to 2,4-D," says Don Page, executive director of the 2,4-D Task Force, an interest group composed of agricultural control product manufacturers, "and you can add to that the probable 4,000 toxicological studies that have been done on 2,4-D."

The Journal of the American College of Toxicology reported that more than 40,000 scientific articles and technical reports addressing 2,4-D had been published by 1978.

Most recently, an April 1994 report by an EPA panel determined that existing 2,4-D studies showed no demonstrable link between 2,4-D and cancer in farmers who used it, or in animals.

The panel said it was impossible to determine whether the studies were detecting a risk that was related to the herbicide or to some other aspect of farming as an occupation.

The risk from using 2,4-D, said the study, "did not seem to be much higher than the risk of farming as a general work exposure."

There is also new doubt about the

accuracy of some prior surveys.

According to Page, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) has received \$25 million over the years to finance studies of 2,4-D, in laboratories or through surveys of end-users or end-user family members.

Those statements by family members—called proxy statements—have recently cast a shadow of doubt over the validity of 2,4-D surveys.

Page says a review of data by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed that—in the NCI studies done in Kansas, Iowa and Minnesota in the 1980s—there was less than 50 percent agreement between cancer-case users and the family members who spoke on their behalf.

"And the self-respondents in the Nebraska study show no association between product use and lymphoma; the next-of-kin respondents do," adds Page.

In other words, the farmers who used the products were the only ones who should have been surveyed, since they would be best able to recall how they used the product and how often.

The Task Force has completed 85 percent of the tests required to reregister 2,4-D, and by the time it's done, it will have spent \$28 million.

But it won't end there. Report that there's no link between a product and disease, and you prompt a halcyon cry for more money and more study.

There are 1100 chemical compounds up for reregistration, but Page says fewer than 450 of those will last, due to the more than \$3 billion it would cost the manufacturers.

Why conduct all this research if you continually question the results?

These scientists must all be guys: They just can't commit.