

## Finally, a tool to assess 'real' risks

by RON HALL / Senior Editor

Dr. John Paling has an informational tool that helps turf managers explain the risks of pesticides to the public.

His Paling Perspective Scale (PPS), as its name implies, puts hazards in proper perspective, including those associated with pesticides. The PPS is based upon available published science, says Paling, a professor of biology at the University of Florida.

Actually, any type of risk that's supported by reliable data can be placed on the PPS. Then, at a glance, a viewer can assess that particular risk against the likelihood of other catastrophes.

The PPS (see below) is a grid that looks like a football field. Reading to the right from zero—corresponding to



Paling: show concern, don't say everything is 'safe.'

the 50-yard line on a football field—are activities that carry increasing risk; moving to the left on the scale are activities signifying decreasing risk.

"Members of the public can then sort out for themselves how specific risks relate

to other risks which they are already familiar," says Paling, who spoke at the 1996 GCSAA Conference.

He offers these pointers to turf managers when discussing chemical risks with concerned individuals.

► **Don't say everything is safe.** There are always the very remote but real possibilities of chemical exposure to ultra-sensitive people.

► **Understand where your critics are coming from.** Are they energized by emotions rather than facts? If so, initially their feelings will probably make them deaf to any discussion of figures from business.

► **Listen.** Make a note of the specific risks and circumstances that are their main concerns.

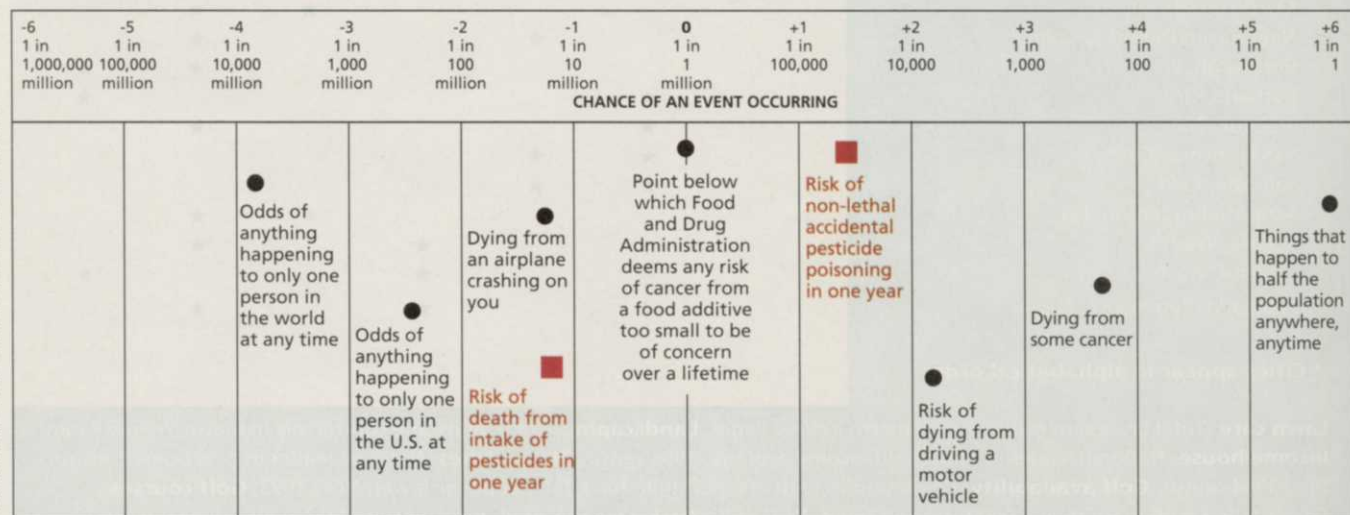
► **Convey your constant concern.** Remember this phrase: "We are always concerned about the health and safety of our members and our communities. We recog-

nize that all chemical treatments have some remote risks attached to them and that is why we constantly take such care to apply them exactly as recommended by the manufacturers and the EPA.

► **Don't let yourself be quoted as an expert on the risks involved.** Even though you may have been carrying out chemical treatments for years, always define safety in terms of meeting the standards set by the experts whose job it is to measure and regulate risks for society.

For more information on risk communication, consider Dr. Paling's book "Up To Your Armpits in Alligators?" (\$20). □

—Contact John Paling & Co., Ltd., 5822 N.W. 91st Boulevard, Gainesville, FL 32653; phone (352) 377-2142; fax (352) 377-2351.



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# Congress and USDA cut Beltsville's grass

by JERRY ROCHE/Editor-in-Chief

Effective October 1st, the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) will collapse for lack of money, if the United States Department of Agriculture has its way.

When Congress cut back its portion of the federal budget, the USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) said it would stop funding the NTEP, according to national program coordinator Kevin Morris.

The NTEP is a nationwide network of research programs that evaluates the adaptability of different turfgrass cultivars to local environmental and climatic conditions, and to different management regimes. Each year, subscribers can receive full reports on all the major varieties entered in the trials for a



Changes have to come from the U.S. Congress, says NTEP director Kevin Morris, shown here on the USDA turf plots in Beltsville, Md.

nominal fee. LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT also runs a condensed version of the reports in its popular "Pocket Seed Guide" every July.

According to government officials, President Clinton's administration and USDA officials, who are appointed by Clinton, consider the NTEP research low priority, and have eliminated it from the 1997 fiscal budget (starting October 1, 1996).

In a letter to NTEP constituents dated March 27th, Morris wrote:

"The good news is that there is still time to reverse this decision. Please contact your Congressional representatives immediately, telling them you support turfgrass research funding by USDA. Also, the following individuals within USDA need to hear from you: Secretary Dan Glickman, Dr. Floyd Horn and Dr. Edward Knipling."

However, in a note to LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT on April 4th, Morris was less optimistic:

"Hopefully, the USDA officials will know we are here. However, they most likely will not change their position. This will have to come from Congress."

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America is exhorting its members to call the Capitol switchboard to contact legislators with support for the

NTEP. In its most recent "Government Relations Briefax," the GCSAA also suggested its members write their Congressional representatives. □

—The Capitol switchboard telephone is (202) 224-3121. To reach Kevin Morris for more information, phone (301) 504-5125 or e-mail him at kmorris@asrr.arsusda.gov

## Southeast distributor to buy Lofts Seed

Budd Seed, Inc., a wholesale turfgrass seed and fertilizer distributor based in Winston-Salem, N.C., will purchase New Jersey-based Lofts Seed, Inc., one of the green industry's major suppliers of turfgrass seed since 1923.

According to Ken Budd, president and chief operating officer of Budd Seed, a mutually-agreed-upon purchase is expected on June 30th.

Budd Seed has distributed Lofts products for the last 15 years.

"We are their second- or third-largest customer," says Budd. "We're looking to expand" the Lofts' products further into the Southeast.

"We plan to run Lofts as it's been run for the past 15 years," says Budd. "It's a strong company, and we plan to continue with [turfgrass] breeding, research, production and distribution."

According to Budd, the Lofts Seed name will remain.

Budd Seed is a privately-held company that sells turfgrass seed to garden centers, golf courses and commercial turf care companies in the Carolinas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia and West Virginia. It also distributes Andersons, Weaver and IMC fertilizers.

Budd says the purchase will combine the synergies of both companies in areas of financing, marketing and personnel.

Jon Loft, president and chief executive officer of Lofts Seed, is expected to retire, although Budd could not specify the date of Lofts' retirement.

Lofts developed and owns patents on more than 25 seed varieties such as Rebel II and Rebel III turf-type tall fescues, Palmer perennial ryegrass and Georgetown Kentucky bluegrass. The company has domestic branches and subsidiaries in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Oregon and Georgia. **LM**

—Terry McIver