

## Canada's industry under siege

**P**laying out in Canada is what lawn care business owners in the United States have long feared. Professional turfgrass and landscape application services there are under attack.

Every town in the country apparently has the green light to make whatever pesticide regulations it wants.

A ruling by Canada's highest court in the spring of 2001 gave the town of Hudson the right to ban professional lawn applications. That decision ended a 10-year battle between that town of 5,500 people and two lawn care companies that had been doing business there.

### The floodgates fly open

A coalition of activist groups reacted like sharks smelling blood in the water. Vocal even before the ruling, they've intensified their efforts and are pestering cities across Canada to restrict or ban the activities of professional landscape services that use chemical pest controls.

At last count, about 50 towns in Quebec Province had passed some form of lawn care legislation. Imagine the confusion and waste for any company doing business in more than a few communities.

More cities are being targeted by these "crusaders," including Canada's most populated ones. The City of Halifax in Nova Scotia, which has about 70,000 households, will outlaw chemical lawn and garden care on residential properties on April 1, 2003. Toronto, Canada's biggest city in Ontario Province, is looking at bylaws. Ottawa and Vancouver are on the hit list, too.

### Playing for keeps

These activist groups — the Sierra Club, the World Wildlife Fund, and others — mean to have their way. Their goal is to rid Canada of all chemical pest control product use, say the Green Industry people we've spoken to.

The activists started with the argument that pesticide use is unnecessary on turfgrass and landscapes for "aesthetic" or "cosmetic" purposes. We should ask, loud and clear, "Says who?"

That argument is just a smokescreen, say Canadian landscape professionals we talk to. The ultimate target is pesticide use in Canada's huge agriculture industry.

So, the activists started with the easiest group to pick on, the lawn care people. And, until recently, the battle has been pretty one-sided. They attacked; the lawn care people reacted. In recent months, however, the professional landscape industry has closed ranks. Owners who heretofore viewed each other as competitors joined forces to defend their profession. Dozens now attend town meetings when the topic of pesticide use is debated. The scary part is that they have to do this town by town, meeting by meeting.

In spite of these efforts and a campaign to develop industry-wide acceptance and implementation of the principles of integrated pest management (IPM), the lawn care industry in Canada remains on the defensive . . . and pretty much on its own.

Contact Ron at 440/891-2636 or e-mail at [rhall@advanstar.com](mailto:rhall@advanstar.com)



The activists started with the easiest group to pick on, the lawn care people.