

Winged Foot loses 'guardian'

MAMARONECK, N.Y...A tree was cut down last month, and the game of golf is the less for it.

The elm tree at the 10th hole on Winged Foot Country Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y. was once called by writer Dan Jenkins "the greatest tree in golf." In 1987, the 250-year-old giant that guarded the green was named "big tree champion" of New York State. It was 100 feet high with a canopy over 40 feet wide. Its trunk was seven feet in diameter.

"This tree was like a person to us," superintendent Bob Alonzi told the *New York Times*, which ran a big story in its Feb. 14th editions.

Because of its presence, golfers were forced to hit to the 10th green under the treeline. "If not," the *Times* article related, "your ball would ricochet almost anywhere...if you were lucky, (it) would sometimes plop down onto the green, proving the elm had a heart, hard as it usually was."

In place of the venerable giant elm, felled by Dutch elm disease, Alonzi and his crew will transplant a pin oak this spring.

Seeking literary contributions

CHELSEA, Mich.—Dr. Trey Rogers of Michigan State University is soliciting contributions from golf course superintendents for his "Superintendents' Handbook for Golf Course Maintenance and Construction."

Each chapter will consist of contributions detailing techniques that superintendents have successfully used at their courses. Contributions should be one to five pages in length, and include photos.

For more information and/or to receive a contribution packet, please write: "Handbook for Superintendents," P.O. Box 799, Okemos, MI 48805.

'Menacing threat' to golf courses

SAN FRANCISCO—Golf course architect Robert Trent Jones Jr. sees the nation's financial instability as playing a large role in the downturn in golf course development. But, according to his "Reading the Green" newsletter, Jones sees a much larger "menacing threat" to golf development in the U.S.

"The major concern to our industry is the so-called 'environmental movement,' which has targeted golf courses for capital punishment," he writes.

"These folks...have become a part of the golf course permit approval process at every level of government, from the local planning commission to the Supreme Court.

"Their familiar refrain is that the golf course is a good idea, it is just in the wrong place. The fact is, they don't like golf courses anywhere...they just don't like the game. They see it as an elitist pastime. It occupies too much space; it takes too long to play; it is not the people's game."

Jones feels the answer to these people is for those who love the game to step forward and "shout loudly that golf is the absolute preservation of open space" and has more environmental benefits than drawbacks.

"Let's join together and actually sell the game to those who make land use decisions. Loud and clear, let's let them know that our vote is for open space, greenbelts, wetlands, animals...birds...and wholesome fun and exercise."

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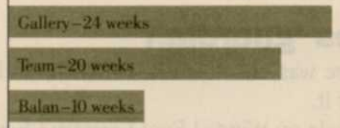
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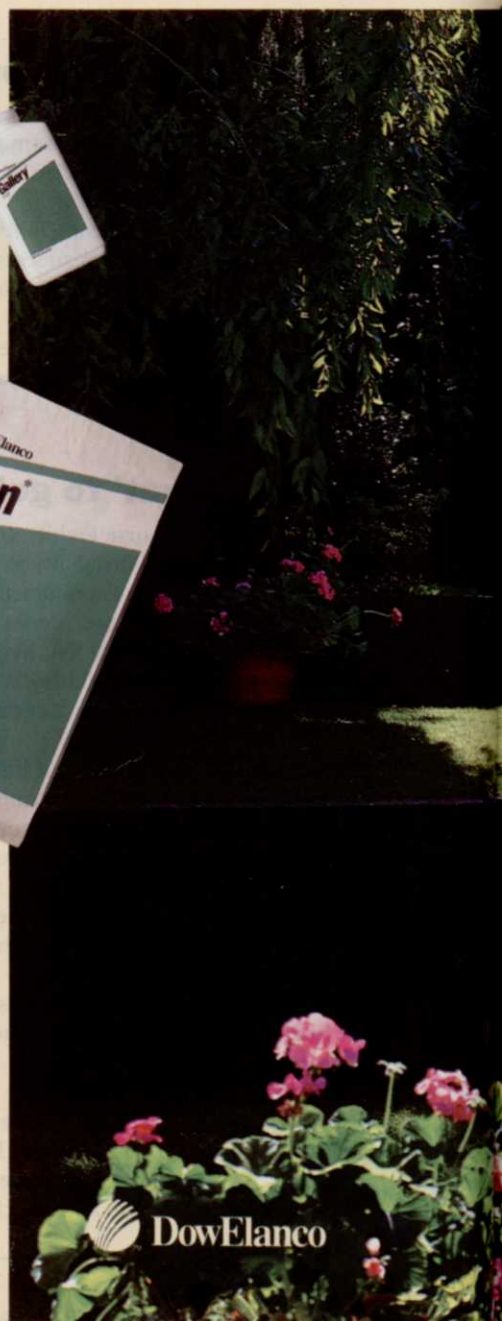
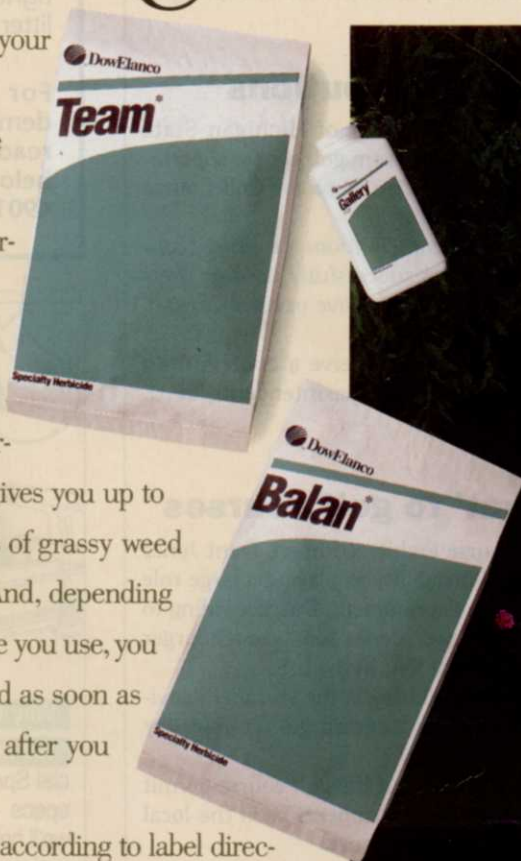
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for people interested in



LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

Do you have 'the right stuff' to become a franchisee?

Dick Nelles wants people with administrative and management skills, 'people skills' and a passion for customer service.

■ The requirements to become a good lawn care franchisee are wide-ranging, according to Canadian businessman Dick Nelles of Nutrilawn International, headquartered in Winnipeg.

A Nutrilawn franchisee has to be a person with overall management ability, Nelles notes. He has to be a good administrator, trainer and judge of personnel. He has to be able to handle the field operations; he has to be a good people person; he has to ensure his employees have a good attitude to service.

He also has to have some money in his pocket.

Nelles and his vice president and partner, Derek Riley, charge six percent royalty on franchisees' sales. In return, they provide technical support and help with business and market planning.

"It's a two-way street," says Nelles. "If our franchisees are successful, then we are successful."

Nutrilawn franchises sell for \$50,000 in larger Canadian markets and \$37,500 in smaller markets. Nelles observes that prospective franchisees also need enough capital on hand to ride out the lean years while they build up their businesses. A base of at least 30 customers is needed to make money, he notes. But the rewards would seem to be worth the wait.

The company's annual meeting in Ottawa in January focused on training franchise operators to train their staffs. "Because our franchises are growing so fast, we emphasize retraining on training procedures," Nelles explains. "The Ottawa franchise, for example, growing as it is,

has to train several new employees every year. It is a step-by-step process aimed at motivating employees to strive to excel in customer service."

Nelles reports that Nutrilawn is doing research on developing a tree and shrub program for its franchisees. Irrigation has also been looked at. In his view, though,

Nelles: Lawn care is large size business opportunity with good growth potential.

"you have to stick to your knitting"—your core business.

"Any add-on services should only be approved where a guy is doing a real good job of looking after that core business," Nelles maintains. "You have renewable business out there and opening new accounts to worry about. A new division requires more people and capital. From all the research I've done, the consistent message is that add-on services can detract from customer service. I would be very cautious about approving add-on services to what we do."

The keys to operating a successful franchising business like Nutrilawn are a good business plan and training program, choosing the right kind of people as franchisees and staying focused on your core product or service, Nelles has learned. Using that formula, Nutrilawn has grown to 26 franchises with system-wide sales of \$5 million in seven years. Projected growth for 1992 was 30 percent; Nelles expects 1993 sales to reach \$7 million.

When he started the business in Winnipeg after being a long-time agricultural equipment dealer there, he had 500 customers. Last year, there were 50,000 Nutrilawn customers in Winnipeg alone.

"From the outset, I felt the business could be duplicated successfully elsewhere," Nelles says. He developed solid training and support programs, and began marketing franchises.

"It is a large size business opportunity that offers good potential growth," he points out. "We have divided Canada into



87 exclusive territories."

Nutrilawn's first franchisee opened in Edmonton in 1987. Last year, that franchisee had 38 summer employees and took in more than \$1 million in revenue. Newer franchisees in Ottawa, the nation's capital, and Halifax are growing even more rapidly. Ottawa's revenue, for example, has jumped from \$100,000 in its first year to \$400,000 in 1991 to \$650,000 last year.

Although the Nutrilawn name is registered in Washington, D.C., Nelles has no immediate plans to sell franchises state-side. "We want to fully look after Canada first and make sure that our Canadian franchisees are successful," he says. "We have franchisees from coast-to-coast, but there are still a lot of areas to fill in."

—The author, Myron Love, is a freelance writer based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

PLCAA's stand on pesticide use

■ This is where the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA) stands on pesticide application issues.

PLCAA made the following recommendations in a briefing paper to participants at its Day on the Hill in Washington D.C. this past February:

Customer right-to-know: PLCAA's members endorse providing their customers with a written, "rolling" Customer Service Agreement, given to customers at time of an application. It would include the brand name or common name of the product applied; the general reason for use as stated on the label; the maximum concentration of the end-use product and the rate of application; any special instructions relating to the use of the lawn by the customer after the application is made; and, on request, a copy of the product label.

Notification registry: PLCAA supports the creation of a notification registry in each state. Anyone who pays an initial fee and an annual renewal fee (to be used to defray the costs of operating the registry) would be eligible to be placed on the registry, with provisions for the fee to be waived in bona fide cases of inability to pay. State regulatory agencies would then send the registry list to commercial and "part-time" applicators (e.g. building maintenance personnel) on a quarterly, or as-needed basis.

Pre-application notification: Commercial lawn care companies and part-time applicators should pre-notify the following people one day in advance of intended applications: customers (if applicable); persons on the notification registry that are adjacent to the customer's property; or an appropriate school authority.

Posting: National posting would build public recognition of the industry standard for the size and type of signs. Commercial applicators, part-time applicators and do-it-yourselfers should affix a posted marker or markers at the primary point or points of access to a property at the time of application. Retail establishments would be required to provide posted markers and information on the requirement to their customers.

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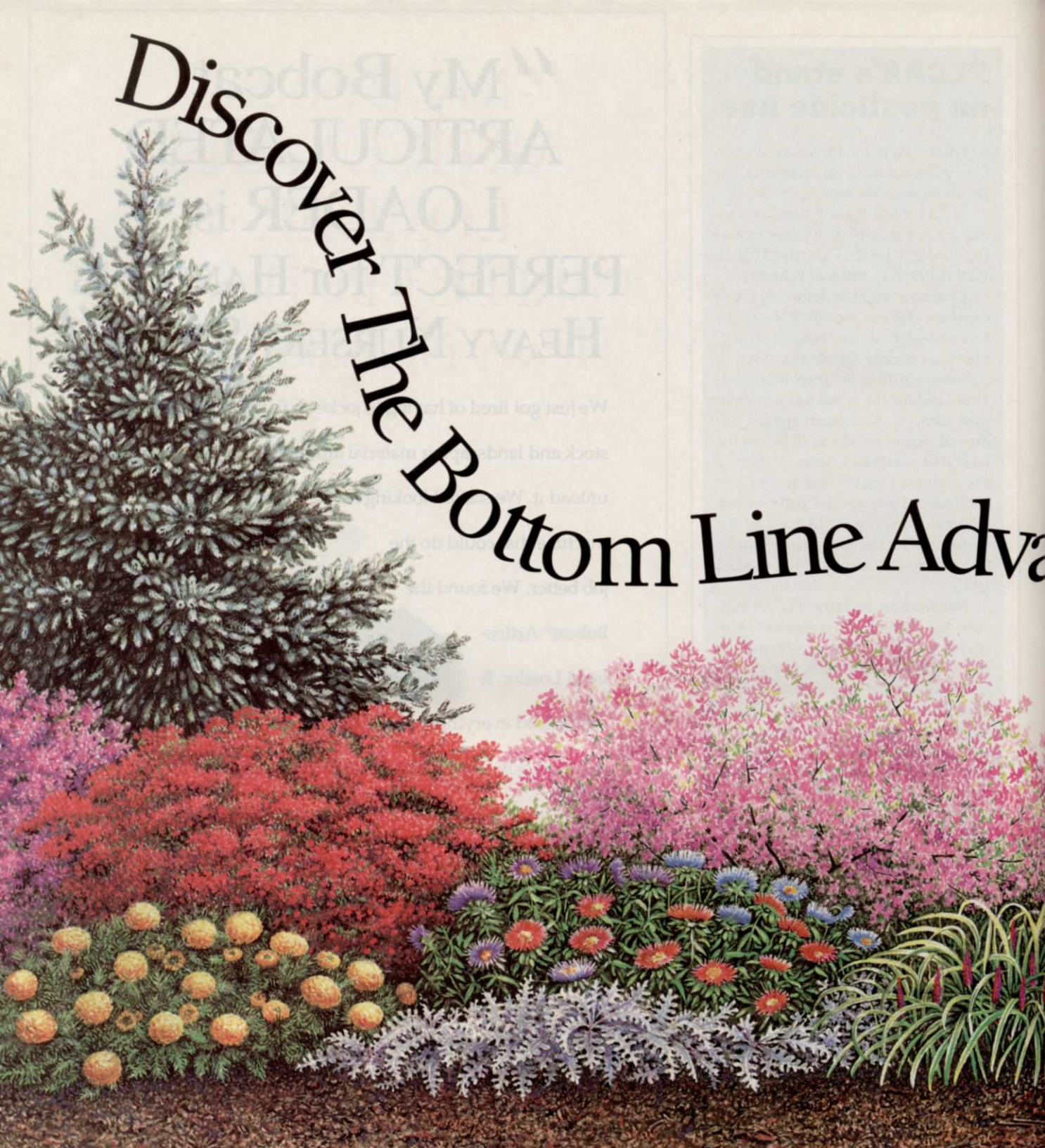


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JOB TALK

Oil changes help Bailey's truck fleet stay trouble-free

Frequent oil changes are essential if you expect to get your money's worth—and more—from trucks and tractors.

■ The key to a good preventive maintenance program on your tractors and trucks is frequent oil changes, says Len Bondeson, maintenance supervisor at Bailey Nurseries, St. Paul, Minn.

The company operates 175 pieces of equipment, from Ford F600s to a Kenworth with a 300 Cummins engine; from new vehicles to ones from the 1950s.

"Although there's more stress on a tractor digging in the field than on a truck making a delivery 100 miles away, each piece of equipment gets the same care," says Bondeson.

Each day, Bondeson and his maintenance staff of three will bring several pieces of equipment into the 2,800-sq.ft. maintenance shop for inspections, oil changes and maintenance. "We try to work around production and delivery schedules," Bondeson admits.

Today's oils are designed with universal characteristics to accommodate all types of gasoline or diesel fuel engines. Using a multigrade universal lubricant offers two major benefits:

- 1) inventory consolidation; and
- 2) reduced application errors.

"In addition, says Dennis Boggs of Phillips 66, "multigrade oils are more versatile than single grades, because they can meet specific requirements for both old and new vehicles in the same fleet."

All of Bailey's tractors are overhauled at the nursery, but



Checking the oil at three-hour intervals keeps Bailey's tractor fleet always ready to do the toughest jobs.



Bailey Nursery supplies more than 4,000 retail nurseries, landscape companies and garden centers nationwide with nearly 10 million trees, shrubs and container plants.

because of increased fleet size, trucks are now sent to a local repair shop for overhauls.

To supplement these major in-shop inspections, operators conduct their own equipment checks at least daily. These usually involve checking the oil once or twice a day, checking hydraulic fluid and greasing all joints.

"During the fall, a digger can run 9 to 14 hours a day," says Bondeson. "The operator will check grease and oil and give the

Maintenance scheduling

Maintenance	Tractors	Trucks
Oil change	100 hrs.	2,000 mi.
Engine overhaul	15,000 hrs.	250,000 mi.

digger a complete look-over every three hours to make sure everything is running right."

Maintenance is important both winter and summer. In the winter, trees must be dug out of what is sometimes frozen ground. In the summer, dust is a constant problem that puts extra stress on an engine.

"We haven't had a problem with dirt in the engines, though, because we change oil frequently to get rid of any dirt and grime suspended in the oil," Bondeson notes.

Phillips 66 Super HD II motor oil is changed in tractors at 100-hour intervals and in trucks and buses at every 2,000 miles. Phillips 66 HG Fluid is changed in hydraulic systems and transmissions once a year.

An oil analysis program was recently implemented to determine if oil-change intervals could be safely extended. Proper analysis and interpretation of oil samples can help operators find internal engine problems early, or allow them to increase intervals between service.

"The toughest part is reading the report," says Bondeson, who worked closely with Fuel Oil Service, plus an independent oil analysis company.

Lubricants experts at Phillips 66 advise operators to avoid making decisions based on oil analyses, unless they've mastered the art of reading them or have their oil supplier or oil analysis company help interpret the results.

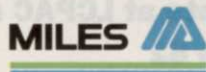
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HOT TOPICS

EPA will ask states for yet another round of lawn care inspections

Industry says violation rate of 1992 inspections gives misleading impression of lawn care safety.

ALEXANDRIA, Va.—When states, directed by the U.S. EPA, conducted 760 additional inspections focusing on lawn care in 1992, about 34 percent of the inspections found violations.

What does this mean? That's what several key lawn care industry members asked U.S. EPA officials at a meeting of the Lawn Care Pesticides Advisory Committee (LCPAC) here in February.

What it means is another round of unannounced inspections of lawn care application companies across the country, says EPA's Maureen Lydon.

The EPA wants yet more data on the industry. Meanwhile, it's putting together a "compliance assistance packet" which will tell LCOs how to better meet state and federal regulations.

LCOs at February's LCPAC meeting claimed the fiscal 1992 inspections unfairly portrays the industry's willingness and/or ability to comply with oftentimes confusing pesticide-use regulations. They pointed out that 25 percent of the documented violations involved recordkeeping and other non-safety issues.

Even so, as one industry member admitted, the 34 percent violation rate will make "great sound-bite stuff." Industry critics, he said, will point to this number should lawn care be the subject of a

Congressional hearing again later this spring. (As of mid-March no plans had yet been made for more so-called 'victims' hearings.)

Indeed, the EPA directed the state agencies to inspect 10 additional lawn care firms each (actually some inspected more) as a result of just such a lawn care hearing before a U.S. Senate subcommittee in May 1991.

Kimm: not a statistical sample

"We were asked, 'What do we know about the nature of violations?'" said EPA official Vic Kimm of the '91 hearing. At that Senate subcommittee hearing both pesticide critics and the General Accounting Office scolded the EPA. The resulting 1992 inspections provide a "snapshot" of LCOs' activities, not a statistical sample, he explained.

"We can take the data and read it in a lot of ways," admitted Kimm, deputy assistant administrator of the Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances.

But Russ Frith, President and CEO of Lawn Doctor, said unlicensed applica-

tors accounted for 15 percent of all violations, and should not be included with licensed operators. Marty Erbaugh, president of Lawn-mark, added that the "snapshot" drawn from the inspections is too narrow.

"We're not dealing with any kind of national crisis, but we do think we can do a better job of it (compliance)," responded EPA official Stephen L. Johnson.

Art Losey, a regulator from the Washington State Ag Department said he was surprised at the number of violations, but admitted, "some of our best applicators, if you look close enough, you're going to find something wrong. That's the world out there."

Even so, Losey said professional users of lawn/landscape pesticides seem to be doing a better job of complying with regulations in his state.

Industry and the EPA agreed on the need for a more aggressive educational effort directed at lawn/landscape care companies.

The EPA's Maureen Lydon promised that "compliance assistance packets" would be made available to lawn care companies before the additional lawn care company inspections planned for fiscal 1994.

But when a lawn care spokesman suggested that applicators be supplied with this information just before an impending inspection, regulatory officials balked. Inspections must be unannounced, they insisted.

"If our people (applicators) are licensed, we expect them to know the law," said Washington State's Losey. "We expect them to know how to read a label."



Kimm: not a statistical sample



Frith: unlicensed operators are a problem



Erbaugh: 'snapshot' too narrow

—Ron Hall

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