

Turfgrass Producers International

EPA Amends Worker Protection Standards for Ag Pesticides

Hearing the concerns of turfgrass sod producers as voiced by TPI and others, the Environmental Protection Agency recently agreed to amend five areas of the evolving Worker Protection Standards (WPS.)

According to the EPA, the following requirements are now in place:

1. **Worker Training** must be completed within five days after a new employee begins work; however, untrained workers must be given brief pesticide safety information at the time of hiring. Retraining for workers and handlers must take place every 5 years.

2. **Crop Advisors** and persons under their direct supervision are exempt from WPS provisions, including reentry restrictions, to perform their tasks.

3. **Irrigation Activities** will be permitted before expiration of the restricted entry interval for up to eight (8) hours in any 24-hour period, but workers must be provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) as required by the pesticide's label.

4. **"Limited Contact" Activities** will be permitted before expiration of the restricted entry interval for up to eight (8) hours in any 24-hour period, to perform tasks that do not include hand labor and only for those pesticides that do not require both verbal and posted notification.

5. **Reduced Restricted Entry Intervals**, from 12 to 4 hours, are now permitted for 114 relatively low risk pesticide active ingredients.

Additional details of these amendments are available from TPI upon request by calling 800/405-TURF (8873,) via FAX at 708/705-8347 or by mail to TPI, 1855-A Hicks Road, Rolling Meadows, Illinois 60008.

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Your belief in, and enthusiasm about turfgrass sod is essential to "selling" your customers.

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Assessment-funded PR Program Compiles Strong 1st-year Results

Funded by a special assessment on all U.S. Class A and B members, TPI's public relations program, featuring the environmental benefits of turfgrass, is having real success. Combining exclusive original articles, media kits and news releases with paid advertisements and letters to writers and editors, the program is designed to encourage the expanded use of turfgrass sod and respond to anti-grass critics.

Consider these highlights:

Over 5.2 Million people exposed to TPI messages, in 49 different newspapers, magazines and books, through 99 separate articles. Had all of this space been purchased, it would have cost TPI over \$178,000!

In addition to free editorial space, TPI's paid advertisements in "Landscape Architecture," "Landscape Architect and Specifier News," and the Garden Writers Association of America

membership directory have generated over 500 requests for professional information about turfgrass sod. Detailed facts about sod, and a listing of TPI members in the state are sent with each information request. Some 125 consumers have also requested information from TPI.

Funding for TPI's public relations and education program results from a special mandatory assessment on all U.S. Class A (producer) and Class B (manufacturer) members. In addition to normal dues fees, these members pay an additional amount ranging from \$160 for small farms to a high of \$400 for large farms. All other classes of members are encouraged to make a voluntary contribution to help support the program. An annual budget of \$100,000 has been established by the TPI Board of Trustees for this program.

(Details: PR Program Scoreboard, Page 4.)

Green Industry Growers Defeat Proposed Federal Promotion Order

By a sizable margin...perhaps as high as 85 to 1...turfgrass sod producers and other green industry plant growers, have voted against a proposed federal promotion order originally proposed by "Plants for America." Garden Council Chief Executive Gary Mariani, who spearheaded the proposal concluded, "The Garden Council will discontinue all Plants for America promotion order

efforts. The Council will review its charter and mission concerning national advertising and will comply with the directives of its supporters and members."

As originally envisioned, the federal promotion order would have, by legal mandate, levied an assessment on all plant containers, pallets and/or green industry growing stock in order to create a

\$25 million annual advertising fund.

A poll of all potentially affected members was conducted for "Plants for America" by the accounting firm of Ernst & Young. According to figures released by Ernst & Young, some 35,888 growers were polled, with 7,141 respondents. This represented one of the highest return rates the firm had ever experienced.

"Sod Spec Guidelines" Undergoing Revision

All TPI members are invited to submit comments and suggestions on how to improve and expand the usefulness and accuracy of TPI's "Guideline Specifications To Turfgrass Sodding."

Last revised in 1988, the current 20-page booklet will be totally redesigned and updated to better meet the needs of those who specify turfgrass sod and those who produce it. The current timetable calls for the TPI Board of Trustees to give final review to the latest draft at their Summer meeting in Omaha, with production and distribution to the members to follow in the next few months.

Modifications made to the booklet thus far include refinement of the current five

separate specification sections, the inclusion of metric measurements and an expanded definition of various turfgrass sod quality standards. Many TPI members use the "sod specs" booklet with landscape architects, contractors and government officials because of the detailed level of information it provides.

The revised edition is intended to expand the usefulness of the "specs" and to encourage greater use of turfgrass sod by providing a reasonable and easy-to-use methods to specify sod on all sites. Recommendations and comments should be mailed or faxed to TPI as soon as possible in order that they can be considered and incorporated wherever possible in the new publication.

Business briefs

101 Questions to Ask Your CPA:

Provides guidance on how to get more than just tax advice from your accountant. Contains questions to ask your company's CPA about financing, analyzing the firm's competitive standing, lease/purchase decisions, business insurance and more.

Division for CPA Firms, American Institute of CPAs, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope. *Free.*

...about invoicing. Write "no charge" on invoices as often as possible. You may be providing services which could be charged for but aren't. Remind customers of what your company is doing for them by listing all these no-charge services on the invoice. *Example:* If sale price includes off-loading and a weed-free warranty, write "Off-loading...No charge. 30-day Weed-free warranty...No charge." This adds to your product's perceived value at no cost to you.

Member Safety Tip

By Linda Tucker, Sodco, Inc.
Slocum, Rhode Island

Slow Moving Vehicles

Most motorists on public roads are not farmers and are unlikely to give much thought to the unique nature of farm machinery on the highway. As an operator of slow-moving farm machinery on public roads, you have a major responsibility for helping motorists to avoid hitting you from the rear.

Motorists are often the most seriously injured victims, with many accidents being fatal. For your safety and theirs:

- **USE A SLOW-MOVING VEHICLE (SMV) EMBLEM.** The triangular SMV emblem, visible from the rear, is the universal symbol to tell everyone a vehicle travels 25 mph or less.

SMV emblems are required by most state laws, and OSHA requires SMV emblems on machines operated by employees.

- **Keep the emblem surface clean and in good repair.** When the colors lose their brilliance, replace the emblem. Mount the emblem securely, and always with a point upward.

- **Keep lights and reflectors in good working order for farm vehicles travelling on public roads.** Operate flashing lights both day and night.

- **Anticipate problems motorists may have when your slow moving machinery is on the road.** Drive with others in mind.

- **Use care, courtesy and common sense at all times.**

- **Move to the shoulder so motorists won't be put in a tight spot.** Stop if necessary to accomplish this.

- **Signal clearly for left turns.** Make sure motorists recognize your intention to turn.

- **When entering the road from a field,** allow plenty of time and distance for approaching motorists.

Do whatever you can to avoid slow moving vehicle collisions by both anticipating motorist errors and operating your machinery safely. The life you save could be your own.

Marketing Tip

By Mike McDermott, Grass Pad Warehouse, Olathe, Kansas

Sell Yourself First!

My Daddy always told me: "The first person you need to sell is yourself; then your employees; then everyone you meet at church, school, the grocery store, your banker, your accountant, your insurance man, and then your customers."

Quick! Give yourself a test!

Name five things grass does to improve the environment. Name three reasons to

choose sod rather than seed for homes, schools, commercial properties and highways. Now, if you really want a shock, ask your banker, your lawyer and your employees the same question. More importantly, how many people have you told today? This week? This month?

As the sod grower - business owner, you are the conductor, the cheerleader and the Sunday preacher. No one plays a note or makes a sound until you begin. In your

heart of hearts, are you a true turfgrass believer?

Turfgrass purifies the air we breathe and the water we drink. It prevents erosion and reduces both heat and noise. Turfgrass makes our cities, schools, playgrounds, parks and homes more livable and safer places for our children to play.

Say Amen!

Taking Care Of Business

By Ronald D. Nixon, Cowikey Turf Eufaula, Alabama

Hiring Custom Applicators

Every year I consider the same question..."Should I put a spreader body on our oldest delivery truck in order to spread fertilizer?"

At present, I have fertilizer custom-spread by the only supplier available. If I had my own spreader truck, then I would be free to hop around and save a few dollars on my fertilizer purchases.

It sounds like a good idea until I consider that my supplier is providing me with an excellent product in a timely manner at a competitive price and doing a good job of spreading it. He has a history of consistency and has invested for the long term so he will be around next year.

Having the fertilizer custom-spread means there is one less thing to do in a

business where we have more than enough work to do already. My decision again this year is to have the fertilizer custom-spread. I reserve the right to make a different decision next year if factors change. A good supplier does not cost you money, but makes you money.

On the other hand, we choose to apply all chemicals ourselves. For us the optimum time to apply chemicals to turf can be very short. The need for chemical control is often very localized with only a portion of a field receiving treatment.

Also, chemical application has to be coordinated with harvesting so as not to harmfully expose workers. Mowing and irrigation schedules are also factors that have to be considered.

Because we will probably always apply chemicals ourselves, we invested in the

best sprayer available. We also streamlined our filling & storage areas to make them as efficient and safe as possible. And, while we do have a small fertilizer spreader so we can put out fertilizer, this investment is small compared to the financial commitment we have made toward the ability to apply chemicals ourselves.

The decision of whether to use custom applicators is just like any other business decision. What is the most economical, efficient, workable way of accomplishing something considering cost, time, labor, quality and personal desire.

With that in mind, the decision to hire outside contractors to do work that your people are capable of doing could vary with every turfgrass sod business, depending on your needs and the availability of reliable resources.

Sod Delivery Damage Disclaimer

This disclaimer will allow your firm to escape future imposed liability by the owner of the property to which you deliver sod. It may be used at your discretion, not necessarily in every situation and may be modified to suit your needs.

DISCLAIMER

The person who signs this receipt acknowledges that he/she is the owner or duly designated agent for the owner of the property where this sod is being deposited.

The undersigned acknowledges that he/she has instructed the driver of the sod delivery

truck to drive the sod truck on the driveway and/or walkway after having been informed that the weight of the truck may cause the driveway/walkway to crack or sink.

By signing this disclaimer, the signator warrants that they are the owner or agent for the owner and that they will accept full responsibility for any and all damage caused by the sod delivery truck driving over the driveway or sidewalk.

The signator agrees to defend the sod company and to hold them harmless for any and all liability arising out of such damage that may occur to the cement, asphalt or combinations of both.

(The disclaimer should have a signature line similar to the following.)

Signed by Owner or Agent

A disclaimer should be printed and kept on hand by your driver or person in charge for them to use based on their judgement in a given situation. No work should be performed at the insistence of the owner before he or she has signed this disclaimer should your representative deem it necessary.

(Source: James B. Zellen, writing in *Landsculptor*, 30700 Telegraph, Ste. 4555, Bingham Farms, MI 48025.)

TPI Action

The following U.S. federal issues are being monitored and/or acted upon by TPI. Individual TPI members may be called upon to advance the group's position to Congressmen, Senators and/or regulatory agency representatives.

ISSUE	TPI POSITION
Wetlands definitions related to farm lands	Sod farms should be included within the definition of farming.
Workers compensation remedies (Adams Fruit Supreme Court Case)	Workers comp should be the sole and exclusive remedy to injured workers and private suits should not be allowed.
EPA's Worker Protection Standards Implementation	Safety is paramount, but rules must consider unique nature of sod farming and the need to use chemicals available to homeowners.
OSHA's Ergonomic Standards to protect workers	As last defined, these standards would be unworkable and are therefore adamantly opposed.
Legal Services Corporation	Legal rights of the poor must be protected; however, LSC must be responsible and accountable.
Executive Order to use "Native Plants" on federal sites	Emotional, not science-based, dictate that would ultimately harm the environment and destroy businesses of non-native plant providers.
Temporary foreign worker program as part of immigration reform	While foreign workers are not a major work-force component of most sod farms, the need for large numbers of seasonal workers is expected to expand, thus jeopardizing all employers' abilities to hire adequate numbers of people.
Triazine/Atrazine/Simazine review by EPA	This family of herbicides is one of the most highly effective and affordable to sod farms. Its removal could cause great economic hardship and crop quality losses.
Cash accounting for farms under budget review	Cash accounting must remain an owner option because of the nature of sod farming and the problems caused by impractical accrual methods such as inventory evaluation of sod.

PR SCORECARD

(May 15, 1994 - May 15, 1995)

Mailings to Media & Members

Total: 104,331 pages

Free Media Exposure:

Publications	55*
Separate articles	99*
Pages of information	112.8*
Circulation	5.23 million*
Advertising value	\$ 178,202*

1st-Aid Kits & Brochures Mailed to Architects, Contractors & Consumers:

502 kits
(kits include state-wide member lists)
124 consumers

Paid Advertisements generated 263 of 502 requests (as of May 15):

"*Landscape Architecture*" (October & November @ \$1,921 each.) 2 Ads; 122 requests (36 states, 12 countries) = \$31.49/request.

"*Landscape Architect & Specifier News*" (October & February @ \$1,046 each) 3 Ads; 141 requests (20 states, 1 country) = \$22.25/request. May Ad scheduled.

ASSESSMENT INCOME

\$66,062 (93.6% of \$70,520 Budget)
U.S. = \$63,059 (92.7% of \$68,020 Budget)
Int'l = \$3,003 (120% of \$2,500 Budget)

PR PROGRAM EXPENSES

(as of April 30, 1995)

\$54,384 (54.4% of \$100,000 Budget)

PAID ADS & ADVERTISING VALUE
\$183,261

Investment Return on Assessment Income:
277.4%

Investment Return on Program Expenses
336.9%

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass Producers International
1855-A Hicks Road, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

FIRST CLASS MAIL

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

Permit No. 662