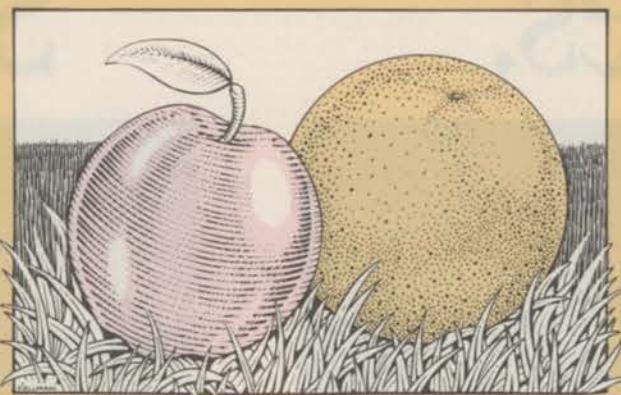


Apples & oranges: A 'fresh' approach to marketing

Closing rate up 22 percent
Cost is only 75 cents

By JAMES E. GUYETTE
Editor

BIRMINGHAM, ALA.—When potential clients of Lawn-Green of Alabama, Inc. are sizing up the competition, co-owner Paul Burton tells them it's just like comparing apples and oranges.



With that in mind, each homeowner who requests an estimate is given a plastic bag containing a huge—perfect—apple and orange.

"This was just an extension of the sales pitch," Burton explains. "I just took it one step further."

While urging prospective customers to select his company over all the others, "I always found that I was going back to saying, 'It's just like comparing apples and oranges.' This puts it into a form they can hold in their hands."

If nobody is home, the packet is placed

See **APPLES** Page 26

LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

Serving the needs of the professional lawn care operator

VOLUME 14 NUMBER 1

AN **ENR** PUBLICATION

JANUARY 1990



Unreeling new technology: The type of hose used in a spraying system can have an impact on production. An expert on hoses discusses advances in the field in an article on Page 13.

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REGULATIONS

LCOs nationwide are dealing with threatening pesticide legislation.

12

SAFETY

You can devise a company safety program for under \$500.

18

CLASSIFIED

See what's for sale, miscellaneous items.

35

ChemLawn jobs cut during restructuring

COLUMBUS, OHIO—ChemLawn Services Corp. is cutting more than 500 full-time jobs nationwide during a restructuring effort by parent company Ecolab, Inc.

The restructuring—expected to cost \$28 to \$32 million—includes staff reductions, management upgrading, a reorganization of branch operations and the development of new business systems.

ChemLawn lost \$10 million during a nine-month period in

1989. The company had made \$2 million during that same period in 1988.

The problems at ChemLawn have led some investors and analysts to demand a shake-up or sale of the unit, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

Ecolab paid \$370 million for ChemLawn in 1987, and industry insiders believe the company is now worth much less.

"We are optimistic we have developed the right strategies for this business and that it will...develop into the strategic asset it was considered to be when acquired two years ago," said Pierson M. Grieve, Ecolab's chairman and chief executive officer.

LCI

Researchers still making discoveries

New pesticides are changing lawn care

By JAMES E. GUYETTE
Editor

Expect the 1990s to bring additional innovations in pesticides as scientists continue to develop unique products that are safer and more effective.

"This is really something for people to look forward to in the next several years," says Consultant Steven J. Day of Landscapes Plus in Wheat Ridge, Colo.

Public concern over the safety of pesticides and increased government regulations have spurred manufacturers into seeking compounds that offer peace of mind—and scientific discoveries are making sure that the new products are able to get the job done.

DowElanco's non-phenoxy Confront herbicide "is abso-

lutely ideal for clients who demand beautiful weed-free turf without the concerns raised by some presently available products."

The firm goes on to report that "the state-of-the-art triclopyr/clopyralid chemistry of Confront specifically addresses the needs and concerns of customers at your most sensitive accounts."

Gallery is another DowElanco product that is being greeted with positive reactions.

Cooper's Lawn Aeration Service in Virginia was one of 11 companies to test the product last year, and owner Gary Cooper is impressed with the control. He found only one weed in the test lawn, which was located next to a vacant lot.

See **PESTS** Page 25

LATE NEWS

State groups are organizing

INDIANAPOLIS—LCOs representing 19 states are taking steps to form statewide associations.

Detailed organizational meetings are set to begin this month, according to Robert E. Andrews of the Indiana State Lawn Care Association. He is spearheading the efforts, which are sponsored by Monsanto and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.

Preliminary seminars were planned to be held here in December, and Andrews was pleased with the anticipated turnout. "If we could have had six or seven states we'd be pleased, but we have 19," he said.

Interested representatives hail from Tennessee, Oklahoma, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Texas, Montana, New Jersey, Colorado, Nebraska, Massachusetts, Connecticut, North Dakota, Florida, Iowa and Idaho.

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NEXT MONTH

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Tall ones.



Short ones.



ChemLawn jobs cut during restructuring

ChemLawn, a leading national lawn care company, is restructuring its operations to improve efficiency and reduce costs. The company, which has been in business for over 20 years, is facing increased competition from smaller, more agile firms. As part of its restructuring plan, ChemLawn is cutting jobs in several departments, including sales and administration. The company is also looking to streamline its operations and reduce overhead costs. Despite the job cuts, ChemLawn remains committed to providing high-quality lawn care services to its customers.

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Thin ones.



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All shapes and sizes qualify for our PAGEANT.

Nothing's worse than slimy worms crawling on your shrubs, ugly beetles munching on your pines and nasty borers blemishing your birches. That's why you need new PAGEANT* DF in your tank.

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What's even more attractive is its broad spectrum of control. You can control everything from beetles to borers to worms—all with a single insecticide.

Since it's a dry, flowable formulation, PAGEANT DF also has minimal odor and less chance of phytotoxicity. Plus, it goes into solution beautifully—no more

clogged nozzles, or undissolved clumps. Your applicators can mix without dust. And without the splashing caused by liquid insecticides.

So much talent in such a beautiful package. Almost seems unfair. PAGEANT DF not only works better than the competition, it also looks better. But that cube-shaped container offers more than good looks—it's specially designed for easier handling and disposal.

Each container holds five full pounds of insecticide. At a mixing ratio of 1-2 pounds per 100 gallons of water, PAGEANT DF is ideally packaged for larger spray tanks.

Why not judge for yourself how well PAGEANT DF protects the beauty of trees and shrubs? Then send a clear message to the insecticide you're presently using: hand over the crown. To find out more, call 1-800-373-2DOW.



*Trademark of The Dow Chemical Company.

Circle No. 105 on Reader Inquiry Card

A growth regulator for warm-season turf will be test-marketed this year by American Cyanamid. The imazaquin product, to be called Timeout, works on St. Augustine, zoysia and Bermudagrasses.

"There's nothing like it on the market," says the company's Nicholas Kalm.

Computerized billing is being introduced by Monsanto for its Greens Center agents. Program allows agents to bill orders for the company's Expedite system via credit card—customers are then sent a bill from the factory.

This system eliminates the distributor's role in the billing process and frees up time for increased customer service, Monsanto says.

An irrigation association is forming in Ohio. All Green Management in Columbus will serve as executive director. Meeting is set for Jan. 16 or 17.

For more information call All Green at (614) 891-3111.

Attendance was up at the Professional Lawn Care Association of America national convention in Las Vegas. PLCAA's Sandra J. Hensel reports

that there were 1,312 attendees and 168 exhibitors set up over 37,000 square feet of display space—all increases over 1988.

An innovative, money-saving system for bulk turfgrass seed shipping is being tested by the Jacklin Seed Co.

A test delivery of the corrugated units to Scott's in Ohio from the Jacklin HQ in Idaho was declared a success.

About 450 industry professionals attended the Green Team Conference and Trade Show in St. Louis, Mo. LCI

"I was hesitant to try it at first. I thought, surely, there would be some injury to my flowers. But Surflan convinced me otherwise. It didn't harm them at all when we sprayed directly over the top.

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Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead
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Circle No. 110 on Reader Inquiry Card

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LAWN CARE INDUSTRY (ISSN 0160-6042) is published monthly by Edgell Communications, Inc. Corporate and Editorial offices: 7500 Old Oak Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44130. Advertising Offices: 7500 Old Oak Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44130, 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60601 and 3475 Lenox Road, N.E. Suite 665 Atlanta, Georgia 30326. Accounting, Advertising Production and Circulation offices: 1 East First Street, Duluth, Minnesota 55802. Subscription rates: \$25 per year in the United States; \$50 per year in Canada. All other countries: \$100 per year. Current issue single copies (pre-paid only): \$2.50 in the U.S.; \$5.00 in Canada; elsewhere \$10.; add \$3.50 for shipping and handling per order. Back issues, if available \$10.; add \$3.50 per order for shipping and handling (pre-paid orders only). Office of publication: Edgell Communications, Inc., 1 East First Street, Duluth, Minnesota 55802. Second class postage paid at Duluth, Minnesota 55806. Copyright © 1990 by Edgell Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to LAWN CARE INDUSTRY, P.O. Box 6200, Duluth, Minnesota 55806.

NBP BPA

EPA could require tighter applicator recertification

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is expected to propose rules that would require commercial applicators to be recertified every three years.

Any EPA rules such as the ones being proposed would most likely be adapted into state regulations.

Current EPA guidelines followed by the states set no specific interval for recertification.

An earlier proposal would have required renewal every five years, at the minimum, for applicators.

Tom Delaney, director of state government affairs for

the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, said most states have recertification every five years.

He said he expects the states to object to tighter rules.

"I don't believe that three (years) will stick," Delaney said. "The states will fight them tooth and nail to keep the five."

The EPA is considering three levels of licensing for pesticide applicators, based on the classification of the materials being used: Application only by a certified person; on-

site supervision, in which one certified person will supervise other applicators; or off-site supervision, which requires a certified person to be able to get to the site quickly.

Licensed supervisors would have to provide guidance on the type and amount of pesticide to be used at each site, plus they would have to monitor hazards and issue safety precautions.

The supervisor also would be responsible for non-certified workers, and would have to keep training records. LCI



Delaney: States are likely to object to three-year plan.

DowElanco Pageant for trees, shrubs

MIDLAND, MICH.—Pageant DF, the first dry-flowable insecticide formulation developed specifically for the tree and shrub care market, has received approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Created by DowElanco, the product will be available in February.

Pageant DF contains 50 percent active ingredient formulated into water dispersible granules.

This formulation offers improved handling benefits such as less dust, less residue in the container, excellent pourability, ease of measurement, less applicator exposure and minimal agitation, according to the company.

"It's a dustless formulation," emphasizes Dr. Mike Shaw, product technical manager for DowElanco.

He adds that the special formulation assures control.

"We feel that this gives better coverage of the plant," Shaw explains.

"Pageant DF is a unique broad-spectrum tree and shrub insecticide differentiated by its excellent activity on worms, scale and aphids," says Rob Peterson, DowElanco's product marketing manager.

While most tree and shrub insecticides currently being used were originally produced for agricultural use, Pageant DF was specifically formulated for the tree and shrub care market, Shaw and Peterson say.

Chlorpyrifos, the active ingredient, offers broad-spectrum control, proven efficacy, longer residual, vapor action and a well-established track record that includes extensive

human exposure studies, they report.

"This product also addresses the delivery system needs of the market via its water-dispersible granule technology coupled with convenient disposable packaging," says Peterson.

"You end up with no residue," Shaw points out. LCI

OSHA calls for driver instruction

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A proposal from the Occupational Health and Safety Administration would require LCOs to devise a documented driver training program, and workers would have to wear seat belts.

At presstime the rules had not yet been published, but release of the details was pending.

The proposed standards would apply to any industry in which workers drive motor vehicles. The rules would not apply to vehicles operated from the stand-up position or off-road vehicles containing not between roll bar systems.

Under the proposal, employers would have to implement a safety program to familiarize workers with safe operation of their particular vehicle.

At the minimum, the program would have to cover the use of seat belts, and employers would be required to conduct an annual drivers' training refresher course.

"They're mandating employers to have a documented safety program," said Paul Skorupa, assistant director of the Pesticide Public Policy Foundation.

OSHA is also considering mandatory vehicle maintenance plans or safety inspections to insure that work vehicles are in safe condition. LCI

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Calif. Weed Conf. in San Jose

SAN JOSE, CALIF.—The California Weed Conference will be Jan. 15-17 at the San Jose Red Lion Inn.

The conference theme is "Weed Science in the '90s—An Environmentally Sound Approach."

To register contact Wanda Graves at (415) 790-1252. LCI

LCOs want to charge for a lawn analysis

LCOs should be charging a consulting fee for a lawn analysis. That's the consensus of readers who have responded to November's *Upfront* column.

As you may recall, this space aired the views of L.V.—who is fed up with spending the time and money to visit a potential customer, only to find that the prospect was interested only in free lawn care advice.

To eliminate "wild goose chases" L.V. charges \$5 for a lawn analysis, and she was hoping other LCOs would feel likewise. She didn't want her name used because she wasn't sure what the response would be.

When told of the results, L.V. breathed a sigh of relief and commented: "Well, maybe we'll all come out of the closet" and set an industry-wide trend of collecting those fees.

So, readers: Meet Louise Voss, owner of Organic Way Lawn Spray Service in Davis, Ill.

Not only are you on her side, but a number of you feel she's not charging enough.

"Should LCO's charge for a lawn analysis? Damn right we should," says Jerome P. Faulring, president of Hydro-Lawn in Gaithersburg, Md. "L.V.'s points are well taken and I agree."

Jerry reports that two years ago his company explored the idea on a small scale as a test. To avoid paying for new brochures, "paid consultations analyses" were solicited over the phone. Cost was \$25, to be deducted from the bill if the account purchased anything.

"It worked to the extent that several for-fee consultations were made," says Jerry. "Most of those who agreed also bought services from us."

He is going to again pursue the idea and expand the test, although Jerry's not quite ready to print a million brochures promoting it.

"I'm so pleased that you wrote the piece because it serves as a reminder that we should re-visit the matter."

Like Louise, other readers were reluctant to be identified as favoring such an idea.

An anonymous card postmarked Youngstown, Ohio arrived, and the writer says the concept is a great one, but... "the only problem: Who is going to be first on the block?"

This reader observes that such a fee would save five different LCOs from going to the same "how much" prospect whose only concern was price.

"I've been doing it for 20 years," says an LCO in the San Francisco Bay area who

charges a \$30 fee.

He requests that he not be identified, because a few years ago he stood up at a turf conference to promote the idea, "and everyone looked at me like I was crazy."

He adds, "Time is money today. 'We're genuinely offering a service to our clients who are picking our brains. Even the TV repair man charges you before you open the door.'"

He says that one out of eight contacts refuses to pay



JAMES E. GUYETTE

EDITOR

the fee. Of those who pay, six out of ten will become an account.

At the Trees, Shrubs and Landscapes Co. in Tulsa, Okla., "They all buy" after clients invest a \$35 consulting fee, which includes a

soil test, says owner Ralph Hallin.

(It should be noted here that for this discussion a lawn analysis involves spotting problems without conducting tests.)

Ralph thinks "you're missing a bonanza here" if LCOs don't use their expertise to spot areas that require service.

Gerry Rubenstein of Lawn-A-Mat of Syracuse, Inc. has a Yellow Pages ad that says "a small service charge" (it's \$25) will be as-

sessed if the prospect desires a personal visit. This discourages people hunting for free lawn care advice.

"I can't think of any professional, anywhere, that not only offers free service and advice, but who comes to your home and at your convenience to boot!" says Gerry.

"As long as our industry continues to do that, the only people who will consider our industry as an industry of professionals will be ourselves."

James E. Guyette

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Exclusive interview

PLCAA pres.: LCOs need to become more involved

By JAMES E. GUYETTE
Editor

The new president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America would like to see more LCOs taking part in the organization's activities.

"My goal is to get a much broader base of members involved," says Richard D. Steinau.

Toward that end, Steinau and other PLCAA officials are

working to set up a series of smaller committees that will invite more participation and provide more services to the members.

"Traditionally, the committees have been extremely broad-based," explains Steinau, who was recently elected to a one-year term as PLCAA president.

Citing the Education Committee as an example, Steinau points out that currently "a lot



Steinau: Action planned for '90.

of things fall under education—I'd like to break that up and get much more specific."

He'd like to see a setup similar to the National Pest Control Association newsletter, in which members get ongoing tips on the latest technology and techniques.

Such mailings include the latest university research, plus involvement by the member companies.

"It goes out three-hole punched for the members.

They keep an ongoing, updated, binder on these topics." Steinau adds that some PLCAA topics could include control of specific weeds or control of specific insects.

Another plus to such a program would be the added participation of PLCAA members on the committees as they prepare the handouts. "With those committees comes more involvement."

Steinau notes that "it's a slow process" for each member as he or she becomes more involved. They are able to get used to the situation at a more gradual pace.

"We want to get them immersed a little bit," he says: "Here, stick your toe in the water. How does it feel? Now try your foot. Now try your leg; now you're swimming."

It will also help the PLCAA leadership spot the members who may be inclined to assume leadership positions in the future. "It gives us (on the board) a much broader view of who's out there—who's doing the work."

Providing for PLCAA's future is important to Steinau. "I'm only a third-year board member, and here I am as president. This has been a very difficult transitional period for me. We'd like to avoid that. We'd like people to be able to go through years of training—to move up to this position."

A combined trade show set to debut this year could offer PLCAA members a number of benefits, Steinau believes. (PLCAA, the Associated Landscape Contractors of America and the Professional Grounds Management Society are uniting to hold the Green Industry Expo in Nashville, Tenn.)

Some PLCAA members express objections to the event, but Steinau calls their reluctance "nonsense, it's foot-dragging." He refers to it as "an anti-progressive movement. I think we should be extremely progressive."

Steinau adds that "this Green Industry Expo is simply a new idea. If we don't like the idea we can step back. If we never take that step, how are we going to know? I see it as being very beneficial. It's a sharing of ideas, how could that possibly hurt?"

Forming branches of PLCAA among the states is another objective. "We see the creation of the state chapters as absolutely essential," he says. "We've done a lot of work there."

He cites the contributions of Robert E. Andrews and Tim Doppel as an example. (Both

See **STEINAU** Page 32

Ryan brings quality aeration from golf greens to green lawns.



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Barefoot planning 9-city expansion with new cash

By BRIAN R. BALL

WORTHINGTON, OHIO—Barefoot Grass Lawn Service, Inc. plans to expand into at least nine new markets this spring, and a cash infusion from a Chicago investment firm could lead to more acquisitions for the burgeoning business.

Barefoot President Patrick J. Norton said six additional franchises and three company-owned operations will open this year. The company had been operating in 47 markets. Barefoot owns 25 of the outlets.

The 1989 sale of majority control of Barefoot to a Chicago investment group means the company could soon expand its presence in markets where it already competes.

"We're in the market to make acquisitions," Norton said, noting that potential targets have been approached already, but no takers have signed on yet.

The last acquisition for Barefoot, Tempo 21, Inc., occurred three years ago.

Barefoot ranks third in industry revenues behind Chem-Lawn Services Corp. and Tru Green Corp.

Barefoot had 1988 revenues of \$39.7 million, with 1989 projections of \$47.7 million. Company-owned markets account for 75 percent of its revenues.

Norton would not say where the company planned to expand, but he said most of the nine locations were outside of the Midwest. The company usually owns operations in the larger cities, and franchises the smaller communities.

Four new markets opened in 1989, with two company operations and two franchises.

"It's not by any stretch of the imagination an easy business," Norton said, noting that each large market can have up to five major players plus smaller, independent outfits.

Barefoot's revenues have increased steadily during the last 10 years as it expanded out of Central Ohio into the Midwest.

In 1979, four years after O.M. Scott & Sons spun off its Barefoot Grass operations, the company had revenues of about \$2 million. The company has continued to expand.

"We expect revenues to grow in 1990," Norton said. "With nine new expansion cities, it's almost guaranteed."

Norton said Barefoot plans to "stick with the basics"—dry fertilizers and insecticides and liquid weed control—rather than rushing into any add-on services.

Barefoot offers tree and shrub care in its larger markets, but Norton said that accounts for only 5 to 10 percent of the revenues in those markets.

Norton is counting more on the financial backing of Golder, Thoma & Cressey, a private Chicago investment firm, as a catalyst for growth in the early 1990s.

The firm acquired a majority share of Barefoot after approaching the company in late 1988.

"Their intent is to make the

business grow in order to make their money," Norton said. "It gives us the financial firepower to compete with the large corporations in the industry."

"As a firm, we bet on a good industry and excellent management," said firm associate Reeve Waud. "We think Barefoot's a terrific company with excellent management in a good industry. It has a lot of potential."

The purchase price and amount of investment was not disclosed, but Norton said the firm could possibly become

public in future years.

Ed Wandtke, senior partner with All Green Management Associates, said he does not think Barefoot is growing too fast.

"Barefoot is doing their growth very slowly and carefully. They're not risking anything," Wandtke said, adding that the strategy is a reflection of Norton's business philosophy.

"Pat has always been a careful, conservative businessman, so he doesn't let them run too quickly." LCI



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About the Author

Brian R. Ball is a reporter with *Business First* in Columbus, Ohio.

SPECIAL REPORT

Industry action taking bite out of state regulations

By MEGAN HARDING
Contributing Editor

Green industry involvement in drafting new pesticide regulations softened the impact of legislation in several states last year.

Lawn care groups continue to work with state legislators in Michigan, North Carolina, Oregon and Pennsylvania, where bills mandating posting and prenotification have been introduced.

New or revised rules go into effect this year in Florida, Illi-

nois, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Florida

"We were screaming bloody murder" about a Florida bill requiring 24-hour advance notification for chemically-sensitive people, said Nick Dennis, owner of Pro Lawn Plus of Jacksonville.

LCOs feared the proposed statewide registry system would unleash an avalanche of frivolous demands for prenotification.

That was before industry

groups added a provision that people listed on the registry must provide medical proof of their allergies to lawn care products.

Individuals must pay a fee and undergo laboratory tests to show they are chemically sensitive.

A companion bill, which also took effect in Florida Jan. 1, mandates posting of a 6-by-6-inch sign and requires pesticide applicators to provide information to customers who request it.

North Carolina

In North Carolina, a posting and prenotification bill was tabled indefinitely after pest management groups raised questions about the cost of enforcement, said William Tesh of the National Pest Control Association.

"You can't be negative all the time," said Tesh. "Some groups come down and just fight bills."

He said lobbyists can gain respect by proposing legislation and highlighting the benefits to consumers.

For example, North Carolina groups distributed a folder stating such facts as what a loaf of bread would cost if pesticide use were eliminated.

Pennsylvania

In Pennsylvania, two bills have been introduced that lawn care groups say are extremely onerous.

The more moderate bill would require written contracts, 48 hour preposting of an 18-by-24-inch sign, and a



central registry for chemically sensitive people.

Those registered could prevent applications from being made anywhere within a half-mile radius of their homes.

However, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is establishing rules in response to a 1987 statute and is likely to block any new legislation at this time, said Robert L. Roberts, environmental counsel for ChemLawn Services Corp.

Posting and contracts are not required under current Pennsylvania law, but LCOs must provide product safety information in advance to customers and neighbors who request it.

Wisconsin

Similar prenotification rules were adopted in November by the Wisconsin Depart-

ment of Agriculture Consumer Trade and Protection. They should be in effect by spring.

"There were a number of people who wanted very strong prenotification requirements," said Russ Weisensel, director of the Wisconsin Turf Coalition. He served on the state's advisory committee.

Weisensel said the state heeded industry recommendations to require prenotification only for customers (not neighbors) who make a written request.

The Wisconsin rules also mandate containment and recovery systems for sites that handle more than 1,500 pounds of concentrated pesticide per year.

Ohio

Ohio's right-to-know rules, which took effect Jan. 1, apply only to applications made within city limits or subdivided areas of a township.

They require posting and prenotification—"reasonable attempts" should be made to do it a day in advance—for customers who request it.

The Ohio Pesticide Applicators for Responsible Regulation played a major role in lobbying for an acceptable compromise.

OPARR had worked with legislators behind the scenes for several years, and negotiations were conducted with anti-pesticide activists.

Oregon

A successful "grass roots" effort stalled a posting bill in Oregon, said Paulette Pyle of Oregonians for Food and Shelter.

Busloads of LCOs attended hearings on the bill, which was shelved until the next legislative session—in 1991.

The Professional Lawn Care Association of America is trying to circumvent a posting bill in Michigan by including provisions for posting under a 1988 revision of the state's pesticide control act.

"The legislation will be See STATES Page 13

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SHOP TALK

Thermoplastic hoses may offer advantage to LCOs

By KEVIN HANNIGAN

Thermoplastic hose offers lawn and tree care specialists several solutions to spray problems that have troubled the industry for years.

Thermoplastic hoses used in lawn and tree spraying situations are smaller I.D. (interior diameter) hoses rated for high pressure applications.

They have special reinforcement construction features that provide for safety and durability under pressure.

Weather resistance. Thermoplastic compounds offer excellent resistance to weathering, ozone and sunlight. This is an important benefit for hoses used in tough, outdoor environmental conditions.

Abrasion resistance. The cover of thermoplastic hose has low drag resistance and slides easily over rough surfaces such as rocks, fences, foundation corners, tree trunks, etc. The thermoplastic tube is smooth, thereby reducing friction and increasing the flow rate.

Locked braid angle. This special construction feature applies the polyester cord hose reinforcement at a spe-

cial locked angle. This increases the hose strength and enhances hose length stability—an especially important feature when 300 to 400 feet of hose is in use during typical spraying situations.

Length stability. Length stability means less movement of the hose as the spray solution is pulsed through it.

Kink resistance. The special locked braid angle also promotes kink resistance. Good link resistance means easier handling, and that makes life easier on the user.

Light weight. Thermoplastic hose weighs 15 to 50 percent less than the equivalent rubber hose.

Lighter weight makes handling easier, reduces user fatigue and increases productivity. For example, a commonly used 1/2-inch I.D. 400-foot length of spray hose weighs 76 pounds, as opposed to 60 pounds for a performance-equal thermoplastic hose of the same diameter.

Colorful covers. Standard thermoplastic lawn spray

See **HOSE** Page 23



Easy drag: A lawn care hose should be able to slide past obstacles while retaining proper flow rates.

STATES

from Page 12

moot if posting is required in the 1988 rules," said Tim Doppel, managing director of the Lawn Sprayers Association of Michigan.

Colorado

In October, a federal judge upheld a decision allowing the city of Boulder, Colo. to require prenotification and posting.

The Colorado Pesticide Applicators for Responsible Reg-

ulation appealed the ruling on November 1.

"The thing that really threw up a red flag," said COPARR member Steven J. Day, was Boulder's insistence that LCOs post a one-foot sign one to seven days prior to an application.

COPARR favors statewide posting, which may be adopted next year after Colorado's pesticide act comes up for review.

Michigan

PLCAA gained a favorable

ruling against the city of Milford, Mich., which has been ordered not to enforce local pesticide regulations.

Milford has appealed the case to federal court.

Doppel thinks the Milford ruling may dampen the plans of other Michigan suburbs, notably Davison and Livonia, that have been contemplating similar ordinances.

New York

A court battle continues in New York State, where five

See **STATES** Page 25



Fighting fright: LCOs are organizing to lobby for rational laws based on science—not politics or fear.

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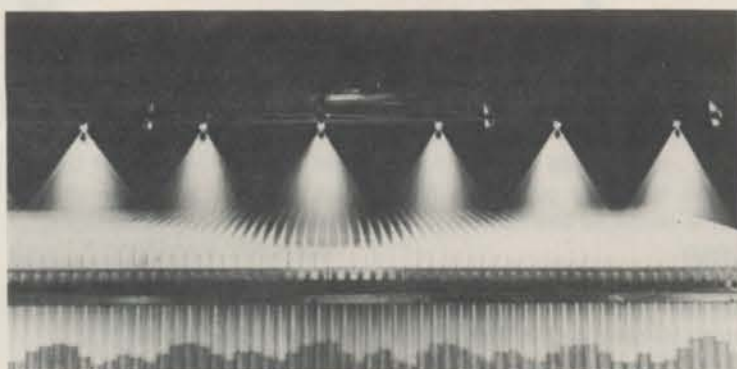
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Improved nozzles help insure accurate applications

Pesticides are most likely being applied differently now than they were five—or even two—years ago, according to Dr. Stephen Pearson, manager of technical services for the Spraying Systems Co. in Wheaton, Ill.

He notes that industry chemical experts and spray equipment engineers have gotten the word out that accuracy is the key to reducing material costs, protecting nearby ornamentals and safeguarding the environment.

"The tricky thing about sprayer accuracy," Pearson

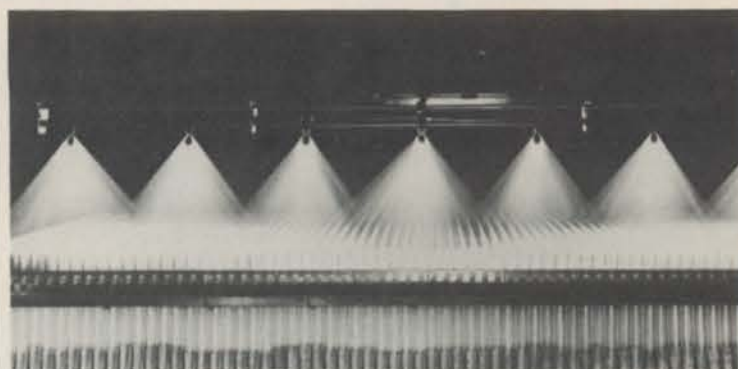


Pressure drop: Some nozzles can cause coverage gaps at 15 psi.

says, "is that as applicators have changed their application techniques they've sometimes 'outgrown' the standard

nozzle types they have used."

Pearson says that new technology such as electronic sprayer controls and marking



Newer design: Extended range nozzles form a uniform pattern.

systems have helped applicators improve their accuracy, but it's critical to remember that nozzles are still

the most important elements in spraying fine turf.

While many LCOs still use standard flat-fan nozzles, sprayer experts now recommend extended-range flat-fan nozzles as a better choice for similar application conditions, he says.

The extended-range flat-fan nozzles are designed to maintain a consistent pattern throughout a range of pressures, including the low pressures recommended when drift is a concern.

Extended range tips can also be used at higher pressures with full accuracy and good penetration into the turf, he says.

According to Pearson, all nozzles operate within two "windows" or "ranges" of performance. The first window is the pressure range with which a nozzle delivers a consistent pattern.

The second is a height range within which a nozzle will deliver uniform distribution without having to change nozzle spacing.

For standard flat-fan nozzles, the recommended pressure range is fairly narrow—30 to 60 psi. If the nozzle is operated outside that range—such as down to 20 psi—the LCO risks uneven chemical coverage, he notes.

For extended-range nozzles, such as the TeeJet made by his company, Pearson says the operating pressure can range from 15 to 60 psi without sacrificing uniform distribution.

This extended range means that applicators can adjust the pressure with the same nozzles to reduce drift.

"I've always advised applicators to use the lowest pressure they can, without losing the spray pattern," says Dr. Loren Bode, an extension engineer at the University of Illinois.

He recommends 15 to 30 psi for larger droplets less prone to drift.

In order to use the lower pressure, Bode recommends extended-range flat-fan nozzles as the best choice. "With extended-range nozzles you can lower the pressure and still get a full pattern without having to adjust the boom or change nozzle spacings," he says.

Dr. Bobby Grisso, extension engineer at the Univer-

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This excellent Kentucky bluegrass was discovered by Dr. C. Reed Funk of Rutgers University. It was found persisting in Huntsville, Alabama and has clearly demonstrated why it survived so well. It also scored high ratings in tests under high heat and humidity in the transition zone.

Medium green in color, Huntsville blends beautifully with Arid and the newer turf-type tall fescues because of its similar color and leaf texture.

Huntsville starts with a vigorous seedling and ultimately develops deep rhizomes giving the grass staying power under drought conditions. This strength was strongly evident during testing in the Nebraska and Great Plains areas where researchers sought cultivars less susceptible to drought and low maintenance conditions.

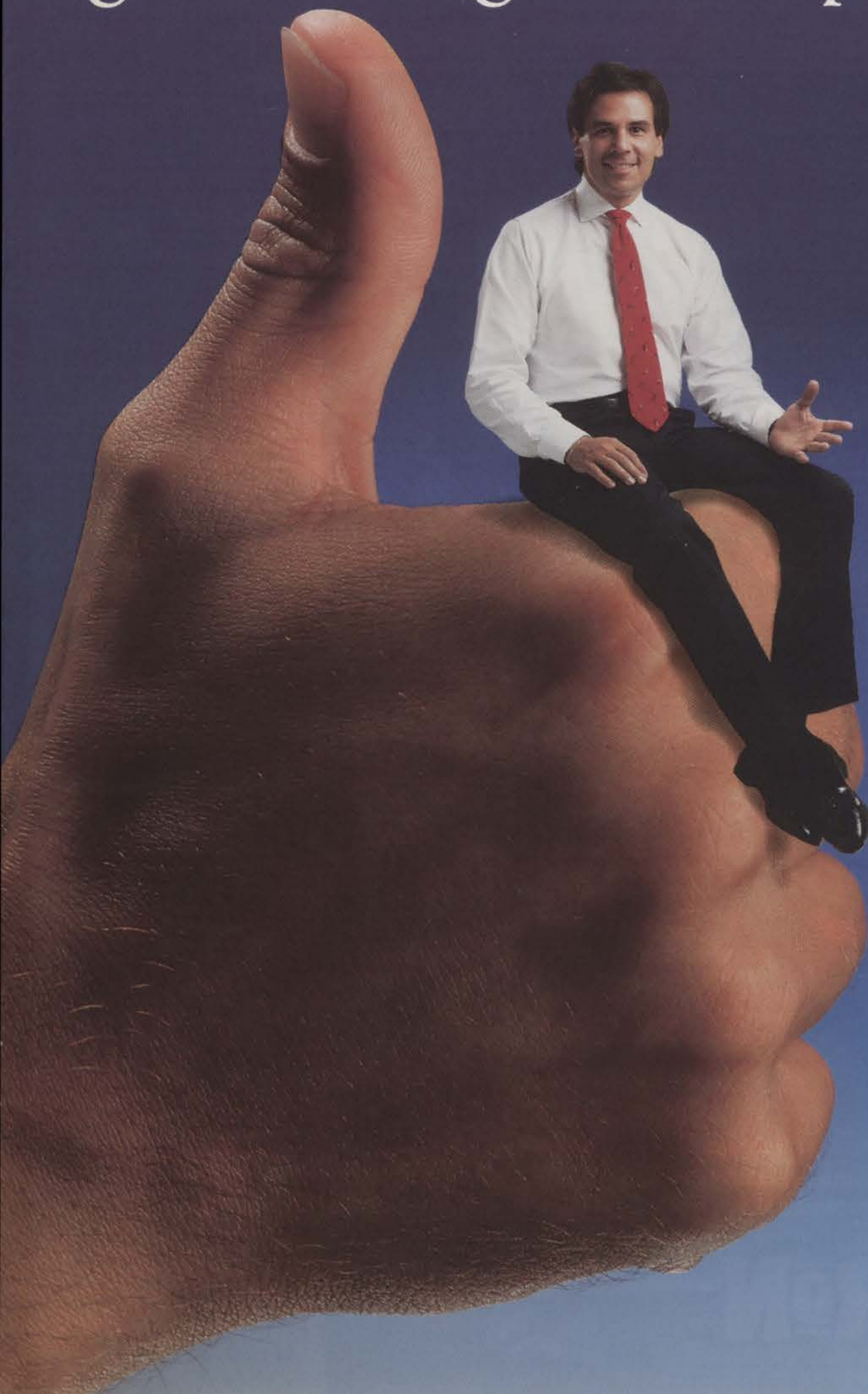
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Rick Steinau, president
Greenlon Lawn Care Services
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"We are definitely saving money by using a premium herbicide," continues Rick. "We know that a treatment with TURFLON costs about 50¢ more per lawn than a standard three-way herbicide, but we actually realize a 30% savings in our herbicide program."

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sity of Nebraska, recommends that LCOs use extended-range nozzles when relying on automatic rate controllers.

For example, suppose that an LCO is spraying with an automatic rate controller and the sprayer is calibrated to deliver 1 gallon per 1,000 square feet at 4 mph with 40 psi.

If one variable—like speed—begins to change, the automatic rate controller tells the rest of the system to compensate in order to deliver a consistent rate.

"The relationship between speed, pressure and application rate is not what you might expect," explains Grisso. "In order to keep a constant rate

without changing speed, pressure must change a lot more than the speed changes."

If the speed drops to 3 mph when the sprayer heads up a rise in the ground, pressure will drop to 22.5 psi to maintain the rate.

At this pressure, he says, standard flat-fan nozzles are being forced to operate 7.5 pounds below their recommended pressure level—outside the window of accuracy.

This causes patterns to narrow and it produces gaps in chemical coverage.

Because extended-range nozzles are designed with a larger recommended pressure window, an automatic con-

troller can easily compensate for slight variations in speed without letting the pattern drop out of its window of reliability, he says.

Even small changes in the sprayer setup, like bounces in the boom, can throw the pattern off.

For example, when trying to minimize drift most applicators will keep the booms as low as possible to cut the time spray material is in the air. If spraying uneven turf areas, the boom can bounce four or five inches closer to the target, causing gaps in the chemical coverage.

"Most spray patterns from standard flat-fan nozzles be-

come significantly less uniform as the boom gets closer to the target," says Pearson at Spraying Systems Co. "But the wider, more consistent pattern of the XR TeeJet is much more forgiving of boom bounces."

With low-pressure applications, automatic controls or bouncing booms, sprayer experts say that extended-range nozzles are worth looking into.

"Extended-range nozzles are the nozzles of the future," says Bode at the University of Illinois.

"I recommend the extended-range nozzle to anybody who is currently using flat-fan nozzles." LCI

Perma-Green purchases Green Scape

BOISE, IDAHO—Perma-Green Lawn Co. has bought Green Scape, Inc., another locally-based lawn and landscape maintenance firm.

The acquisition is not expected to affect the way either firm conducts business.

According to Perma-Green President Mike Spicer, Green Scape will maintain its own identity for at least one year, and its employees will be retained by its new parent company.

Moreover, Spicer said former Green Scape owner Ron Hutt has been appointed Perma-Green's director of landscape services.

Hutt, who left Perma-Green after five years of service to start Green Scape, will be responsible for sales and marketing at both firms and serve as liaison between them.

He is also charged with enhancing customer service at each organization and integrating lawn mowing and landscape maintenance.

"We'd like to think of the transaction as more of a merger than an acquisition," Spicer said.

"Aside from relocating Green Scape's customer service office to our corporate facilities, we will not be making any changes to the company. Green Scape customers will continue to receive the same level of service from the same people.

"Meanwhile, Green Scape will accrue many substantial benefits," he said.

"For instance, the firm will have greater access to resources, such as Perma-Green's in-house agronomists."

Spicer said Perma-Green will also benefit from the acquisition, having recently decided to follow industry trends and add lawn mowing to its list of landscape services.

"Perma-Green has no expertise with the mowing aspect of the lawn maintenance industry," he said.

"Hutt does. He added a mowing division to Green Scape this last year which contributed 10 percent of the company's total revenues. We need his skills and experience working with us, not against us, to expand Perma-Green into a full-service landscape maintenance organization."

Perma-Green provides lawn and tree care services to 22,000 customers in Idaho, Nevada, Utah and Washington.

Founded in 1977, Perma-Green is the largest landscape maintenance firm in Idaho and ranks among the top twelve in the nation.

It projected revenues of \$4.4 million for 1989. LCI

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Its rewards.

"TURFLON did a much better job, particularly on our problem weeds like wild violets, ground ivy and spurge," Bob continues. "Since switching to TURFLON, we've reduced our weed related callbacks and service cancellations by 50% from a year ago." With performance like that, you'll be able to add some sweetness to your bottom line. Call us to find out more. 1-800-373-2DOW (2369).

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Obtain pesticide safety training for less than \$500



King: Invite free advisors.

By MEGAN HARDING
Contributing Editor

Lawn care companies that don't have a big budget for safety programs need not despair.

There are enough free and low-cost training programs and videos available for most small companies to begin a safety program for under \$500.

"The best way to get free training is to get involved with your local association," says Tim Doppel, managing director of the Lawn Sprayers As-

sociation of Michigan.

Most groups hold an annual meeting where safety training is offered inexpensively.

In Michigan, "All they ask is that you be a member," Doppel says. "It's really a nominal investment."

Resources will vary from state to state, but the department of agriculture is usually a gold mine of information. Many offer winter courses for recertification credit.

Any agency that regulates LCOs is likely to be active in providing some kind of train-

ing assistance.

Many states publish pesticide recommendations based on what types are safe and effective in that area. This type of information is generally available through county extension offices.

A safety manual published by the Professional Lawn Care Association of America is a compendium of safety tips based on current regulations. The manual is free to members; it costs \$20 for non-members.

PLCAA dues vary by the

size of the company. New memberships start at \$200 per year. The association, headquartered in Marietta, Ga., can be reached at (800) 458-3466.

Michael L. King of Reno Green Landscaping, Inc., had experts from the State Industrial Insurance System (SIIS) do an in-house evaluation of his Nevada firm.

Four years ago, King says, seven of his employees lost time at work due to careless accidents. The fact sunk in when he received a notice from SIIS. "Our insurance rating started going up," King recalls.

He contacted SIIS, which provides workers' compensation for accidents, and they came in to provide tips, films and other advice.

A year later, the Lawn Magic Division had cut its accident rate by 43 percent and its insurance dropped by \$3,000, King says.

King also has his auto insurance company come in once a year for a driver safety refresher.

Video and audio tapes are a popular, inexpensive way to improve the use of safety techniques while on the job.

Many LCOs swear by the effectiveness of video tapes, and say that a visual medium gets the point across much better than written material.

PLCAA distributes a video produced by DowElanco that targets the lawn care operator. The tape is \$70; \$50 for members.

It discusses the toxicology of various products—including 2,4-D—which are used by the lawn care industry.

Another project is in the works: A videotape on handling spills, with emphasis on avoiding the wrath of local authorities and the media.

PLCAA offers an audio tape series on spill readiness. It comes with a workbook and costs \$70; \$50 for members.

PLCAA sells an audio tape/slide series (\$200) to help LCOs comply with The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's right-to-know program.

The larger suppliers will often send a representative out to discuss the safe use of their products. When arranging such seminars, make sure the company understands that the talk is not to be a sales pitch.

Dr. Barry Troutman, PLCAA director of education, says companies typically invest \$40 million to develop a new pesticide, and much of the research goes on the label.

"There is more safety information on that label than you can use in a lifetime. And they give it to you free when you buy the product," he says. "Read the label." LCI



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When Lawn Doctor franchises move up to TURFLON, broadleaf weeds take a fall.



"TURFLON is more effective on the broadleaves that the competition is missing."—

Russ Frith, president
Lawn Doctor,
Matawan, NJ

If "easy" weeds were the only ones cropping up in customers' lawns, 2,4-D would handle the job. But that's not the case. You need a tough product to keep tough weeds down. Maybe that's why you should move up to TURFLON* herbicide.

The real problem with lawn care.

"Weed control is the most important problem," explains Russ Frith. And as president of one of the nation's most successful lawn care franchisers, he ought to know. In explaining how TURFLON has worked for Lawn Doctor, Russ says, "It does a better job on the tough to control weeds."

Prove it for yourself.

How do franchisers who use it justify broadcast spraying TURFLON at about \$9.50 per acre? "Reduced callbacks," Russ says. He adds that independent Lawn Doctor operators select their own products. Most are skeptical of TURFLON until they prove for themselves that it does a better job of controlling tough weeds. "Many who use it full service started with spot (spraying)."

Finally, Russ says one word describes the experience Lawn Doctor franchises have had using TURFLON: "Excellent."

Isn't it time you moved up to a better herbicide for better weed control? Call us to find out more. 1-800-373-4DOW (4369).

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Circle No. 107 on Reader Inquiry Card

BUSINESS SENSE

Does direct mail still apply to lawn care?

By Ed Wandtke

In the beginning, there was direct mail. Companies, most notably ChemLawn, sent out mailers to people who lived in neighborhoods that seemed to be the best in terms of potential response. And the response was tremendous.

In the beginning, there were lists of people who were waiting for lawn care. Some didn't even get to have it in the first year—and were put on a waiting list!

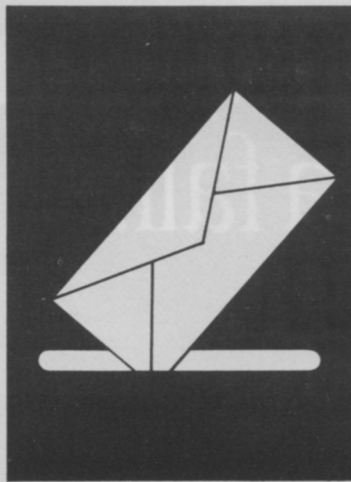
In the beginning, it was bet-

ter known as "the good old days." The "good old days" are gone. In their place are "the good new days."

But the only companies for which the new days are good are those that understand how to reach the potential customer and how to keep that customer.

A part of that attraction campaign is still direct mail. But certainly not like it was used in the "good old days."

For many companies, the direct mail campaigns have been supplanted by teleselling.



Instead of a mail approach, the customer is called by phone.

The numbers in terms of attraction certainly look good for teleselling techniques. There are beginning to be problems, however.

First, people are getting tired of being called for solicitation. I talked to one consumer who had seven calls in one night.

It seems that if you're in a good neighborhood, teleselling companies will get your name for all sorts of products and services.

In some communities, efforts are underway to prohibit teleselling, and some type of legislation may happen within the next few years.

A second problem is that the retention rate for teleselling is very low.

People who buy by phone, particularly if you approach them rather than the reverse, are not likely to stay as long term customers.

Cancellation rates are very high among telesold customers, higher than any other form of advertising or selling.

Direct mail, mailed out once, is a pretty useless effort. There are too many other brochures competing with you for a single mailing to make much impression on a consumer.

At the same time, direct mail retains some ability to attract customers if you go about using it correctly. Here are some ideas for its use in the "new good days."

1. Understand your segment of the market. There isn't much sense in sending a direct mail piece to someone who isn't likely to buy.

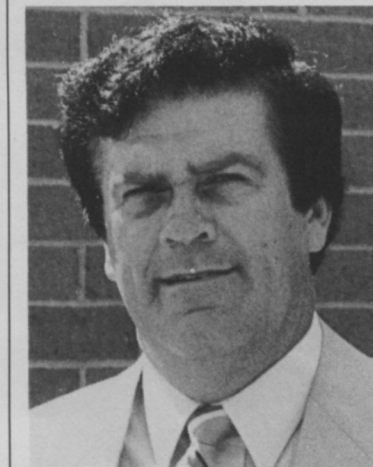
Before you send anything out from your organization you need to be certain that there is a good chance that the people you reach are both able and interested in buying what you are selling.

You should look at your current customer profile in order to get a strong idea of whom you're likely to attract in the future. Go after them—don't use the shotgun approach.

2. Stop using technical information in the brochure. Many companies seem to be convinced that the consumer is interested in how grass grows or in the agronomic program that is proposed by a given company. Most of them aren't.

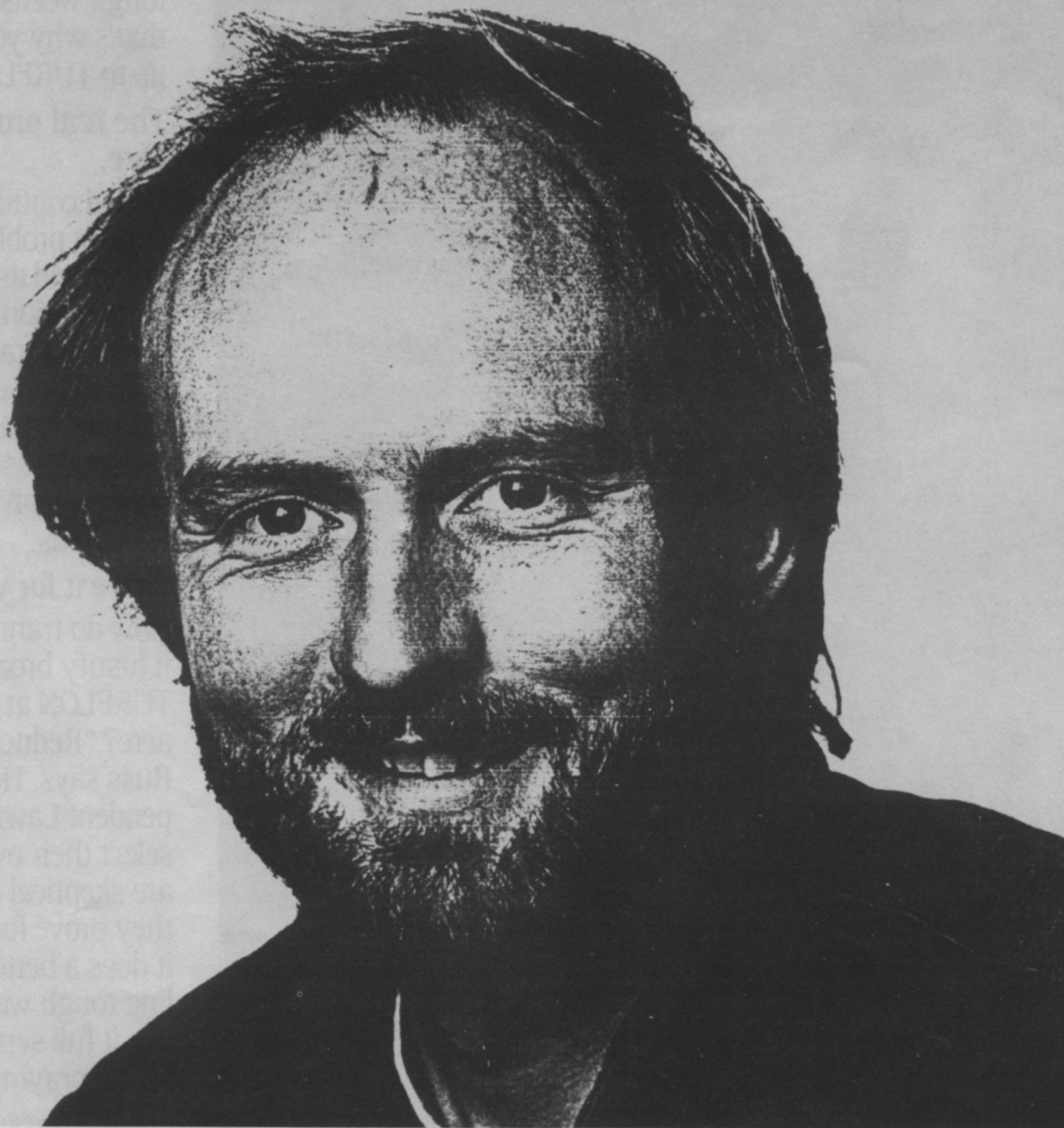
We've tested this for years and the consumer hasn't changed much. The reason for so much technical information is that is the most comfortable topic for most lawn care companies.

Since the consumer isn't
See MAIL Page 24



About the Author

Ed Wandtke is a senior partner with All Green Management Associates in Columbus, Ohio.



"Last August, we applied ROOTS* to our newly seeded and distressed lawns. A lot of fungus damage had occurred due to heat and heavy rains. Two or three weeks after the application, the treated lawns showed tremendous improvement in turf density and color. The core samples we took showed twice the root mass as the untreated lawns. There was a definite acceleration in establishment and recovery time. This year we plan to use ROOTS throughout our operation."

roots inc.

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— Marc Blais
The Green Machine
Bloomfield, Connecticut

Graham
Wilson

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won't be coming back
to haunt you.**



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Nothing's more terrifying than to hear a customer say, "They're back." Dreaded broadleaves. Costly callbacks. You want to scream.

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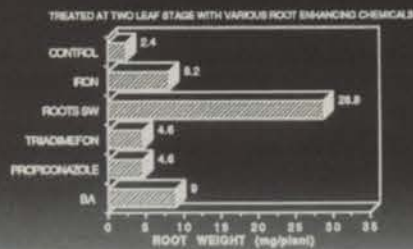
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Research: Biostimulants aiding lawn care programs

VPI TURFGRASS FIELD RESEARCH

SEEDLING GROWTH RESPONSE OF KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS



Using biostimulant compounds in integrated lawn and plant management programs offers significant opportunities for LCOs, according to university research and commercial trials.

"These products look like they will have an ever-increasing place in lawn care markets—not doing the same job as fertilizers, but rather providing a tool for optimizing plant chemical processes that will make them more efficient," explains Dr. Eliot C. Roberts, director of The Turf

Institute in Pleasant Hill, Tenn.

Improved root growth, better stress resistance and reduction in nitrogen levels can all be possible benefits from the use of some biostimulant compounds under some conditions.

For LCOs, Roberts says that biostimulant products should open up new marketing opportunities.

"As is often the case, customers will have a favorable impression of biostimulants because of their 'natural' prop-

erties, although those of us who work with chemical materials know that this is perhaps a false impression," Roberts explains.

"But regardless of whether this impression is false or not, it does create a viable marketing opportunity."

Roberts cautions LCOs that customers may expect biostimulants to be fast-acting, much like nitrogen fertilizer or iron.

"Generally, biostimulants do not bring about a quick response," he notes. "Instead, they take time to improve plant processes and produce healthier, stronger and more disease-resistant plants."

He adds that biostimulants seem to work best when a lawn is under some type of stress, whether it be from temperature extremes, too little or too much water, or too much traffic on the turf.

"In these cases, plants aren't healthy enough to naturally manufacture sufficient biostimulant to function normally," Roberts explains.

"Any time a plant lacks in vigor and health—this is when biostimulants will provide a pronounced response."

Another situation where biostimulants can have a desirable effect is when turf is pushed to a rapid rate of growth by nitrogen applications.

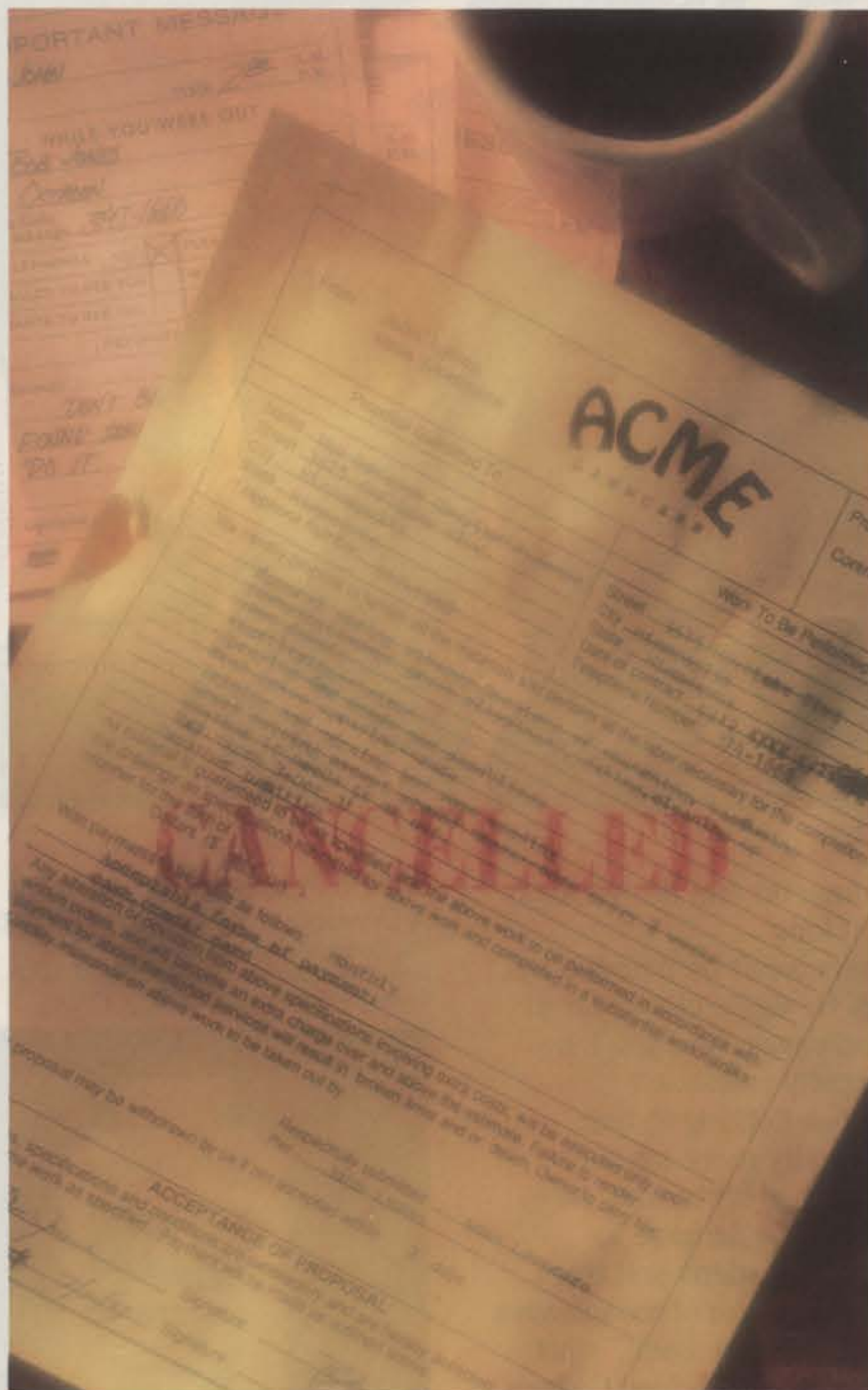
"This is particularly true with turfgrasses. They can be pushed to the point where they are growing faster than the normal synthesis of biostimulant can keep up," Roberts adds.

Roots, Inc., a division of Soilizer Corp. in New Haven, Conn., sells a biostimulant called Roots Root Growth Enhancer. It's a mixture of humic acids, warm and cold water seaweed extracts, chelating agents, metabolizing agents, co-enzymes and micro-nutrients like iron, zinc, manganese and boron. (The company also is developing an iron material due out in the spring.)

"Roots is also compatible with liquid fertilizers and

See **BIO** Page 23

IF YOUR LAWNMOWER BREAKS DOWN, YOU MAY NEVER REPAIR THE DAMAGE.



In the lawn business a broken engine can cost a lot more than the price of repairs.

So Toro has made their mid-size walk power mowers even more reliable with new, high quality Kohler engines. They are available in 14 or 16 horsepower, and have a variety of commercial features. These include electronic ignition and full pressure lubrication for longer life. And Kohler engines come with a two year commercial use warranty.

In addition, Toro mid-size walk power mowers come with double width traction belts and cast iron spindles for greater durability. Available deck sizes are 36, 44 and 52 inches.

With so many advantages, it's not surprising that our mid-size walk power mowers have become the preferred choice of commercial cutters. Stop in to your Toro ProLine dealer and see for yourself how much they've improved. You'll be impressed, you can depend on that.



ProLine
The Professionals
that keep you cutting.



Iowa turf conf. set for Jan.

AMES, IOWA—The 56th Iowa Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show will be held at the Des Moines Convention Center Jan. 29-31.

For more information contact the Iowa Turfgrass Institute at Iowa State University in Ames. **LCI**

HOSE

from Page 13

hoses are available in various bright colors ideal for color-coding hoses for various pressure ratings.

The hose covers are chemical resistant and have excellent durability for outdoor use. These hoses can be produced in almost any color on special orders.

Thinwall construction. Typical spray hoses have a smaller outside diameter, allowing for easier plumbing in tight-fit areas and full flow

when the hose is coiled on a reel or bent in a tight radius. This helps prevent collapse and kinking.

Non-wire reinforcement. Thermoplastic spray hoses have a polyester braid reinforcement, which is corrosion resistant and durable.

Excellent chemical resistance. Thermoplastic hoses will handle most pesticides and herbicides in water base solutions in concentrations up to 10 percent.

With these advantages in mind, why have lawn and tree care operations been reluctant to use thermoplastic hose?

In order to understand this, it is necessary to look at some

potential negatives of thermoplastic hoses:

- Depending on the type of hose and thermoplastic compound used, the hose may be stiffer than equivalent rubber hoses.

- Again, depending on the compounds used, high and low temperature applications may be somewhat limited.

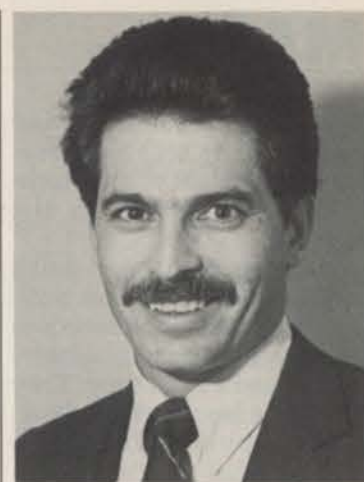
Some thermoplastic hoses may tend to be brittle at cold temperatures and some compounds can become too soft to be serviceable at hot temperatures. Other thermoplastic compounds have a broad temperature range capability which is close to rubber.

The effective temperature range is from 15 degrees below zero to 150 degrees.

- Some may feel coupling techniques are inconvenient.

Thermoplastic spray hose is quite easy to couple when correct procedures are followed. The hose does not give and stretch like rubber; in fact, it is almost impossible to force a slightly oversize coupling into a plastic hose.

Hose manufacturers generally recommend the same types of industrial couplings used with rubber hoses. General purpose spray hoses use couplings similar to rubber hoses, such as inserts, clamps, bands or crimp-ons. LCI



About the Author

Kevin Hannigan is a hose specialist at the Gates Rubber Co., Denver, Colo.

BIO

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pesticides, which should be a good selling point with LCOs," Roberts adds.

Dr. R.E. Schmidt, professor of agronomy and a turf ecology and physiology specialist at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, is currently researching several types of biostimulant compounds.

He is concentrating mainly on bluegrass, bentgrass and, to a lesser degree, tall fescue—and most of his work involves sod production.

"We know that we can stimulate growth—especially of roots—with some of these biostimulant compounds," Schmidt says. "We are also getting better tillering and initiating of buds."

Schmidt believes that more widespread use of biostimulants could help solve problems with groundwater contamination, particularly with nitrates.

"We're talking about biostimulant application rates measured in grams as opposed to hundreds of pounds of fertilizer," he says.

"Of course, you'd never substitute a biostimulant for an essential plant nutrient like nitrogen—but you could use the two together and cut nitrogen rates because nitrogen efficiency would be greatly increased."

Most of Schmidt's research thus far with biostimulants has involved seedling or juvenile grasses. "We're getting our best results here, and it's easier to measure results," he says.

"We are also finding that application timing depends tremendously on environmental conditions. For instance, under ideal growing conditions, we can get a measurable growth response following biostimulant application in only a week," the researcher continues.

"Under more stressful conditions, a growth response may not be evident for four to six weeks. We have also had good growth response with biostimulant applications made in the middle of the growing season." LCI

Your most valuable assets aren't always liquid.

For many weed control problems, the answer is not a solution. It's granular Team™ preemergence herbicide.

Team puts your weed control where it does the most good—the weed germination zone. There, it turns into a vapor and delivers a zone of protection that's very solid. So solid, it keeps out crabgrass, goosegrass and many other problem weeds all season long.

That keeps your reputation solid, too. With Team, your golf or lawn care customers will see fewer weeds—and more beautiful turfgrass.

But it's not just Team's tough weed control that keeps customers happy. Many of them also prefer its gentle activity to turfgrass. Plus its easy, precise application. Team granules stay where you put them and won't leach out, even in heavy rainfall. And you can either apply Team by itself or on fertilizer available from leading formulators.

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Refer to the Team label for complete directions.

MAIL

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likely to be attracted to your company for technical reasons, why would you put technical information in the mailer?

3. Stop using too much copy. There are some well-known advertising executives who suggest that consumers like to read a lot of copy. They don't in a lawn care brochure.

The copy should be simple. Explain what the consumer is buying, and be clear to the consumer.

Long-winded explanations don't help the consumer—the consumer is either bored or

confused by long copy in lawn care brochures. Both of these are bad for attraction.

4. Stop showing trucks. Studies of advertising pieces show that most consumers look at and search out people in the advertising.

Why do we in this industry continue to show trucks? It's a mystery to me. It worked at the beginning, in "the good old days," but it doesn't work now. Stop it.

5. Make an offer to the consumer. If you want to have some chance of a consumer reacting to a direct mail piece, you have to make some offer.

Otherwise you are sending an informational rather than a

selling piece.

This can be interesting to do, but it certainly is costly. There must be some reason for the consumer to react to the mailer. Without that, the mailer is thrown away immediately.

6. Send it more than once. It is a mistake to think that sending out a large number of mailers means success. Sending out mailers to the right people means success.

And sending out mailers to the right people more than one time is at least a start on being successful at direct mailing. If you want, you can even send the same piece a few times.

In order to make this work

you need to target your audience as well as possible. Once you do, multiple mailings to a small set of people are better than one massive mailing to a basically non-descript set of people.

7. Make sure that your name and phone number are dominant in the mailer. I've seen mailers that have good design but they don't feature the name of the company.

In order to make an impression on the consumer, the name must be large and a method to reach the company must be prominent.

You don't have very long to reach the consumer with a mailer, so make sure you have

your name prominent enough so that the consumer will know the company and the type of offer being made.

Direct mail is still a viable and valuable means of customer attraction. But it's getting harder and harder to use since so many companies use it.

It's becoming more important to understand the consumer: The above suggestions aren't centered around the company—as many firms like to operate—they are centered around the consumer. LCI

Dennis is new ALCA director

FALLS CHURCH, VA.—Debra H. Dennis has been selected as the new executive director of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America.

Dennis, 32, is a 10-year veteran of ALCA. She started as an administrative assistant and progressed to office manager. She later moved up to become staff liaison to six major ALCA committees.

According to Ron Kujawa, ALCA president, the selection process was rigorous.

"We had quite a few applicants. She was not a shoo-in. She went through a competitive process and she emerged victorious," he said.

Dennis said she plans some "new and exciting" additions to ALCA's programs. "I think it's a great opportunity to start some new things."

Dennis wants to improve communications between ALCA, the membership, the media and the general public.

"If we strive to improve the image it can only help bring more people into the profession."

Dennis is originally from Cochran, Ga. She was graduated in 1979 with a degree from the University of Georgia, and she attended the Institute of Organizational Management at the University of Delaware.

Her husband Larry is an executive with the National Pest Control Association.

Terry Peters, ALCA's former executive director, left to take a job outside of the industry. LCI



Dennis: Boosts industry image.

Excellent Overall Performance



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Jaguar takes care of itself. It needs less feeding and thrives in hot weather and drought with limited watering. Jaguar takes traffic because it forms a dense, deeply-rooted persistent turf. Jaguar resists diseases (Rhizoctonia brown patch, in particular) and tolerates shady, low light areas. Jaguar needs less mowing. It is lower growing and more tolerant of close cutting. Jaguar has a leafier, finer texture and beautiful dark green color.

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PESTS

from Page 1

"I was so impressed with Gallery that all 92 acres of my 350 customers have all received Gallery" as part of the regular program.

Cooper estimates that he'll be able to save 280 man hours in the spring because post-emergent treatments will be unnecessary. He's considering using that extra time to treat his clients' dogwood trees.

At Lawn Doctor, there are no plans yet to use Gallery as part of the regular program. But John Buechner, director of technical services, says the company will "use it as a customer relations tool for problem lawns" because of the safety factor.

Consultant Day says turf managers in the Denver area are pleased with the product. "Everybody here is pretty excited about Gallery."

Day adds that Mobay's



Day: Biologicals improving.

STATES

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groups have appealed a decision upholding right-to-know rules developed by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation.

Beth Seme of the New York Turf Grass Association called the rules "unworkable." The case was heard Nov. 1 and a decision is expected soon.

Minnesota

The City of St. Paul, Minn., will hear recommendations Jan. 15 from a Toxic Chemical Task Force.

The city created the task force even though the state's attorney general says municipalities do not have the authority to regulate the use of pesticides and fertilizers.

"That has not stopped St. Paul in the past," says Terry Ambroz, state coordinator for Minnesota Pesticide Information and Education.

Meanwhile, LCOs in the Land of 10,000 Lakes are gearing up for compliance with Minnesota's comprehensive new Ground Water Protection Act.

Ambroz says the new act is tough, reflecting the progressive politics of the state, but he calls it a major victory for industry groups because it will be enforced by the agriculture department and not the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, as originally proposed.

LCI

"Tempo is one that people are using with apparent success."

Mocap is also a material that LCOs in the Mile High City are using.

"Another one that people are interested in is this LESCO TFC," says Day. "It does seem to do a pretty good job" at killing unwanted tall fescue.

In Michigan, LCOs are taking notice of PBI Gordon's Trimec and UAP's Mecamine-D.

"They're a very good spring and fall weed control," says Robert E. Bushouse of G&L Distributing in Kalamazoo.

Bushouse observes, though, that aggressive marketing pro-

grams are needed for recent releases because his conservative customers tend to be wary of buying something new.

"They still want to stay with the old standards that work," he points out.

Often a product that tests well never even makes it to the mass market, notes Keith Waller, president of Perfecturf USA, Inc. in Mentor, Ohio.

He has previously taken part in testing programs. Now, he says, "I don't worry about it until it's labeled and ready to go."

Dr. John R. Street, turfgrass extension specialist at Ohio State University, says that Monsanto's Dimension



Cooper: Likes Gallery

diclopyr is something to look at because it offers both pre- and post-emergent crabgrass control. "We had excellent control—zero percent crabgrass."

He also is checking out a



Bushouse: Marketing needed.

new Acclaim compound, plus a prodiamine material from Sandoz.

Street says that the experimental BASF 514 kills crabgrass within seven to ten days. "It's a very exciting ma-

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terial and one you want to keep your eye on. It just took that crabgrass right out of there. We got 100 percent control."

ICI, DowElanco, American Cyanimid, Mobay and Biosys



Street: Likes BASF product.

all have grub control products in the works, says Dr. Harry Niemczyk, research entomologist at Ohio State University.

He expects nematodes to create a large impact once the

prices are reduced through more effective production techniques.

At the Ohio Turfgrass Conference, Niemczyk noted that high-pressure applications and subsurface applications of insecticides may soon come to pass. "We've been looking at this for a couple of years."

The Rainsaver machine, made by Rainsaver, Inc. in Walla Walla, Wash., has been a useful application device, according to Niemczyk.

Spinning coulters place the product underground. "To a fairway or a home lawn that damage is minimal" and the control effective.

"We're trying to reduce sur-

face residues," he points out.

In 1989 Monsanto released its Expedite handheld herbicide application system. It consists of a battery-powered lance device that operates with a selection of pre-mixed herbicides.

The closed delivery system minimizes worker exposure to chemicals, and spinning discs supply a consistent, even spray pattern that reduces waste, according to the company.

Volume and speed controls enable the operator to control droplet size, swath width and amount of herbicide applied.

Expedite Grass & Weed non-selective herbicide contains glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup. Expedite Broadleaf herbicide provides selective control for spot treatments and callbacks.

Expedite Grass & Weed Plus, containing glyphosate and a residual for long-lasting control, is due out in the spring.

Ciba-Geigy introduced its Pace fungicide last year, and label changes were added to several other products.

Scotts added two new weed controls and an insecticide to its ProTurf line. The Fluid Broadleaf Weed Control attacks 68 weeds. Weedgrass Control 6060 WP features drop-in packets.

Riverdale has a new three-way water soluble herbicide on the market, Weeddestroy Triamine II W.S. And last year it also introduced a selective weed killer in an aerosol can, called Triamine Jet-Spray.

Future product developments are expected in the field of biological controls as interest continues to grow and new discoveries are made.

"The companies that have been providing you with (chemical) pesticides will be providing you with biologicals as well," reports Dr. Eric Nelson, a research plant pathologist at Cornell University.

"This area is still in its infancy, but you're going to be seeing a lot more of these," says Nelson, who spoke to well-attended sessions at the Ohio Turfgrass Conference.

"The larger companies have research programs directed toward biological controls," he says.

"We have a very active program," confirms Dr. Mike Shaw, product technical manager at DowElanco.

Consultant Day believes that because of the safety issues "we are increasingly being forced to look at biologicals, botanicals and soaps/oils."

And Day likes what he sees. "These are the biggest growth areas into the 1990s." Pyrethroid insecticides are being developed, and Abbott Laboratories is expected to release a bacteria product that kills elm leaf beetles.

The field is wide open, Day maintains.

"There are so many of these coming on the market now that you have to check the label to see if it's for ornamentals or turf," observes a somewhat amazed Day. LCI

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What two products have teamed up to lead the crusade against insect pests? It's Lebanon Pro 20-3-5 with 1 percent DURSBAN — a new and improved fertilizer/insecticide formulation. We've taken our 20-3-5 fertilizer base, with four units of sulfur-coated, slow-release urea and added a higher concentration of DURSBAN, a time-tested and effective insecticide. So you can get early green-up and sustained feeding while controlling surface and soil insects — without the time-consuming efforts of two applications. And for straight granular insect control, try Lebanon DURSBAN 2.32 percent. From your source for premium quality turf products.

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*DURSBAN is a Registered Trademark of The Dow Chemical Company.

APPLES

from Page 1

where it can easily be seen in order to best grab the customer's attention.

In recent years the Birmingham area has attracted several new lawn care companies in addition to the established firms, and Burton says it is not uncommon to leave your estimate along with two or three others.

"I feel the apples and oranges spark a curiosity factor and compel the customer to read the enclosed sales literature, which is entitled *Comparing Lawn Care Companies Is Like Comparing Apples and Oranges!*" he says.

"A lot of people thank us. You get a lot of feedback—it's something that gets people talking."

It's also something that gets people to sign up.

From 1988 to 1989 the company's closing rate was up 22 percent to 67 percent.

"We knew our lawn care program offered the best possible service, but we needed to educate our potential customers, and this sales aid accomplished this," Burton points out.

"The packet includes only

the largest and prettiest oranges and apples, because use of small, cheap or blemished fruit might be interpreted by the customer that our service might be substandard."

The cost of the two items adds up to about 75 cents. "I go pick it out" personally to make sure the giveaways are of the highest quality.

"Another sales aid we use is the 'before and after' photographs. A photograph is taken of the lawn when the service is started, and later on in the year another photograph is taken to document the changes," Burton adds.

"When selling a new customer these photographs give an honest idea of what they can expect."

"Several times estimates have been made on lawns across the street or next door to a current customer, and we give the potential customer the before and after photographs of their neighbor's lawn," he explains.

"These photographs are also used when a customer calls with a problem; to show them that progress is being made on their yard."

The extra time and money is well-spent, he says. LCI

COMMERCIAL SERVICES

Commercial services offering economic opportunity

BY PHILIP D. CHRISTIAN III

Commercial clients who buy lawn, tree and shrub care applications may offer the greatest opportunity for growth and profit in the 1990s.

Until now most LCOs have concentrated their sales efforts on the homeowner lawn care customer.

But some of the other available markets for lawn, tree and shrub care include multi-family projects, office buildings, retail centers, industrial areas, institutions, municipal properties and assorted government agencies.

The exact size of the commercial segment is unknown, but a 1980 study by Dr. Louis Snyder projected commercial green space to reach 5.5 million acres by the year 2000.

Based on existing revenue for lawn care only, the potential of the commercial market will grow to almost \$5 billion.

Differences attract our attention more than similarities, but there are two striking similarities between these market segments: The people are basically the same, and the lawns, trees and shrubs are basically the same.

Up to 30 percent of the professional purchasers in the commercial market have lawn care at home—even if those services are purchased by the spouse.

As for the turf, trees and shrubs—the standards for color, weed control and texture are not exactly the same, but they are getting closer than ever.

We have noticed the trend toward higher quality expectations in the commercial sector.

The most important difference between the two segments is who does the purchasing.

In the commercial sector one—or more than one—person is responsible for purchasing landscape services. They also are held accountable for



these purchases.

This professional buyer may be a full-time purchasing agent, somebody selected to do the task, the vice president, the president or the owner of the property.

No matter what their title might be, purchasing this type of service is part of their job—they are professional purchasers.

The professional purchaser has different motives for buying lawn, tree and shrub care.

Therefore, our biggest challenge when expanding into the

commercial sector is learning to satisfy the needs of this commercial buyer.

The second major difference is the size of the average commercial property versus the typical home lawn.

Even though 25 percent of commercial properties are under 10,000 square feet, there is no limit on how large they can be.

Part of our challenge is to learn how to cope with the
See **GROWTH** Page 33

You never know what's hit you when you see patch disease. It could be Fusarium blight. Or necrotic ring spot. Or summer patch. Or take-all patch. Or spring dead spot. Or any combination.

They all look very similar on turf. Only with a microscope can you tell them apart. So guessing which one's causing your patch disease still leaves your turf open to the other four.

That's why complete coverage pays. And only Rubigan is labeled to prevent and treat all five of these pathogens that cause patch disease.

Not to mention dollar spot, snow mold, copper spot, red thread and stripe smut. And this spring is an excellent time to begin your preventive program.

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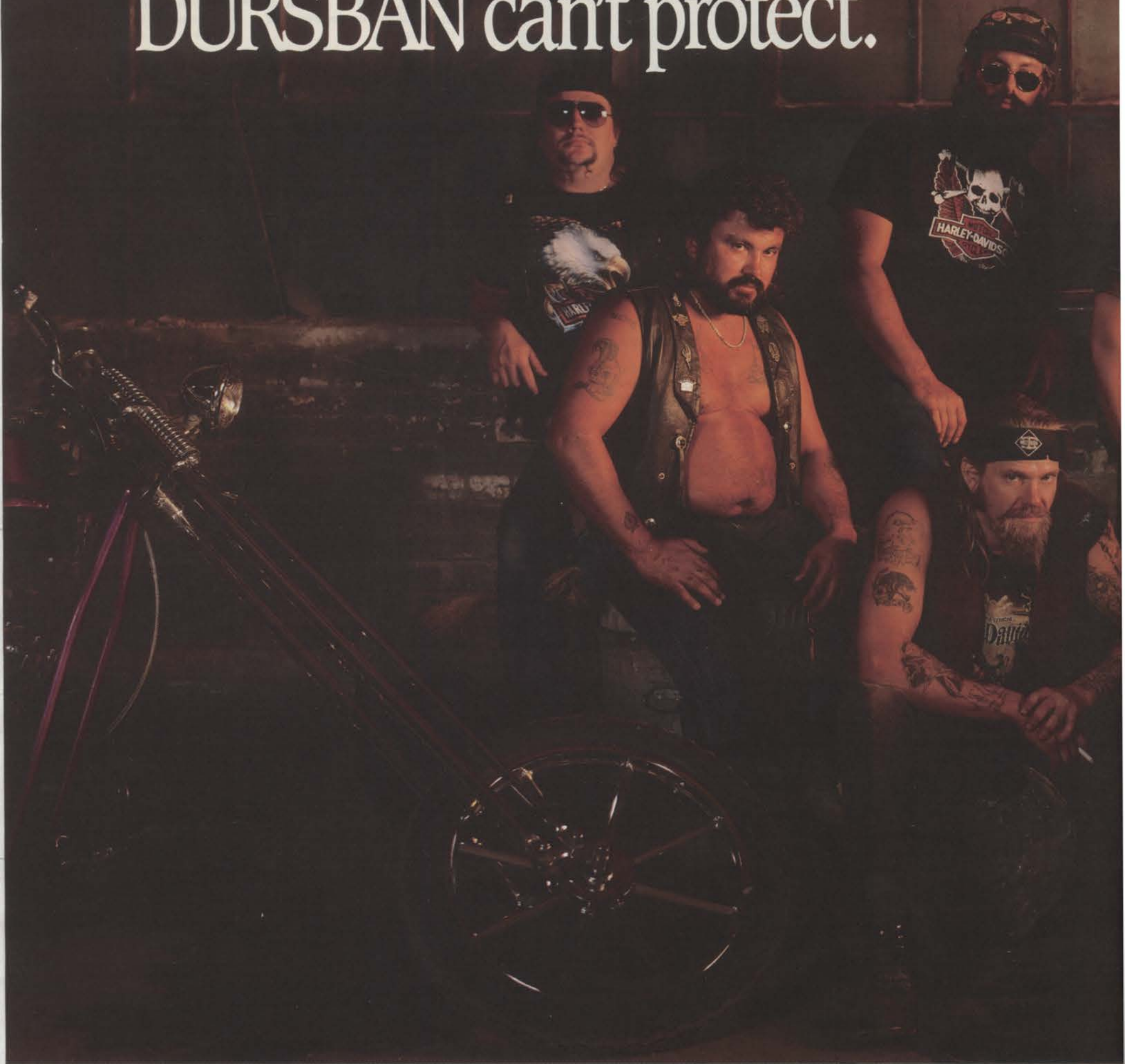


About the Author

Philip D. Christian III of Alpharetta, Ga. is a consultant with All Green Management Associates in Columbus, Ohio.



There is some turf even DURSBAN can't protect.



Granted, DURSBAN® Turf Insecticide won't do you much good in a dark alley. But when it's time to get tough on surface-feeding insects, it doesn't make any sense to take chances. What makes sense is using the

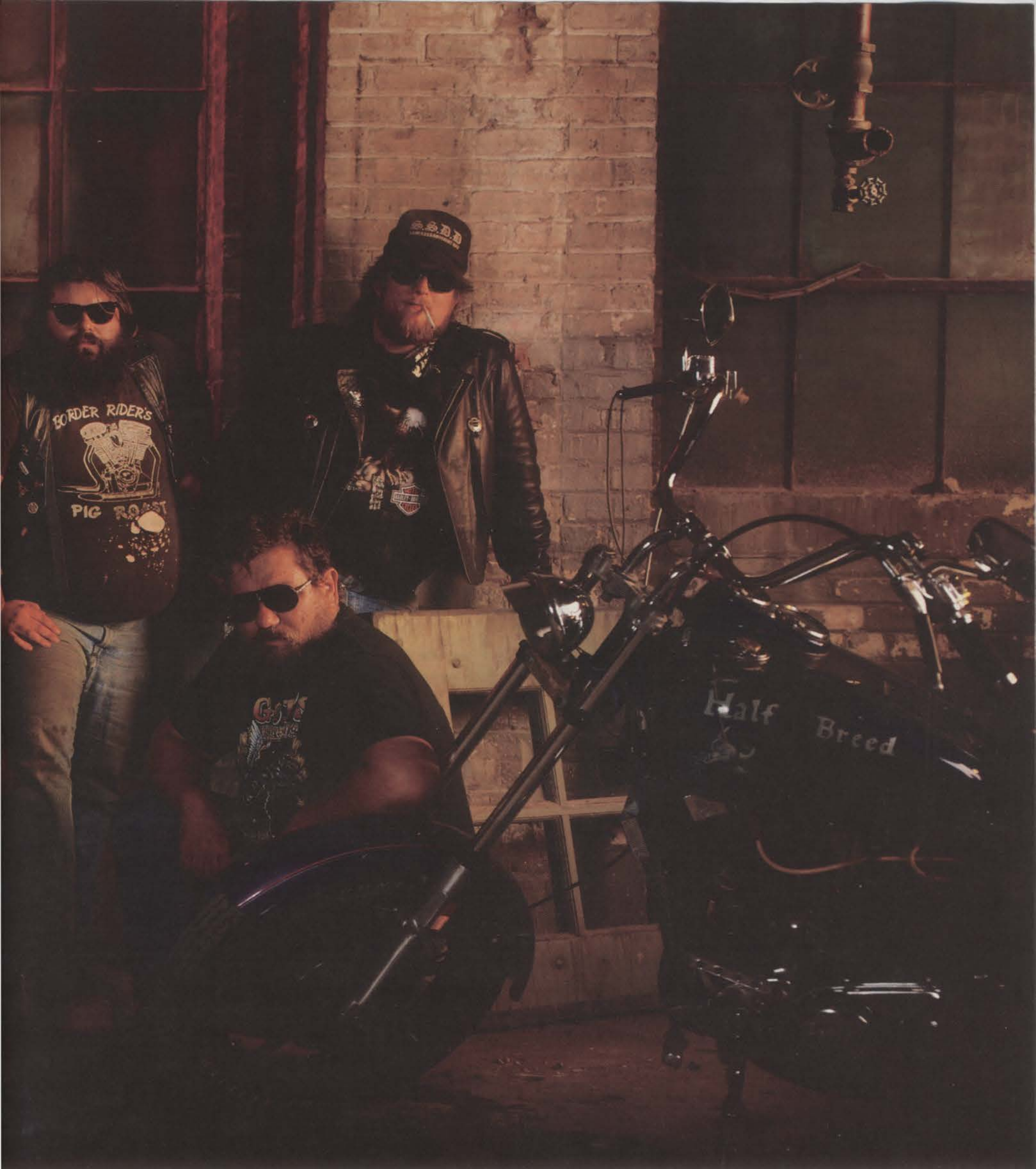
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control you've come to expect—
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keep surface feeders off your
turf. Wearing a black leather
jacket during application is, of
course, not recommended.

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Circle No. 108 on Reader Inquiry Card

STEINAU

from Page 7

have been successful at organizing and reaching smaller companies.)

The idea is to get more of the smaller firms to participate. "We feel that these are very positive moves: To go out and extend a hand to these smaller companies—to say, 'Listen, we need your input. Come back in the door, or if you haven't been here initially, come test us.'"

An increase in dues last year led to a number of companies dropping out of the organization.

"We're still smarting from

the loss in membership, but we're sitting with 1,200-plus members. The loss was not as severe as we once had anticipated. I think we lost a couple hundred members."

The increase in the dues was long overdue. "For a national organization, we made a mistake for 10 years—we undercharged. To belong to a national association for only a couple hundred dollars (a year) is ridiculous," he maintains.

"Our membership fees were too low and we made a mistake. Like a business, we should have been increasing those dues 3 to 5 percent each year, instead of what we did

this (past) year."

Steinau is confident that some of the companies that dropped out will again become members. "With a good, progressive program those members will eventually come to realize what they are missing. Whose nose are they cutting off to spite whose face? PLCAA is, without a doubt, the leading agency for lawn care."

In regard to those who were upset over the dues increase, "If they are angry, hopefully they'll get over that anger and come back." Perhaps they will say to themselves: "I punished them for one year, and now I'm ready to come back and

show them what I can do."

Says Steinau, "The only way to facilitate change is to become involved. You can't do it if you're not involved."

On the media front, PLCAA's new director of communications, Sandra J. Hensel, will be making plans for meetings with anti-lawn care activists, Steinau reports.

"Sandy has some good clear thinking on this." He adds that "we'd rather sit down with these people at a roundtable forum to show them that we're willing to work with them. Let's hear both sides, let's come to common

ground."

The consumer news media is likely to lose interest if there is cooperation between the opposing camps. "If we have success working with them we will become a media non-event. Let's make this a non-issue. Let's put the fire out."

More and more lawn care companies will begin to offer add-on services to enhance revenues, Steinau predicts. Aeration, seeding and black-topping are just a few ideas. "You can't be afraid to go back and knock on old doors."

Customer contracts are sure to become more popular within the industry, he believes.

"I think contracts are a very positive thing. With some companies you hear their knees knocking on that, (but) it lays out the conditions and terms for the customer to see—nothing is hidden—you're acting like a pro."

Look for additional rules and regulations to have a positive impact, he says. "We're going to be forced into being more professional just by regulations."

Tougher testing requirements are likely to be seen at the state level, and Steinau thinks that's a good idea, too: "You want to be in this industry? It takes more than a 50-gallon drum and a pump in the back of your pickup truck. You'll have to know this industry, and you'll have to prove it by taking some tests."

Steinau, 42, is president of Greenlon Lawn Care Service in Cincinnati, Ohio. "I grew up in pest control. As a kid I ran routes during the summer. I've always been involved in chemical application."

At one time his father worked for Otto Orkin himself before forming his own company in 1950.

"Around 1974 I started taking note of all the ChemLawn trucks on the street. I thought that this would be a good direction to go," Rick recalls.

He located a lawn care enterprise that might be available. "It turned out there was a company for sale which had been in operation since 1972. These were home heating oil people who wanted their drivers to have something to do during the summer."

The seasons became too long to support both branches, and Steinau bought the lawn care portion. "It was a good call. This industry's been very good to me."

Steinau became involved with pesticide associations, and went on to play a major role in the Ohio Pesticide Applicators for Responsible Regulation.

He became knowledgeable at working with the news media, writing his own press releases and columns. For PLCAA he helped set up a network of media contacts. **LCI**



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GROWTH

from Page 29

scope of these properties when applying our services.

A change in the buying environment is a third major difference. We are moving from the warm, personal delivery to the homeowner to the harsh reality of the competitive business world.

This professional purchasing environment has existed for years—long before lawn care was viewed as a specialty.

We are not about to substantially change this existing environment, therefore we must learn how to mold our specialty to fit.

The increase in average property size offers the LCO an opportunity to increase productivity.

More square feet per stop equates to more square feet per day, and, hopefully, more dollars per day.

A good working relationship with one commercial purchaser may yield additional acres of land to be serviced. These commercial buyers often make purchases

for multiple properties.

And each year they have the capability of growing in total number of acres.

The commercial customer is buying from budgeted funds. Initially the budget may not be large enough, but you can influence that budget in the coming years as your working relationship with the purchaser improves.

We are accustomed to selling a luxury in the homeowner market, paid for with discretionary funds. Commercial buyers do not have the option of doing the work themselves.

They must pay someone to

take care of the lawn, trees and shrubs.

Surveys indicate that lawn care companies have less than 10 percent of their clients in the commercial classification. If the opportunity is so promising, why is the existing penetration so low?

Many LCOs have simply not needed the commercial customer to meet their projected growth. The homeowner segment was perceived to contain enough business for everyone.

That assumption could be true today, but what about tomorrow?

Will the marketing cost of increasing our homeowner ac-

counts be more prohibitive than penetration into the commercial market?

Our initial experience with commercial clients may not have been all that positive. Accurate measurements of commercial properties were difficult and time-consuming. We offered the commercial buyer commercial programs at homeowner pricing.

In many cases these programs did not fit the needs of the property or the professional buyer.

What specific skills do we need as LCOs to become more successful at expanding our

existing services into the commercial market sector?

• Skills in marketing to the commercial client.

• Development of commercial agronomic and horticultural programs.

• Commercial measuring, estimating and pricing.

• Commercial sales abilities.

• Commercial proposal forms.

• Commercial production.

In the coming months, each of the above topics will be discussed in greater detail in this column.

LCI

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Roberts: Conducting turf trials.

Pennington appoints Roberts

MADISON, GA.—Don W. Roberts is Pennington Seed's new corporate turfgrass specialist.

Roberts is focusing on research and marketing of turf seed varieties.

He is working with Pennington's research efforts and with agricultural colleges on an in-depth program of trials and evaluations of various turfgrass varieties.

In the area of marketing, Roberts concentrates primarily on golf courses, athletic fields, professional lawn care and major construction projects.

Roberts is a BSA graduate of the University of Georgia with a major in horticulture and a minor in plant pathology. He received his Master's Degree from Clemson University in horticulture and plant pathology with emphasis on turfgrass management.

His master thesis was done on the study of Pythium.

Before joining Pennington in 1987, Roberts' work experience was concentrated in the lawn and garden industry. LCI



Remember your roots.



Just dig beneath the surface a bit and you'll see why it pays to make Dacthal your preemergence herbicide.

With Dacthal you won't have to worry about stressed or damaged roots in desired turf. Because most turfgrass root systems have a high tolerance for Dacthal.

So while you may save a few bucks with less expensive herbicides, you may not save turf root systems.

And healthy turf is the bottom line in terms of satisfying customers and minimizing callbacks.

What's more, Dacthal has a proven record of performance on more than 20 annual grass and broadleaf weeds. Including the tough ones like crabgrass, spurge, annual chickweed, foxtail and *Poa annua*.

Given recent problems with crabgrass control and damaged root systems, it's no wonder lawn care professionals are making the Dacthal choice this season.

Remember, Dacthal is not water soluble, so it won't leach during wet conditions. And Dacthal is biodegradable, so accumulation in the soil has never been observed.

So why not make Dacthal your preemergence herbicide this season? Why not join a growing grassroots movement?

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Always follow label directions carefully when using turf chemicals.

C'mon back to Dacthal®

Circle No. 116 on Reader Inquiry Card

NEW PRODUCTS



Kawasaki engine on frame mount sprayer

Maruyama has developed two frame mount sprayers featuring 3.6 horsepower Kawasaki engines.

The units spray 5 gallons per minute at up to 500 psi,

and come with an adjustable spray nozzle. The hose reel holds 164 feet of 1/4-inch hose.

The entire system is mounted on a U-channel frame, which also holds the 50-gallon tank, and has a hydraulic jet agitator. **LCI**

Circle No. 130 on service card.

True Temper spreaders boast key features

Two new models of True Temper Cyclone push broadcast spreaders have features the Camp Hill, Pa. company says will make them easy to use.

The spreaders have rain covers to protect the material,



hopper screens to break up clumps, dual ground props for added stability and handle-mounted on/off controls.

Model CB3000 has 8-inch rubber wheels and model CB4000 has 10-inch pneumatic tires. Both have a spread width of 4 to 8 feet and

a capacity of 60 pounds, or 1,500 cubic inches.

Both spreaders are made of corrosion-resistant polypropylene, and have enclosed nylon gears to prevent clogging. **LCI**

Circle No. 131 on service card.

LESCO produces new turf and tree sprayers

LESCO, Inc. of Rocky River, Ohio has introduced its new line of fiberglass turf and tree sprayers.

They can be used for turf spraying with a gun or boom, and the 15-gallon-per-minute model will spray trees up to 50



feet high, according to the company.

Two different engines are available: A 5-horsepower Briggs & Stratton capable of spraying 10.5 GPM, or an 8-horsepower Kohler engine that sprays 15 GPM. The tanks, which come in sizes from 100 to 500 gallons, feature seamless five-layer construction, 16-inch fillwells and mechanical agitation. **LCI**

Circle No. 132 on service card.

Is your weed control controlling you?

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LAWN CARE CATALOG



SAFETY EQUIPMENT & SUPPLY CO., INC.
SAFETY EQUIPMENT & SUPPLY CO., INC.
SAFETY EQUIPMENT & SUPPLY CO., INC.

Safety Equipment and Supply offers catalog

Lawn care professionals may be interested in the new mail-order catalog from Safety Equipment & Supply Co. of Fort Wayne, Ind.

The 1990 catalog is free, and features a variety of gloves, goggles, protective clothing and emergency equipment.

To receive a catalog, call SES toll-free at (800) 558-5330. In Indiana, call (800) 552-4989. **LCI**

Circle No. 133 on service card.



Low profile tanks available from Cushman

Two new turf sprayers with low profile tanks are now available from Cushman.

The tanks come in 120-gallon or 150-gallon sizes. Both mount easily on the chassis with a pin-disconnect system.

The spray tanks are lightweight, centrifugally-cast fiberglass, colored to resist ultraviolet light. They have sloped bottoms and center sumps for complete drainage, and feature a new agitation system that constantly recirculates the chemical mix.

Boom guards and four-way spring tension hinges break away if the outer boom hits a solid object. **LCI**

Circle No. 134 on service card.

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71 Chev 6/300 Fbrglis W/Dual Reels, 56,000 Act. 79 IH S1800 DSL 3/800, S/S W/Dual Reels. 80 M/ Benz DSL 3/800, S/S W/Dual Reels. 81 IH S1700 DSL 3/700, Fbrglis W/Dual Reels, 53,000 Act. 84 Ford 1 Ton W/575, S/S, Single Reel, 64,000 Act. 500/200 MN Wanner Envert. 260/40 S/S 150 Poly MN Wanner Envert. 700 S Pull Type Hydr Boom Solid Sprayer. Clyde (612)479-2340. 1/90

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With all you have to do, it's good to know one decision is easy.

Booking your PRE-M order may be one of the easiest business decisions you make all year. That's because LESCO PRE-M® 60 DG Herbicide delivers outstanding preemergent weed control at a cost and performance no other product can match.

With the active ingredient pendimethalin, PRE-M delivers broad spectrum control of crabgrass, goosegrass, foxtail and other

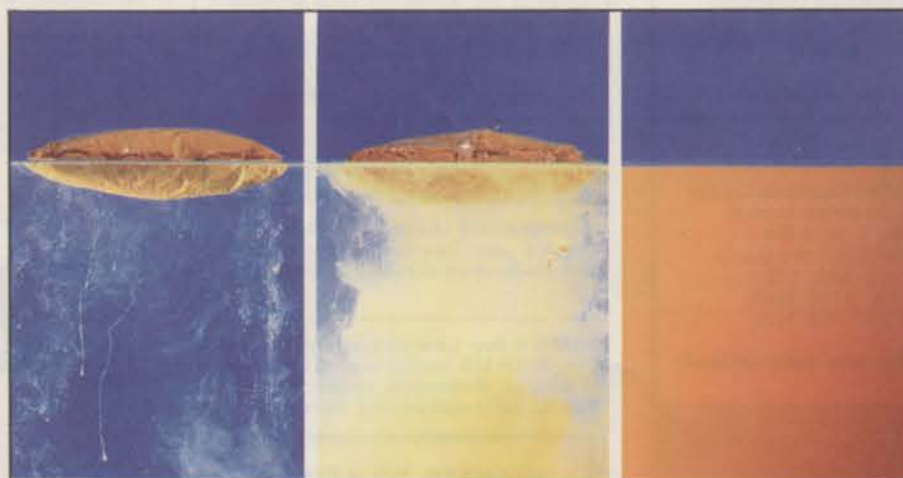
grassy weeds and at the same time tackles tough broadleaves like oxalis and spurge. Easy-to-use water dispersible granule formulation makes PRE-M convenient to handle and apply.

Only PRE-M offers built-in flexibility that lets you use it on most cool and warm season grasses, and programmed applications control both early and late germinating weeds. Convenient packaging

requires less storage and simplifies shipping and handling.

Combine the effectiveness and convenience of PRE-M with the fact that it costs less than other preemergent herbicides and it's easy to understand why this business decision is easy. Order today.

Stop by your nearest LESCO Service Center or call (800) 825-3726 toll free.



LESCO PRE-M 60 WP Herbicide is now available in easy-to-use water-soluble packaging. Supply is limited, so contact your salesman today.



LESCO, Inc.,
20005 Lake
Road, Rocky
River, Ohio 44116 (216) 333-9250

Always read and follow label instructions before applying any herbicide product. PRE-M® is a registered trademark of LESCO, Inc.

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