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Just the Facts

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Re: "SD5 considers pesticide ban," The Free Press, Oct. 7, 2010

October 7, 2010

As School District 5 debates its policy on the use of pesticides to control unwanted and potentially harmful weeds in school yards, I hope they will also consider the reason these tools exist and the thorough assessment they undergo before being made available for use.

If left unchecked, weeds can destroy important green spaces and other costly infrastructure and rob children of the opportunity to enjoy ever-so-important outdoor activities.

For example, pest control products help ensure students have access to safe recreational spaces where they can play without the threat of tripping and injuring themselves. School yards and playing fields can be overtaken by weeds or severely damaged by insects, seriously impacting a school's ability to provide these important playing areas to children.

Schools must have safe and cost-effective solutions available to them when faced with allergenic weeds such as ragweed or poison ivy, damaging insects such as ants and grubs or other weeds, insects or diseases that may negatively impact their properties. Pesticides that are used on school grounds are specifically evaluated for use in environments where children may play. Every product that's sold in Canada undergoes a comprehensive scientific review and risk assessment by Health Canada that includes a review of all scientifically credible studies available.

Given the school board's commitment to thoroughly examine this issue, I'd like to suggest they take the time to listen to scientific experts from Health Canada or other unbiased sources like university researchers who can provide impartial, scientifically proven information. As Bev Bellina points out, the decision should be based on carefully considered science.

Canada's plant science industry welcomes questions about our products and looks forward to future opportunities to set the record straight about the safety of our products and our industry's commitment to people, public health and the environment.

Sincerely,

Lorne Hepworth

President, CropLife Canada - *representing the plant science industry*

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