

Pesticides next

BY ROBIN MCLEOD, CALGARY HERALD AUGUST 1, 2013

Re: "Council bans smoking near playgrounds, sports fields," July 30.

I applaud council's decision to ban smoking at playgrounds and sports fields following similar bans in Toronto, Edmonton and Grande Prairie.

Now, let's get serious about pesticide use at playgrounds and sports fields in Calgary.

Over 80 per cent of Canadians are protected by provincial legislation and municipal bylaws banning the use of cosmetic pesticides. Calgary is the largest municipality in Canada that doesn't have a pesticide bylaw. Calgary has 716 tot lots that should be pesticide free by virtue of a 30-metre spray exclusion zone. However, there is great reluctance within the city to call these parks pesticide free because that would limit the city's ability to use pesticides at the tot lots.

Small children are most vulnerable to pesticide use and residue due to their size, developing immune systems and a propensity to taste-test everything and anything. Pesticide-free tot lots are a no-brainer, followed very quickly by pesticide-free sports fields. We do value our children's health, don't we? If we continue to model pesticide use as the cure-all to weed infestations, we are at great risk of teaching our children the same mode of behaviour. I have been there, but now I know better.

There is another way. Let's go, Calgary. Urge council to adopt a pesticide bylaw for our children's health.

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Calgary

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