



March 30th, 2016

Superintendent associations respond to PMRA chlorothalonil announcement

Golf course superintendent organizations are responding to a recent announcement from the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) which plans to re-evaluate its position on chlorothalonil.

The Ontario Golf Superintendents Association, for example, is concerned that if the PMRA's amended proposal regarding the chemical chlorothalonil is adopted, it will have a significant, deleterious impact on the turf industry, particularly golf courses.

"We understand that if this proposed amendment is adopted, chlorothalonil uses will be significantly restricted, and in particular, the use of chlorothalonil on turf would be restricted to a single time per year and just for snow mold control, which will not be adequate to address the large variety of turf diseases which exist on Canadian golf courses," wrote OGSA president Mark Prieur in a letter to the PMRA, dated March 23.

He said the fungicide is vital in golf courses' defence against snow mould. Without it, he added, golf courses would be subject to destruction.

Chlorothalonil is also key in the control of dollar spot, helminthosporium leaf spot, brown patch and anthracnose.

"Chlorothalonil plays a key role in resistance management as it is the only multi-site control option and is absolutely necessary when a severe disease outbreak occurs," Prieur wrote. "Without the availability of chlorothalonil, turf managers would be forced to use preventative treatments repeatedly

during the growing season, resulting in overall increased chemical applications."

He argued that if the proposed re-evaluation is implemented, Canadian golf courses would find themselves at a competitive disadvantage to their American counterparts, which would be able to continue with certain chlorothalonil uses that would no longer be available in Canada, putting them at a clear disadvantage in the North American marketplace.

"Our industry is already governed by legislation, which is in place in most jurisdictions of Canada (and certainly here in Ontario), which requires golf course staff to be trained in the judicious use of such chemicals, and meticulous records are required to be kept as to its use," Prieur wrote. "The products containing chlorothalonil that golf course superintendents currently use have an established history of safe and effective use for more than 45 years. We would point out that unlike other agricultural uses for this chemical, the turf industry is not applying it to a consumable product."

Syngenta Canada, a manufacturer of chemical products, has also made its position clear about the PMRA announcement in a news release to the golf industry.

"The amendment is significantly different from the previously published proposed decision from 2011 and, if adopted, will significantly restrict and in some instances remove certain chlorothalonil uses," a Syngenta news release read. "We stand behind and are confident in the science behind Syngenta products containing chlorothalonil which have an established history of safe and effective use for more than 45 years. We are currently reviewing the document and will respond to it as part of the 60 day comment period. We are also engaged with various associations and are working with them as part of the review of and response to the publication of this amendment."

Superintendent associations, including the Western Canada Turfgrass Association and others across the country, are alerting their members to the PMRA announcement and are promoting letter-writing campaigns to state their concerns before the PMRA.