

Alberta Golf Industry Association

Golf Course Pesticide Use Educational Film

About the Film.

Enclosed please find a copy of a film produced for the golf industry by the Alberta Golf Industry Association (AGIA). The AGIA produced the film in coordination with White Iron Productions of Calgary. The film is professionally done, entertaining, and contains awe-inspiring vistas of the Priddis Greens Golf and Country Club. The film delivers key messages about the use of pesticides on golf courses as well as photographs comparing treated and untreated greens that will make any golfer shudder.

As you view the film keep in mind that the AGIA advocates the safe use of registered pesticides, which have gone through a strict regulatory evaluation for effects on the environment and for human exposure. It is important to know that Canadian standards as established by the federal government's Pesticide Management Review Agency (PMRA) are much more stringent than the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This means that decisions to use pesticides are based on science rather than on human emotion.

How to Use the Film.

The film was developed to educate the average golfer about the pesticide use issue and the realities of their safe use. The following are suggested forums to show the four-minute film:

- Club annual meetings
- Club executive meetings
- Club staff meetings
- Club handicap computer
- Men's and ladies' club gatherings
- At local municipality meetings if a pesticide ban is being debated

The film enclosed is in a DVD movie format. We can also provide a VHS tape if desired.

Following the viewing of the film, we would recommend that you offer the viewers the opportunity to sign the enclosed petition and then forward the signatures to the AGIA. Our objective is to bank as much documentation of support as possible so that when municipalities consider pesticide use bans, we can counter with the voice of the golfing public.

Alberta Golf Association, Alberta Golf Course Superintendents Association, Alberta Professional Golfers Association, Alberta Turfgrass Research Foundation, Canadian Golf Superintendents Association, Canadian Society of Club Managers – Alberta, National Golf Course Owners Association – Western Canada, Royal Canadian Golf Association.

The Pesticide Issue.

Since the June 2001, Supreme Court of Canada Ruling that upheld the 1991 Hudson, Quebec bylaw banning the use of lawn chemicals, Canadian municipalities have been empowered to enact the ban of pesticide use. The potential impact will be far-reaching and without proper education on the matter, a negative toll will be felt by the game of golf and our storied Alberta courses.

The Alberta Golf Industry Association Accomplishments.

The Alberta Golf Industry Association is an amalgam of golf industry association representatives who have combined forces to achieve common objectives. Since 2000, the AGIA has been working to PROACTIVELY educate golf club board members and staff on the issue of pesticide use. The following are a few highlights of our progress:

October 2000, key AGIA stakeholders gathered together to discuss strategies to combat the banning of pesticide use on golf courses across Alberta.

November 2000, AGIA representatives attended a City of Calgary operations and environment subcommittee meeting convened to discuss a possible pesticide ban.

March 2002, an AGIA Pesticide Use subcommittee was formed to educate key decision makers about the safety and need for pesticide use on golf courses.

October 2002, four seminars were held throughout the province to educate golf course staff and board members on pesticide use. Over 100 golf club letters of support were received and banked for future use in pesticide ban debates.

October 2003, four seminars were held throughout the province to educate golf course staff and board members on the safe care and control of golf course drinking water; West Nile Virus precautions; time crunch continuum and its effect on the growth of the number of golfers; and an update on the pesticide issue in Alberta.

April 2004, release of a four-minute educational film produced by the AGIA, featuring the numerous benefits that golf course properties provide to bettering the environment.

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Conclusion.

We urge you to take action as the future of the game hangs in the balance. If golf courses fall under pesticide use bans you can expect:

- A shorter golf season on high quality turf
- Reduction in quality of turf
- Higher costs for replacement of damaged turf, especially tees/greens
- Decreased golfer satisfaction
- Decreased play
- Decreased equipment sales
- Decreased food and beverage sales

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Frequently Asked Questions and Answers.

1. Why do golf courses use chemical applications?

Answer: Pesticides help to limit the damage that can be caused by insects, weeds and plant diseases. Insecticides, herbicides and fungicides are used very selectively to protect the health of turf, trees and other living organisms on the course.

2. Are pesticides used just for 'cosmetic use' purposes?

Answer: No, pesticides are used primarily to ensure a healthy playing surface for the game. They help protect a valuable and ecologically important piece of land. Golf courses are tremendous economic assets as well as vital green spaces for communities. Golf courses help to filter air pollutants and recycle oxygen; they are excellent groundwater recharge sites and are critical wildlife sanctuaries in urban and suburban areas.

3. Why can't golf courses use organic alternatives to manage turf?

Answer: Many courses in fact incorporate organic alternatives such as organic fertilizers and composts as part of their Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs. However, effective alternatives do not currently exist for all turfgrass diseases and pests. Finding alternatives takes time and money. Currently the Canadian Turfgrass Research Foundation spends \$100,000.00 per year on researching alternatives. For example, over \$500,000.00 has been spent for the past 10 years to find a biological control for snow mould. As of 2003, a product has yet to be registered.

Opportunistic entrepreneurs have claimed to have solutions often without scientific research proving the efficacy of their products. Unfortunately, these claims are being made in the current political climate to enhance their sales without regard to the effect on long-term operations.

4. Can anyone apply pesticides on golf courses?

Answer: Definitely not! Golf course superintendents must be certified by the provincial government to purchase and apply any and all pesticides. Today's superintendents have college degrees in agronomy, horticulture or a related field. Because it is important to keep up to date with new information and technologies, the majority also attend continuing education programs and seminars offered by their provincial and national associations. Finally, superintendents implement an Integrated Pest Management Program to ensure both their turf and environment stay healthy.

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5. What kinds of products are used?

Answer: Only products that have been thoroughly tested and registered by the federal government are used on golf courses. It is important to know that Canadian standards as established by the Pesticide Management Review Agency (PMRA) are more stringent than the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

6. Today's golf courses are so green, is it true they use a lot of pesticides?

Answer: Golf course superintendents are very judicious in the use of pesticides for a number of reasons. Pesticides are very expensive and can have a profound effect on a golf course operation's bottom line. Public perception also plays a role in a superintendent's reluctance to use pesticides. For this reason, usually only tees and greens which comprise one to two percent of a golf course's total acreage are treated, and then only when required.

7. Are pesticides harmful to golfers and wildlife?

Answer: Pesticide use is very highly regulated. Before a product is registered for use it must be rigorously tested for human health and environmental effects. This process can take up to 10 years and involve more than 120 different tests and studies. Today, manufacturers often invest up to \$50 million in product safety and testing before a new pesticide ever comes to market.

The role of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency is to review extensive health and environmental impact data for all pesticide products prior to registration. The PMRA registers only those products for use in Canada where it can be satisfied from the data that the intended use will not pose an unreasonable risk of harm to either human health or the environment. The Alberta golf industry uses only those products that registered in accordance with federal law and regulations and have been registered for use by the PMRA.

8. What would happen if pesticides were banned for golf course use?

Answer: The inability to use specific plant protectants would result in devastating turf loss. This would ultimately cause a considerable increase in the cost of maintaining golf courses and the standards of maintenance would be jeopardized.

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9. How does a Superintendent decide to apply pesticides?

Answer: Pest problems on golf courses are often predictable and can be diagnosed as part of an ongoing monitoring program. Once the problem has been identified, the superintendent considers the available options. This could include cultural practices (such as pulling weeds, changing irrigation patterns or clearing underbrush around a problem area to allow more air movement) or the use of biological controls or chemical products. Once the problem is diagnosed, the superintendent waits for the ideal time to treat the problem in the most effective and environmentally sound manner available. This approach is called Integrated Pest Management.

10. Some media stories suggest that pesticides are linked to cancer. What are the facts?

As noted above, PMRA regulations provide for specific use restrictions for all registered pesticide products. All products used by the Alberta golf industry are registered for use by federal regulatory authorities, and all are used in strict accordance with use directions and limitations that are specific to golf course uses. The pesticide registration process assures that when these products are used in strict accordance with label directions, no undue risk of harm is expected in those who apply the registered products, or those who use the golf courses that have been treated in this way.

The Alberta golf course industry will continue to strictly abide by all regulations imposed by the PMRA regarding the use of pesticides on Alberta golf courses.

For further information, please contact:

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References:

1. Pro Shop, Winter 2000-2001, pp. 19-20, an excerpt of a statement sent to the honourable Charles Caccia, Chair of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, and the honourable Allan Rock, Minister of Health, on behalf of eight allied golf associations.
2. The Alberta Golfer, 2002, Natural Preserves, James Beebe, pp. 44-45.
3. Royal Canadian Golf Association, General Industry Points, Caledon Pesticide Meeting, 2002.
4. Calgary Herald, Club's Pesticide Plan Costly if Weeds Invade, p. B2, November 30, 2000.
5. www.cbc.ca/stories/2001/06/28/Consumers/pesticideruling_010628, June, 2001.
6. Alberta Golf Association, Pesticide Seminar Series Minutes, November, 2002.

List of Informational Websites:

1. <http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/shared/readmore.asp?sNav=pb&id=477>
2. www.lawnfacts.ca/article-0012.shtml
3. www.uoquelfh.ca/cntc/announce/june2001.shtml
4. www.dowagro.com/chlorp/rpa/exposur1.htm
5. www.benefitsworld.com/AA/Stat/Cancer041603.asp
6. www.canoe.ca/Health9904/21_cancer.html
7. www.ottawalynx.com/Health0005/15_cancer.html
8. www.savemedicare.com/n25se00a.htm
9. www.cbc.ca/cgi-bin/templates/view.cgi?/news/2001/11/05/Consumers/cancerpesticides_011105
10. www.cancer.ca/ccs/internet/standard/0%2C2939%2C3702_372059_266265_lan_gld-en%2C00.html
11. www.croplife.ca/english/pdf/Analyzing2003/T6B.pdf
12. www.uoquelfh.ca/cntc/announce/nov151997.shtml

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Alberta Golf Industry Association

Golf Course Pesticide Use

Petition Letter

I support the Alberta Golf Industry Association's proactive attempts to educate golf course Board Members, Managers, Professionals, Superintendents, and golfers on pesticide safety.

I lend my name in support of the use of pesticides on golf courses by certified applicators as part of a scientifically based Integrated Pest Management Program.

	Name	Golf Course	Place of Residence
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____

DATE: _____, _____

AGIA Privacy Policy: Names collected as part of this AGIA petition initiative will only be used to support the AGIA and its allies in maintaining the use of pesticides as part of a scientifically based Integrated Pest Management Program. Names collected in this petition will not be released to any outside party, vendor or corporation.

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Al b e r t a G o l f I n d u s t r y A s s o c i a t i o n

G o l f C o u r s e P e s t i c i d e U s e S u p p o r t L e t t e r

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Signed: _____

City of Residence: _____

Date: _____, ____

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