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Jason's Productivity Files

MONDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2011

The Pesticide Ban and What Else We Need To Do

In British Columbia we are facing a cosmetic pesticide ban. The NDP has introduced **Bill M 203** before the legislature. If this bill passes, we will no longer be able to use pesticides on putting greens after five years. This would impact the golf industry in our province immensely. Many courses would not be able to compete and many of us as turf managers will lose our jobs.

Currently our associations are working on our behalf to fight the bill. A good article about the fight and what we can do can be found [here](#). Fighting the bill is only one thing that we as turf managers can do.

What will happen if the bill passes? Will you be able to produce adequate conditions on your course? Will your course be able to compete? What will you do if pesticides were taken as one of your options for turfgrass pest control? We cannot just sit idly and hope that the bill is defeated, doing so would be irresponsible on our part. We are the ones in the field who have the power to make change.

We need to be proactive. We need to start experimenting with ways that we can reduce our dependence on pesticides. Currently we have the option of using pesticides the same way we always have. We can use them whenever we, as professionals, feel that they are necessary to protect the health of our turf. Because of this I think it is essential that we experiment with ways of reducing our dependence now while we still have the "safety blanket" of pesticides at our disposal.

We can't rely on scientists to come up with solutions. Everyone needs to be involved in the solutions that we seek. Formal research is expensive and time consuming. I believe that turfgrass professionals are capable of obtaining good solid data to help reduce our pesticide dependence.

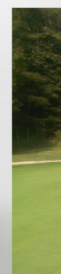
We need to document and share our findings. We need to be organized and work together as an industry. Everyone needs to know what you are trying, what works and what doesn't. Sharing this information with others will allow them to build on your findings and move this issue along much faster.

Moving forward and finding new ways to manage without pesticides is just as important as fighting the ban. Our associations need to know this and need to fund not just formal research, but the individual turf manager in our efforts to find what works and what doesn't. We need tools that help us communicate our findings, we need direction from those who know what best to try. We need to be unified as one unit

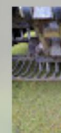
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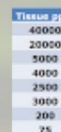
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In the age of social media and hand held computers we should be able to come up with some way of working together. Whether it is an app for your phone that allows you to share you pest monitoring observations with other turf managers in your region or an online forum where we can gather and share, we need to come up with some tools fast.

To start the discussion I have a few questions and comments for people to think over in no particular order.

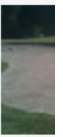
- We need to find ways of surviving the winter without the use of pesticides. Are higher cutting heights the answer?
- How long can we expect spring recovery to take? Which turf species is the quickest to recover and the most economical.
- What levels of turfgrass death are acceptable?
- Is maintaining non-native turf species sustainable? Is constant re-seeding sustainable or should we grow to rely on the native turf species seed bank for regeneration?
- How do we maintain competitive conditions without the use of pesticides.
- Can we maintain the same standards without the use of pesticides? I believe we can.

I have started to publish my findings on my blog. I am actively working to find solutions to this challenge that we will eventually have to face, are you? I do not support the pesticide ban because I feel that they (pesticides) have a place in our toolbox. I do think though that we need to be more responsible with their use. Preventative action to me isn't a preventative spray, it is doing whatever you can to prevent having to spray. Preparing for the pesticide ban isn't just hoping that it doesn't come, it is finding ways that we can survive if it does come.

Please comment and join the discussion. Share this with your colleagues and membership. They need to be receptive with your attempts to find a solution. They need to be willing to potentially make some small sacrifices or face the reality that golf as it is played today, might not exist in the next decade.

I believe that we can find a solution if we work together. I hope that the associations will support our efforts as much as they support the efforts of those fighting the ban.

To close I'll share a nice picture of a sea of mycelium. This fusarium outbreak in November was never treated with chemicals. I knew that as my fairways were predominately *Poa annua*, they would regrow naturally without any help from me....and they did! Who cares if a little grass dies in the winter? Who is crazy enough to golf this time of year anyway?



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no that's not snow or frost. It's just a little Fusarium...yum:)

Posted by [Jason Haines](#)



Labels: [IPM](#), [Pesticide Ban](#), [Pesticides](#)

1 comment:

greg evans 5 September 2011 at 12:13

Great Blog and very thought provoking. If pesticides do get banned no matter where you are in the world and which grass species you are managing, it will be devastating for the turfcare industry. Golfers minds will have to change. As you said a little fuzz in November is not the end of the world. By spring its soon gone. In London, England, *Poa annua* (creeping bluegrass for you guys) is the indigenous grass. If managed correctly it does produce the most perfect surface. Even in winter. If managed poorly, it will produce poor surfaces. But no grass is a wonder grass. Fescue, Bent, Rye all have their weaknesses. Its not the grass that's important its the management techniques used to manage it that is.

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