

School Pesticide Monitor

A Bi-monthly Bulletin on Pesticides and Alternatives

Vol. 5 No. 4 Jul/Aug 2005

Beyond Pesticides/National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides
701 E Street, SE, Suite 200 • Washington, DC 20003 • 202-543-5450
info@beyondpesticides.org • www.beyondpesticides.org



Connecticut Passes School Lawn Pesticide Bill

A bill banning lawn care pesticides on the grounds of children's day care centers and elementary schools passed in Connecticut's House of Representatives on Thursday, June 8th. Senate Bill (SB) 916, "An Act Concerning Pesticides at Day Care Facilities," overwhelmingly passed the Senate in May, and the Governor signed the bill into law in July.

Under the bill, public and private pre-schools and elementary schools can use integrated pest management (IPM) techniques to apply pesticides sparingly on playgrounds and playing fields until July 2008. After that, all pesticides, including fungicides, insecticides and herbicides, will be banned. The bill includes a provision that allows for the emergency application of pesticides to eliminate immediate human health threats, as determined by local or state

health officials.

According to the *Greenwich Time*, the bill does not apply to high schools as part of a compromise for officials who worried that the quality of playing fields would suffer without herbicides. Representative Lile Gibbons, one of the many co-sponsors of the bill, explained that, "Eventually all schools are going to fall under this."

"Connecticut is one of 30 states in which the pesticide industry has put preemption clauses into state statutes, making it illegal for towns to be more protective of their citizens when it comes to lawn-care pesticide exposures," explained Nancy Alderman, president of Environment and Human Health, Inc., a Connecticut-based non-profit organization that strongly supports SB 916. In February, Nancy Al-

derman testified to the members of the Connecticut Congressional Environment Committee in favor of the bill. Alderman and other local activists who worked to get the bill passed hope that SB 916 will serve as a model for other states to follow.

Fifteen states have laws requiring schools to use IPM methods. Under Connecticut's current law, schools are recommended but not required to implement IPM programs, and schools can spray even highly toxic restricted use pesticides on school lawns and fields as long as they post notification signs. The new, tougher bill will be one of the strictest school lawn pesticide bills in the country.

For more information on SB916, go to www.ehhi.org

North Carolina School District Adopts IPM Plan to Protect Children

Recently the Orange County, North Carolina School Board adopted an integrated pest management (IPM) plan to end the use of toxic pesticides around children, as reported in the *Herald Sun*. These changes came as a result of successful organizing by the Agricultural Resources Center (ARC)'s Pesticide Education Project (PESTed) in Raleigh.

This school district now joins others in North Carolina, that include, Durham, Wake County, Forsyth County and Elizabeth City in adopting the prevention-based approach. PESTed is also working with the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, ARC's Billie Karel told the *Herald*.

While at a meeting this spring, ARC and others presented a petition to the Orange County school board with 50 signatures of community members

wanting safe pesticide use. "There are parents who really want their schools to be less toxic," Ms. Karel said. "Our goal has been to empower those parents' groups and teachers' groups to build a campaign."



Many schools use pesticides on their playing fields

An ARC survey shows that IPM could save money while also reducing chemical exposure to children within the schools. According to the survey, North Carolinian school districts spend \$1.77 per student per year on pest control, which can be reduced to \$1.49 per student per year with the use of IPM methods. In Orange County, advocates have worked with Frank Meadows, the district's safety coordinator. Advocates from the project generally hook up with interested parents during informational sessions at local schools, libraries and information fairs, Ms. Karel said.

For more details on the plan in North Carolina, contact the Agricultural Resources Center at www.pested.org.

To find out what state laws and local policies govern your school please see www.beyondpesticides.org/schools/

School Pesticide Monitor

Beyond Pesticides/

National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides

701 E Street, SE, Suite 200

Washington, DC 20003

(202) 543-5450

Playing Fields and Pesticides Update: U.S. Youth Soccer Dissolves Partnership with TruGreen/Chemlawn

U.S. Youth Soccer (USYS) has ended its sponsorship agreement with TruGreen/ChemLawn. The March 2005 decision came after environmental activists, public interest groups, and concerned citizens from across the country launched a letter-writing campaign to USYS, asking that the soccer association not renew its agreement. Under the agreement, TruGreen/ChemLawn had been given access to USYS's mailing lists, which they used to send out mailings to the families of young soccer players promoting the use of their chemical lawn services. The mailings explicitly stated that TruGreen/ChemLawn would donate a percentage of each purchase to USYS.

USYS ended the partnership without any comments. Josh Golin, program manager for Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, which spearheaded the campaign to end the USYS-TruGreen/ChemLawn alliance, said that while USYS has no comment, "It is clear that the letter—and all of our efforts—played a key role in U.S. Soccer's decision to end the partnership...It is great that ChemLawn will no longer be able to exploit children's love of soccer to market toxic pesticides to families. And it is gratifying to see all of our efforts make a real difference."

Thirty prominent children's and environmental organizations, including Beyond Pesticides, sent a public letter in October 2004 to USYS asking them not to renew their sponsorship agreement with TruGreen/ChemLawn. Numerous individuals and grassroots organizations

sent individual letters as well.

It is widely known that children are more susceptible to pesticides and other toxins than adults. Pound for pound, children eat more food and drink more water than adults do, and thus they take in more pesticides and toxic chemicals relative to body weight. At the same time, children's organ systems are still developing and are more vulnerable to hazardous chemicals. Studies show that children in households that use home and garden pesticides are 6.5 times at higher risk of developing leukemia.

This past spring, Richard N. Ash, M.D.,

an internal medicine specialist and leader in the field of environmental medicine, spoke out against the continued use of chemicals on sports fields used by America's youth. "While the use of natural fertilizers is the best first step in growing a safe and environmentally healthy lawn or field for our children, we must be aware of how pesticides and other harmful and non-organic growing agents effect our children," said Dr. Ash in a press release.

Editors Note: Thanks to all who participated in the campaign against TruGreen/ChemLawn by sending letters to USYS and helping lead to this victory.

Sign the National School Pesticide Reform Protocol ***A Proclamation for the Protection of Schoolchildren from Pests and Pesticides***

Calling all: governors, mayors, attorneys general, school superintendents, school board members, teachers, PTAs, doctors, medical associations, unions, state extensions, school facilities staff, and pest management officials!

The National Protocol is a call-to-action from the School Pesticide Reform Coalition (SPRC) to get schools to use safe school pest management practices. With this national call-to-action, we will raise further awareness for the need of viable alternatives and safe approaches to school pest management such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

The Protocol is a tool to:

- Document the unified support for pesticide reductions in schools.
- Send a message to the public and policy makers about protecting children from pesticide exposure.
- Create local, state and national support for safe pest management practices and policies.

Sign the Protocol: Go to <http://www.beyondpesticides.org/toxicfreeschools/action.htm>