



## **Sports Field Forum NZ Monthly Newsletter**

**April 2008 Vol 3 (3)**

### **Chairman's Cheers**

Well, we are into the Winter season, it's hard to believe.

Of note is the later daylight savings date and the glorious autumn weather –(for all but grass/turf growers -read dairy farmers and sports field managers !!)

It's been a few years since the last "Indian" summer and field conditions won't be what field managers would have liked for the start of the season. It will be interesting to observe from the sideline how the fields stand up-your renovation, maintenance and use management skills will be tested.

I am currently looking at the record of summer use here at Manukau and it is pleasing to see the range and depth of recreational activities we cater for.

All forum members are gainfully engaged providing the opportunities for Kiwi's to engage in healthy activities. Of particular note is the growth in non sporting "events". Here at Manukau we now have an events team who we as the main event venue managers (parks and civic area's –which only leaves roads) co operate with to facilitate the events. Not new to some other sports field managers is the increasing pressure we are coming under to allow sports fields to be used as venues for events. At the recent Polyfest at the Manukau sports bowl a soccer field was made available for the crowd to watch performances on a stage at the side of the field. This allowed the event to grow even larger. We managed by charging a sum for renovation required over and above the norm.

A new duty of our Park Rangers is to be assigned to events –either the large scale ones that require an events permit (& resource consent) and which have an events coordinator facilitating or those requiring a Park booking only.

An Update on Forum Initiatives:

#### 1. The Young Horticulturalist of the year competition.

Due to the lack of available man power to carry out the necessary administration we won't be making an entry this year. However it is proposed to contact the other sectors of the Turf industry to see if the Turf industry at large could make an entry next year.

## 2. The best provincial stadia competition.

Due to the need for more lead time this is now proposed to be run in 2009.

The momentum achieved to date is to be maintained and there will be ongoing discussions with these stadia.

3. An Auckland region Park Booking Officers forum has been proposed and Colin Foster PBO at Manukau parks is drawing up an action plan which should see the forum meet by the end of April.

## **Request for Help from Whangarei**

“With a change in council last year and a desire by the current councillor to cut spending, one of the obvious avenues which they will want to explore is whether we should increase the charges for use of our sportsfields.

Am I able to use the council membership of the Forum to ask those member councils what charges they levy on sportsfields both for regular use for both competition and practice, and for casual, one off type use? If not do you have another suggestion whereby I can seek the information outlined?

The information will be very helpful in presenting a case to council”  
Aubrey Gifford, Technical Officer Parks, Whangarei District Council

Robert Findlay, Manukau City advises ”No charges for use of sports fields -considered 100% public good. We did have charges for several seasons but then Council dropped them. At the time about 5% of the cost of presentation was the target recovery level and about \$80k was involved”

Mike Gallagher, Auckland City Council, advises that all of their charges are available on their website;

<http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/whatson/places/sportsparks/summary.asp#fees>

If any of you can help Aubrey, please contact him via email – [aubreyg@wdc.govt.nz](mailto:aubreyg@wdc.govt.nz)

## **NZSTITO**

### Staffing:

The ITO is now being led by Executive Officer, Jenny Lupton. The Board is fully supportive of, and confident in Jenny’s ability to see our ITO prosper in the future and lead training for the Turf Industry.

A recent review of staff roles and levels highlighted the need for some changes, including increased administration support. To improve customer service, a part-time Training Administrator (Jeanette Salmond) has recently started with the ITO on a 3 month temporary appointment.

Some other changes within the Training Co-Ordinators will see more effective management of trainees, marketing and promotional work.

### Industry Strategic Training Plan:

Between 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April, Professor John Haydu has moderated four focus group sessions in Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland and Palmerston North. Participants representing all sectors of our industry have been involved in the process. This carries on from initial survey work begun in 2006.

The final plan will be vital in defining future training needs for the Sports Turf Industry. It will establish priorities on what needs to be accomplished and when, and will hopefully pull the industry together around a single game plan. I expect it will go a long way to addressing issues around attracting and retention of staff within our industry. Thank you to those people who have assisted in the project to date.

### ITO Re-recognition:

By the end of 2008, the Sports Turf ITO's 5 year recognition period expires. Government requires evidence of how effective the ITO is, and that it has continued industry support. The process is going to be an important project to deliver on- to ensure that the STITO remains in place for the benefit of our industry.

### Unit Standard and Qualification Reviews:

Commencing in September 2007, level 3 and 4 units have been reviewed. Our Sportsfield Sector owes a huge vote of thanks to Warwick Sisson, who has represented us in this process. Thank you Warwick, and your team of helpers. The National Certificate in Sports Turf Management (level 4), National Certificate in Amenity Turf Maintenance (level 3) and National Certificate in Sports Turf (Introduction to Turf Care) (level 3) are also to be reviewed as soon as practically possible. Industry representatives participate in this project. Warwick will again represent NZ Cricket and Sportsfields.

## **Best Stadia Competition**

After developing a concept and format for the Best Provincial Stadium Competition, SSDM began to contact potential entrants with the intention of enabling the competition to run this winter, with the first audit taking place during April 2008. Contact was made with a number of stadiums which resulted in competition details being sent out to representatives from 14 provincial stadiums. Although a few of the stadiums never responded at all the concept was generally met with enthusiasm and willingness to enter, but not this year. Short notice, timing of renovation works and the unbudgeted competition entrance cost were the key factors behind the decisions not to enter. The competition shall instead be organised for next year, with increased fore-warning for budgeting purposes. We look forward to running the competition and hope that many of the Provincial stadiums plan to take part.

**Richard Gibbs, SSDM**

# Endosulfan Submission – PGG Wrightson Turf

Submission by Bill Walmsley, Turf Agronomist, PGG Wrightson

## Introduction

Endosulfan has been used extensively in the turf industry in every town and city in New Zealand for over 20 years without reports of health injury environmental damage or fish deaths. It is highly effective for earthworm control, which is its main use. Alternatives for earthworm control are much less effective and could lead to perverse and adverse consequences.

I have advised turf managers for close to 30 years on the safe and effective use of endosulfan. There are definitely improvements that could be made to the labeling and usage recommendations for endosulfan to improve its safety in turf.

There has been a great effort made by OSH, Growsafe trainers, consultants, safety manufacturers to provide and make mandatory the use of the highest standard of safety products for applying pesticides. In my experience there is a very high level of compliance with the use of personal protective equipment for spraying. It is an outrage that the least effective respiratory option and least effective headwear were chosen as inputs into the model in 4.2.45.

Here are my comments on the report and some of the information requested.

### 2.2.5 Risks to the environment

When used in turf for earthworm control, endosulfan is watered in immediately after application by a sprinkler irrigation system applying 12mm of irrigation without runoff. It is therefore washed off the turf surface, minimizing the risk of dislodgeable residues affecting turf users. In the soil its very high organic carbon partitioning coefficient adsorbs it to the soil organic matter (and clay particles). It is then held very tightly and doesn't move much. So much so that earthworms can live below the endosulfan layer and will not be affected until they move through it to the surface.

The main environmental risk is from surface runoff into streams from heavy rain immediately after application. To avoid this users are recommended to water it in using a measured amount of sprinkler irrigation. Buffer zones of 7-10m should be left between the sprayed area and any water body or stream. Unlike agriculture where soil particles can transport adsorbed agrichemicals into water bodies, particle transport is insignificant in turf. Instead surface runoff from the sprayed surface is the primary mechanism. Once watered in to the soil, the strongly adsorbed endosulfan will not move laterally in turf.

Where turf areas adjoin farmland turf managers are warned not to dispose of clippings anywhere that grazing animals can eat for three months after endosulfan application.

### 2.2.6 Risks to human health

In my 30 years of experience I have not come across a case of anyone experiencing harm from endosulfan. Agrichemical safety practices were very poor 30 years ago.

### 2.3.4 Uses of endosulfan

Endosulfan is used in turf primarily for earthworm control in golf courses, lawn bowling greens, cricket pitches, croquet lawns, sportsgrounds, and ornamental lawns. It is also used for earthworm control in airfields to prevent birdstrike, where excessive earthworm population attracts bird feeding.

Endosulfan is normally used on an as-required basis on most turf. When there is a low level of earthworm activity, none is required. Once the level becomes unacceptable the area is treated, and generally it doesn't need treating for another 2-3 years. Frequently earthworm activity is excessive in certain areas and only those areas need treating. Blanket wall to wall spraying each year is considered to be bad practice and is discouraged. Many airports used to apply endosulfan every year up until about 10 years ago. As the effect has worn off the birdstrike numbers have increased. They need to have the option to spray periodically as required.

An important use of endosulfan is in controlling earthworms in sand carpet sportsfields. Sand carpet sportsfields are widely used throughout New Zealand to upgrade otherwise muddy sportsfields. Most stadiums are sand carpets and so are many suburban sportsfields. They are very expensive to build and maintain. A critical part of the maintenance is to prevent earthworm casting into the sand layer. If not controlled the sportsfield can be ruined in as little as 3-5 years. The same applies to golf greens which are predominantly sand.

Endosulfan has a minor use for insect control in turf. It is foliar applied and is left overnight before washing it off the foliage the following morning. It is particularly useful because a single insecticide application can control both insects and earthworms where they both need treating.

#### 4.1.8 New Zealand reports of adverse effects.

For all the years of extensive use on sportsfields, golf courses, bowling greens, I have not heard of any reports of any adverse environmental harm apart from one suspected case of fish kill, when heavy rain occurred immediately after application. When watered in after application, any problems with surface runoff and contact re-entry are greatly minimized.

4.1.9 Reports of worker injury in Benin and India are due to worker contact re-entry times not being adhered to.

4.1.13 Surface runoff immediately after application is the main risk in turf.

#### 4.2.16 Application rates and frequency

I must object strongly to the assumptions made in this study having any relevance to turf. I can't recall any turf manager applying four applications of endosulfan per year and I can't visualize any use where applications would be made at a minimum of 10 day intervals. One or at most two applications per year perhaps. Nearly every user would water the product in, otherwise it won't work. Users are encouraged to have a no spray zone (buffer zone) around water bodies or streams.

Why would the inputs to the model be patently bad practice?

4.2.22 Endosulfan is used for earthworm control in turf. In order for it to work it needs to be watered into the soil. The acute terrestrial vertebrate risk and risk to birds is minimized by watering in immediately after application, which should be good practice anyway.

The chronic risk from multiple applications is not applicable to turf because earthworms are generally controlled by a single application which lasts for 2-3 years. Occasionally a second application is needed to give control. I can't recall it ever being applied in multiple applications as described in the model. Some sand carpet sportsfields need annual treatments for difficult to control earthworms which explode in numbers when applications stop.

4.2.23 Chronic toxicity data for birds and mammals is not applicable to most turf uses which tend to be small in area. For example the golf greens represent about 1ha in area on a golf course which is 100ha in size. Similarly where sportsfields are treated on an as-required basis, typically only part of a sportsfield is treated or only a few sportsfields in a city are treated. A bowling green of 0.1ha is also small.

4.2.45 The model uses the least effective respiratory option and the least effective headwear. This is at odds with the executive summary which states that "High risks to workers have been identified even where workers are using full PPE including respirators." It would be more honest to add "where modeled using the least effective respiratory protection and the least effective headwear." It would be interesting to compare the protective clothing chosen with that recommended by OSH and sold here in New Zealand.

4.2.50 You can't make a statement about high bystander risk using a model that doesn't account for that. There is good equipment to minimize spray drift and there shouldn't be bystanders if good spray practice is followed.

4.2.51 Benefits of endosulfan

Endosulfan is an effective, long lasting earthworm control in sports turf. Used properly the main risks to operator health and fish kill can be mitigated.

4.3 Assessments of NZ international obligations

Endosulfan could be a factor in our international airport safety in relation to birdstrike.

6.12 Off label use

Endosulfan is used in all turf areas primarily for earthworm control.

### **Benefits of Endosulfan**

Endosulfan is uniquely effective and long lasting on earthworms in turf. It is cost effective for sports clubs and councils. The alternatives are effective for shorter, require much more active ingredient to be applied and can have unintended consequences. For example thiophanate methyl has been known for earthworm control but use of this fungicide repeatedly is bad practice in relation to resistance control. Carbaryl is another short term control, but it is an organophosphate insecticide and surface application carries increased risk of player harm from dislodgeable residues. There are also risks to beneficial insects.

### **Possible changes to controls**

Formalise good practice with explicit instructions on the label or with information available elsewhere.

**Bill Walmsley, PGG Wrightson Turf**

## South Island Fine Turf Seminar

This will be held at the Suburban Club, in Nelson on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June and Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June. The event is organised by the Canterbury Golf Course Superintendents Association.

Additions have been made to the original programme that some of you may have received. A Sportsfield/Cricket section has been added now.

Topics include Environmental Sustainability, Saxton Field Sportsfield and Cricket Block Construction, Sportsturf ITO Update, Open Forum.

On the Tuesday there will be a field trip to various Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council Sportsfields.

Further mail outs are due shortly with the updated programme. Other information is available by following links on the NZ Golf Course Superintendents Association website [www.nzgcsa.org.nz](http://www.nzgcsa.org.nz)

### Executive Committee

Feel free to contact any member for assistance:

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**That's all for now  
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