

## TALKING ABOUT HERBICIDES

Responding to myths, rumors and fears



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### Why should YOU speak up?

- You are on the front lines
- You have expert knowledge
- It's easier to frighten people than to educate them
- Perceptions will only change if people with knowledge speak -up



### Information is everywhere

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Website & Blogs
- Newspapers
- Television

**Accuracy is often lacking!**

### People don't understand

#### What they don't know

- Most of the public gets their science from the Lifestyle pages
- They know what they've heard – but not the facts
- Public opinion is often based on anecdotes, fears, or beliefs – NOT science.

### EPA has a PR problem

- × That means we all have a PR problem
  - + People believe:
    - × Regulators are all "paid off" by manufacturers
    - × Pesticides are used in huge quantities
    - × They said it was safe but it wasn't
      - × (Agent Orange)

### How to explain why they don't need to be afraid

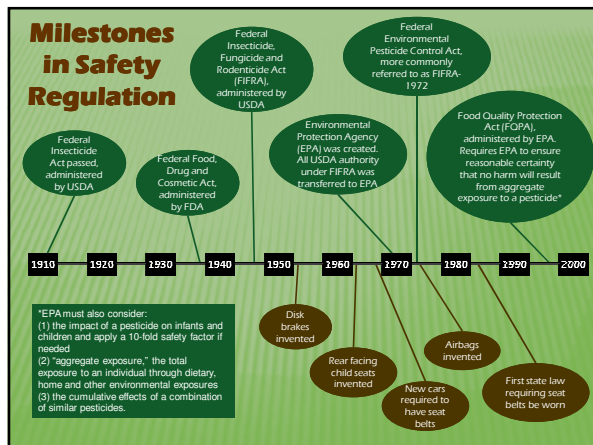
- × Acknowledge the "bad old days"
- × Regulations have changed over time
- × Clarify "hazard," "risk" and "safety"
- × Pesticides as a part of an overall management plan
- × Chemicals – natural vs. synthetic
- × Address myths and issues of concern
- × Talk about the benefits of pesticides

### What the public doesn't know about pesticide regulation

- ✗ EPA registration requirements
- ✗ Applicator training requirements
- ✗ Pesticides are not all the same
- ✗ How much has changed over time

### Pesticides did have bad old days

- ✗ Those days are gone!
- ✗ EPA was created
- ✗ Hazardous products were banned
- ✗ FIFRA was enacted
- ✗ FQPA (1996)
- ✗ Re-registration requirements
- ✗ Science Advisory panels



### Government oversight

- Pesticides are among the most tested and regulated products for sale in the U.S.
- Each product must pass over 140 different tests
- Only 1 out of 140,000 potential products reach the market
- All products must be registered by the EPA
- That process can take 8-10 years and cost \$150 million or more

### Government oversight

- Pesticides are under constant scrutiny
- If health or safety issues arise, EPA can require more testing at any time
- EPA can pull a product off the market at any time

### The label is the LAW

- EPA specifies what the label must say
- The label specifies how much to use, when to use, and other limits
- Not following the label is a violation of the law

### Understand the terms

**Hazard**

Potential for negative outcome

**Risk**

Probability of negative outcome

**Safety**

Emotional view of risk/reward balance  
*(What is safe to you may not seem safe to me)*

### Life is full of hazards


- **Using electricity**
- **Driving a car**
- **Taking medication**

- **We manage our exposure to limit risk**


- **Risk = hazard x exposure**

### Hazards are not all equal


Cell phone charger




110 volt outlet




220 volt outlet






Residential power line



Transmission line



**Pesticides vary in terms of hazard, too**

### Natural vs. Synthetic

**Cotton**



**Pyrethrum**



vs.

**Synthetic**



**Pyrethroids**



### Pest management is more than pesticides

- × **IVM**
- × **Planting successful plants**
- × **Mulch**
- × **Mowing**
- × **Blading**

- × **Sometimes pesticides are the best solution with the least adverse effects**

### All systems have risks

- **Mowing**
  - **throws rocks**
  - **increases risk to workers**

- **Scraping increases sediment runoff that impairs streams**

### Focus on benefits rather than risk

- **Mosquito control prevents disease**
- **Termite control protects homes**
- **Managing vegetation prevents wildfires**
- **Public safety is protected by maintaining roads and rights-of-way**

### Benefits of pesticides

- **Focus on positive outcomes of appropriate pesticide use**
  - **Stop invasive species**
  - **Protect habitat**
  - **Make driving safer - visibility, drainage**
  - **(State Patrol Mantra)**

### Application Safety

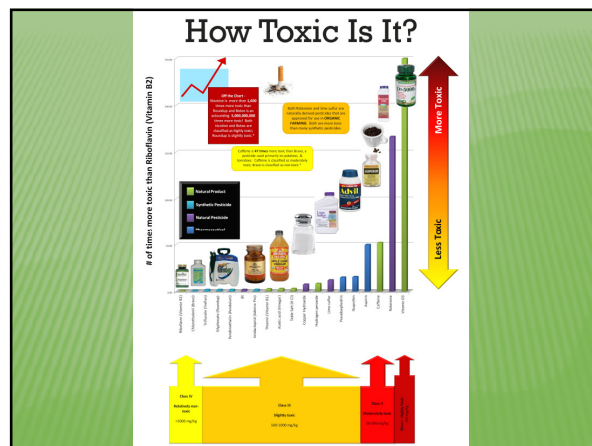
- **Applicators must be trained and pass a test**
- **Applicators get update training every year**
- **As a trained and licensed applicator, you follow the law and understand safety precautions**

### Make a good first impression

- **Determine what they are most concerned about – health? the environment, testing and regulation?**
- **Let them know you sincerely care about the proper use of pesticides**
- **Use your own life experiences as examples**

### Keys to Success

- **Know your subject – be prepared**
- **Know where to get more information**
- **Communicate clearly and calmly**
- **Follow-up – find the answers to questions**



**Never discount the value of your  
knowledge or the importance of  
your contribution...**

**The world is run by  
those who show up!**

**Questions?**

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