

Municipal pesticide bylaws in Canada – The impact on pest management practices

In June 2001, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld a municipal bylaw that prohibited the use of pesticides on public and private property. The judgement was based on a distinction between essential and non-essential uses of pesticides, provided the bylaw purpose "is to minimize the use of allegedly harmful pesticides in order to promote the health of the inhabitants". Since, over 150 municipalities and 2 provinces have adopted bylaws severely restricting the use of pesticides within their jurisdiction. These bylaws now account for nearly 50% of the Canadian population. The public discussions have left little room for IPM practitioners who see pesticides as a necessary tool within a justified and rational program. This workshop will review all sides of the argument and draw lessons for IPM practitioners. Presenters have direct involvement in municipal bylaw debates. An overriding theme will be the need for education of the decision makers in regards to pesticide use in public areas, including education of the public on the role of pesticides in pest management program; education of pesticide users on the importance of reducing unnecessary pesticide use; and education of elected officials on least-toxic pesticides.

The Canadian experience illustrates the importance of novel programs to comply with more stringent legislative requirements, such as stronger emphasis on preventative pest control, better documentation of pest problems, and increased auditing of work performed.

Moderator and Organizer: Mario Lanthier, office@crophealth.com, CropHealth Advising & Research, Kelowna BC Canada

8:30 The arguments of municipal pesticide bylaws

Mario Lanthier, office@crophealth.com, CropHealth Advising & Research, Kelowna BC, Canada
Public discussions about municipal bylaws rapidly become partisan debates. Those in favor or against bylaws both claim scientific knowledge, public support and moral authority. Specific topics will include the legal background that allows for municipal bylaws in Canada, the arguments in favor of bylaws by environmental groups and members of the medical community, the arguments against bylaws by trade organizations and pesticide manufacturers, and the impact on IPM practitioners and their use of pesticides.

9:00 An example of municipal bylaw: the City of Kelowna Pesticide Reduction Strategy

Michelle Kam, www.kelowna.ca, Environmental Technician, City of Kelowna, Kelowna BC, Canada
Municipalities have the authority to limit specific activities that involve pesticides, such as applications for cosmetic purposes, but cannot regulate sale or purchase of these products. Most Canadian municipal bylaws use similar wording, with differences for local considerations. This presentation will examine the City of Kelowna bylaw as an example. The "Pesticide Use Regulation Bylaw" was adopted by City Council in 2008 following 3 years of a pesticide reduction strategy. Specific topics will include public input, staff directed research, the Pesticide bylaw advisory committee, and actual bylaw wording.

9:30 The genesis and effectiveness of municipal pesticide bylaws in Canada

Carol Mee, cmee@toronto.ca, Supervisor, Environmental Information and Education, Toronto Public Health, Toronto ON Canada

A reduction in non-essential use of pesticides is documented where pesticide bylaws are combined with a public education campaign. The conclusion is supported by surveys done in municipalities that have adopted a pesticide bylaw. This presentation will review the City of Toronto as an example. The 4-year old bylaw was adopted to address health and environmental concerns. Specific topics will include the origins of the bylaw, impact on commercial landscape services, public opinion surveys on use of pesticides and natural gardening techniques.

10:00

Kent Mullinix, kent.mullinix@kwantlen.ca, Institute for Sustainable Horticulture, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Surrey BC, Canada

IPM accreditation programs were developed by the landscape industry as an answer to municipal pesticide bylaws. Commercial pesticide users that receive detailed IPM training can be exempted from the provisions of the municipal bylaw. This presentation will review the "PlantHealthBC Pest Management Accreditation" as an example. It was developed to work with municipalities to advance the practice of IPM by landscape care service providers. Specific topics will include program development and objectives, accreditation standards, program elements, and municipalities as key partners. There will be a short discussion of the successes and failures of these programs.