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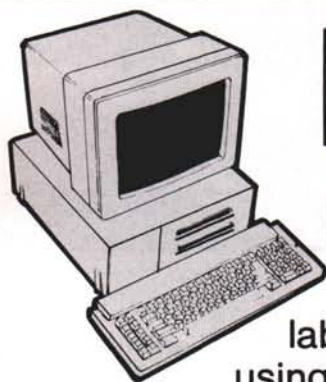
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CHEMLAWN STOPS 2,4-D USE PENDING TEST RESULTS

ChemLawn Corporation of Columbus, OH, the largest lawn care company in the U.S., has suspended its use of the broadleaf herbicide 2,4-D following results of a study released in October showing increased incidence of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL) among Kansas farmers using herbicides. The company will not resume its use of 2,4-D until more tests of the product are completed and conclusive results are reached.

The decision to suspend use of 2,4-D was made out of concern primarily for ChemLawn employees, says Steve Hardymon, the company's manager of legislative affairs. Although the Kansas study was inconclusive according to the National Cancer Institute, it did reveal that farmers using herbicides more than 20 days per year had six times the risk of developing NHL as those who did not handle herbicides. The NCI said 2,4-D was just one of a number of different herbicides used by the farmers in the study.

"During more than 40 years of use and a bank of 30 tests recently completed for the Environmental Protection Agency, 2,4-D has not been conclusively linked with cancer," says Hardymon. "None of the tests have ever implicated 2,4-D with causing cancer in the lawn spray business. In fact, we are volunteering our employees as proof that no such connection exists. All ChemLawn applicators follow strict precautions when applying or mixing chemicals. Gloves, face masks and protective clothing are worn when any concentrated pesticide is handled for mixing.

Although the study did not relate directly to lawn care, the company thought it "prudent" to replace 2,4-D with another herbicide until the final set of scientific tests is complete. Hardymon says the company took the step because it tends to receive the most flack from the media even though it spends more on its own safety research than any other company.

More than 40,000 scientific articles have been published about 2,4-D since it was introduced in 1944. Control of dandelions and plantains in lawns and ornamental turf is one of its minor uses. It is also used for selective control of broadleaf weeds in cereal crops and for control of woody plants in rangelands, forests, pastures and roadsides.

In 1980, EPA felt the data on 2,4-D should be updated and required manufacturers to provide additional information through testing. These tests have supported the claim that the herbicide does not represent a health hazard to humans, domestic animals or wildlife when used according to label instructions.

Hardymon suspects the farmers in the most recent test did not utilize the same level of precaution when handling herbicides as ChemLawn does. But, until more conclusive data is presented, the company will use an alternate herbicide.