



PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE CIRCULATION

The Amenity Forum welcomes letter sent out to local authorities

At the end of last week, the Director of Regulatory Policy at the Chemicals Regulation Directorate sent out a letter to all Chief Executives of Local Authorities. The letter alerted them to new regulations and changes relating to the use of pesticides resulting from the implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive (SUD). It emphasises that, whether authorities use their own staff to undertake weed, pest and disease control or use external contractors, it is important that they fully comply with the legal requirements and follow best practice guidelines at all times.

It emphasises the need for such control programmes to be specified and overseen by suitably qualified and competent staff thus minimising risk and ensuring best value and the most effective levels of control. In specifying and delivering contracts, it suggests authorities should follow best practice guidelines such as those set out in the Amenity Assured standard and encourages use of established CPD programmes. It asks authorities to fully consider integrated programmes of weed and disease control and emphasises the responsibilities involved in all such operations indicating that suitable advice or guidelines are available on the Amenity Forum website.

Professor John Moverley, Independent Chairman of the Amenity Forum, said "We very much welcome the issue of this letter and have valued being involved with its preparation. As a voluntary initiative led by all involved in weed, pest and disease control in the amenity sector, our key objectives are to promote best practice and drive up standards and we have made real progress over recent years. However, whilst there are many examples of good practice, there are those who do not meet such standards. The potential consequences for human health and in ensuring that we can all continue to be able to use all the methods available to us for effective control, are significantly threatened as a result"

He continued "We are pleased to have within our membership, a number of local authorities but we would welcome more. By so doing, they are not only gaining access to a wide range of information and support, they are also demonstrating their commitment to best practice and the highest standards"

John is speaking to a national APSE conference later this month on the practical implications of the new regulations arising from SUD and indeed the Water Framework Directive. On October 17th, a major national conference is being held at Leicester which will address all these matters in detail. Further information is available from Alan Spedding, Secretary to the Forum, at Alan.Spedding@amenityforum.co.uk

Notes to Editors

The Amenity Forum is the independent body bringing together professional organisations with an involvement in the amenity horticulture sector. This is a very diverse industry responsible for the landscape management of urban areas, highways and rail network, sports grounds, parks, industrial and utility sites. To establish and maintain these areas to a high standard, the sector requires access to pesticides, efficient equipment and trained and qualified staff. The organisation was formed in October 2003 as a key action to support the Voluntary Initiative, an industry led project agreed with Government to reduce the environmental impact of pesticides.

The membership comprises of organisations from across this diverse industry, covering manufacturers, suppliers, trade associations, local authorities, major users, landscape, sport and leisure. Equally important are those members who represent training and qualification standards. The key Government agencies have an important observer role. The objectives of the Amenity Forum are:

- *To be the collective body representing the amenity industry, in relation to pesticide use*
- *To lead, coordinate and encourage achievement of "Best Practice" objectives in amenity pesticide use*
- *To coordinate and encourage the establishment of sustainable qualifications, training and CPD activity, specifically for the amenity sector*
- *To organise activities within the Amenity Forum membership and linked organisations, such that Amenity Forum objectives are developed in a coordinated way*

For further information on this press release or the work of the Forum, please contact the Secretary, Alan Spedding, or the Chairman, Professor John Moverley OBE. Similarly if you wish to register for future press releases, please let us know.

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