

May 11, 2010

Law Amendments Committee Nova Scotia Pesticide Ban

Mr Minister, MLAs, Ladies and Gentlemen: Thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon. My name is Mike Barclay, and I am the General Manager of Halifax Seed Company in Halifax. Our company has been a leader in Horticulture and gardening in Atlantic Canada since 1866. I have personally been involved for 27 years.

First I would like to disagree with the premise that Lawn and Garden Pesticides are non essential. Flowers, lawns and gardens are a desired part of our environment in Nova Scotia. Tulips, Roses, Forsythia, Red Maples in the Fall, all add to the beauty of our surroundings. And yes, lawns are a large part of our cultured environment. They all add beauty to our neighbourhoods, and they add to the beauty of Nova Scotia. In the world of growing plants, Mother Nature sometimes throws pests at us that are difficult to deal with. Pesticides are sometimes needed to deal with these pests.

We also support legislation that truly helps protect the health of Nova Scotians.

In life and business we all have people that we respect and trust. When the Pesticide issue came up, I went to my father. He is a well known and respected Chemist, who has been honoured into the Order of Canada. I asked him what he thought about banning pesticides. I trust and respect his experience, and opinions. His response was that if we really want to make a difference in reducing health risk, and exposure, then we are focused in too low on the list of risky substances. He talked about the direct contact that we make with many substances everyday. Some of his examples include:

- Fire Retardants in fabrics, and clothing
- Food Preservatives
- Paints
- Cleaners
- Pool and Hot-tub chemicals
- Chlorine and water treatments for drinking water.
- Wood preservatives

Having been a part of this industry for quite a while, we have experienced

some strong trends in pesticides, and solutions for dealing with pests. First of all, homeowners want to use softer/ eco-friendly approaches for dealing with pests. Manufacturers have responded by developing softer solutions to Pest Control. This trend has been progressing for years. Manufacturers are providing more Eco Friendly solutions, the PMRA has been demanding more eco-friendly science, and homeowners are selecting the softer/safest approach. These strong movements have made pesticide use much safer.

Moving forward we have 2 (some) major issues.

1. A list of permitted products. Gardening is a huge industry, and there is a need to deal with pests. It is important that there be a list of permitted products, and that there be clear scientific guidelines for how this list is developed. There are some excellent products available now, and more to come. So let's make it clear how ecofriendly products can be added to the list of permitted products.

A suggestion that we have here is that if there is some hesitation on which products, and how to control them, you may consider a Pharmacy Style system. This would require Retail Vendors to be trained and licensed to sell certain products. These Products could be sold in a controlled environment, so that there must be interaction between the trained vendor, and the gardener with a problem. This is similar to the PEI model.

2. There must also be some consideration for dealing with inventory of products that will be banned. There are millions of dollars of pesticides in inventory throughout the province in consumer, and commercial pesticides. One short gardening season is not enough time to clear them all off the shelves, and out of warehouses. When the PMRA or a manufacturer discontinue a pesticide, they generally phase them out over 3 or more years. Think about it, the manufacturers won't take them back, especially if the cases have been opened. Also the Transportation of Dangerous Goods specifies that some of these products must be shipped in the UN approved safe shipping cases (original packing). I don't have real solve for this today. I suggest that it would take 2 to 3 years to sell through or clear the shelves in some instances. At this point we won't even know what is banned until after the 2010 season is done. What do retailers, and landscapers do with products then?

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. If anyone would like to use our expertise, we will be glad to offer our assistance.