AMATEUR LIAISON GROUP

Home and Garden Sector

- Much smaller than the professional sector but still significant. Put at around 10% by value of the professional sector.
- Very different market than professional sector – under 50 active substances approved as against 270 in the professional sector.
- Under ACP-recommended policy, only products which can be used safely by users without training or protective equipment approved.
- Very large numbers of users for some products (estimated around 5 million for lawn treatments and slug pellets).
- Continuing growth in Ready-To-Use (RTU) products which now account for more than 50% of market.

Amateur Group

Membership includes:

- B&Q
- CRD
- Crop Protection Association – Garden Group of companies
- Defra
- Horticultural Trades Association – representing garden centres and some other stores
- National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners
- Northern Ireland’s Department for Agriculture and Rural Development
- Pesticide Action Network UK
- Royal Horticultural Society
- Scottish Government
- Welsh Government
- Which? Gardening

The Group’s activities have focussed on several main areas:

Disposal

Environmental risks posed by amateur products seem as likely from poor disposal as poor use. The Group has taken initiatives including:

- limiting maximum pack size;
- improving label messages;
- discouraging 2 for 1s and similar marketing practices and
- promoting disposal of unused product via Council recycling centres.
Latest initiative (on Forum agenda) aims to encourage recycling of empty ready-to-use containers.

**Training**

Group members have developed 3 different levels of training courses –

- BASIS Guardian (2 days),
- Garden Care (1 day) and
- (soon to be launched) on-line course for retailers (2 hours).

The courses have been designed to meet different levels of need for retailers and to meet requirements of Sustainable Use Directive. A range of advisory material for retailers and members of the public have also been produced (postcards and leaflets on best practice).

**Labelling**

For household users the label is always likely to be the main source of use and safety information (although there is increasing use of websites).

All amateur products now have to carry a prominent warning

‘Use pesticides safely: read the label’.

There is an unavoidable tension in designing labels that meet statutory requirements and are comprehensive whilst avoiding overloading the label to the extent that key messages get lost.

Companies have made significant improvements to the clarity of labels but this will remain an area of ongoing interest for the Group.

**Miscellaneous**: Various other issues have also been tackled by the Group including:

- **Surveys**: the Pesticide User Habits Survey (on the Forum agenda) provides the group with a guide to user practice which has helped to inform some of the initiatives above.

- **Revised requirements for metaldehyde slug pellets**: a relatively large number of incidents involving young children apparently picking up and eating slug pellets were reported. New rules were introduced limiting the size of pellets and improving labelling (particularly by requiring a pictorial ‘scatter diagram’ to prevent over-use).

- **Herbicide contamination of composts (clopyralid)**: there is some anecdotal evidence that this herbicide (used as a selective lawn treatment) can occasionally persist in composted material and damage sensitive plants. Product label instructions have been strengthened in response and further research (by WRAP) linked to improved screening of commercial compost is ongoing.