

Pesticide Discussion

Meeting Between Pesticides Coalition Steering Committee members and Department of Environment and Local Government Staff

*by Liz Smith,
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On July 30, Lia Daborn of the Conservation Council and Liz Smith of the New Brunswick Lung Association met as representatives of the New Brunswick Pesticide Coalition Steering Committee with Nabil Elhadi, Greg Shanks, John Antworth, and Greg Sweetland of the Department of Environment and Local Government. The purpose of the meeting was to present through them to the Minister of the Environment, a resolution calling for a ban on the sale, supply, and use of cosmetic pesticides across New Brunswick. Included with the resolution was the list of signees, including numerous environmental groups, the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, and professional organizations such as the Nurses Association, and the New Brunswick Association of Social Workers which represent a substantial number of New Brunswickers.

The main concern expressed by the Department was a need for a definition of the word "cosmetic", a logical concern, which the Coalition representatives stated could be worked out based on the experiences of other jurisdictions, and at such time as the legislation to ban cosmetic pesticides was being developed.

The majority of meeting time was spent exchanging information about what each of the two non-profit organizations present and the Department were doing regarding cosmetic pesticide use reduction. A positive leap forward on the part of the Department is the recent creation of an manual on Integrated Pest Management techniques of turf grass management. In addition, as a participant at the National Healthy Lawns Strategy Meetings and the National Working Group on Pesticides Education, Training, and Certification, Greg Sweetland of the Department expressed the opinion that the national trend in cosmetic pesticide management is towards using a pharmacy-like approach to dispense the chemicals, based on a prescription obtained from an appropriate official, thus discouraging their use. This tactic, coupled with public education about alternative methods of pest control, would have the effect of lowering the use of pesticides in Canada. It was duly noted by coalition representatives that the department expressed a need for information about the alternatives. It falls to us to make sure they and the public get such information, with continued cooperation from the Department.

The meeting closed with a suggestion by Nabil Elhadi that the old Pesticide Advisory Board be resurrected under a new name. This was reiterated as a statement of intent by Minister Jardine, sending a promised official response to the Resolution. The gist of the response was that the New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Government is following the lead of the National Pest Management Regulatory Agency

in how it deals with the reduction of cosmetic pesticide use, and will continue to examine the issue through a working group composed of appropriate stakeholders from around the province. *