

SNAP presentation on EX23-47 - Supplemental Report - Regulate the Non-essential (Cosmetic) Use of Pesticides

Dear Members of the Executive Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this supplementary report about the regulation of the non-essential use of pesticides in Regina.

My name is Paule Hjertaas, President and spokesperson for the Saskatchewan Network for Alternatives to Pesticides (www.snapinfo.ca) I presented to Regina City Council in 2002, 2012 and 2022 to recommend the banning of non-essential (cosmetic) use of pesticides in Regina.

Introduction

Pesticides are harmful to the health of citizens. Pesticides are harmful to biodiversity and the environment. Therefore, since its foundation, SNAP has supported and still supports a ban on cosmetic use of pesticides and continue to see that as the best option. However, if that is not what this committee and Council choose to do, I will therefore direct most of my comments to the options. SNAP supports any administration recommendations that would, if properly implemented, reduce pesticide use on city property. It is important to see what impact you are having. SNAP therefore urge development of metrics to track pesticide use by the city and on private property with annual reporting of the metrics. I am making novel suggestions to help notification of pesticide use and notify and understand current pesticide use in Regina and education in a cheaper way of achieving 'the City's strategic priority of Environmental Sustainability by improving biodiversity and by creating a healthier community by reducing reliance on chemical sprays.'

Education may reduce use on private property. I applaud the City's Pest and Wildlife page and I have suggestions of cheaper ways to spread the word.

My first comment is about the options. As mentioned, SNAP prefers option 1, a ban on cosmetic use of pesticides.

1. **No to Option 2: having all spraying done by licensed applicators**

SNAP does not support option 2 as we believe it would lead to an increase in pesticide use until such time as companies that offer alternative lawn care in other provinces establish businesses in Regina to offer a true alternative.

1a. more pesticide used

Sounds great in theory. In practice, that would likely end up with a lot more pesticide use because lawn care companies use commercial products which are a lot more concentrated than domestic products available for use by individuals. Also, my past experience indicates that home owners generally spray their lawn once a year, while a lawn care company locks customers into a package which generally includes herbicides two or more times/year.

1b. Many companies are awful at even notifying customers of spraying.

Certainly, regarding notifications, customers of some lawn care companies have indicated that they are not even notified of when the company will come to spray their own property. If they had known, they would have put away children's toys, taken laundry off the line, and closed their windows. In 2002, after the spokesperson for one such company told Regina City Council that they were good citizens and would

be happy to notify, politely phoning them to ask for notification led to threats of being referred to the police for harassment.

1c poor use of safety clothing and equipment

In addition to some lawn care companies not notifying their own customers of when they come and threatening neighbours who want notification with harassment complaint, there are many observations that lawn care company sprayers wore few or no safety clothing.

I am glad to see that the employees are now supposed to be licensed which is a recent addition to the regulations. (<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/agriculture-natural-resources-and-industry/agribusiness-farmers-and-ranchers/crops-and-irrigation/pesticide-licensing-program/pesticide-service-licence>)

1d Selling treatments for problems that do not exist locally

Another issue with lawn care companies is selling treatments for problems that do not exist locally. For instance, getting customers on a lawn program that includes insecticide for chinch bugs or grubs in lawns - which to my knowledge you don't find in Saskatchewan although they are common problems in Eastern Canada (see Notification of Spraying/Insecticides below). This leads to more unneeded pesticide use.

1e Company registration and improved signage would be useful

Considering these companies are spraying poison all over the city, SNAP thinks that knowing who they are as well as what chemicals they use would be a positive option so a registry and some regulation might be in order. While many companies put up little signs on sprayed areas, they are more advertising than useful. I don't believe they mention any product used. In addition, one is exposed if having to get within 15 feet to read the details, so a large sign would be warranted. As I get sick from pesticides for a period of two weeks after spraying, Taking down signs after one day is inadequate for ensuring safety.

2. Notification of spraying

2a Interactive map created for any pesticide use

As to the duty to notify, perhaps a more handlable format would be for the city to provide an interactive map on a web site, where all companies as well as the city could add their spraying information by entering an address or location. It would be up to individuals who want to know to consult the map on a daily basis. I have heard that lawn care companies like to divide the city in areas and tend to do all their work in one area at the same time so perhaps notifying which area is being sprayed which day with what would be useful. This map should include spraying on golf courses and other areas currently excluded from pesticide bylaws. This map should be updated daily and past days should be available for consulting for at least a year. <https://pesticides.australianmap.net/> is a similar example done on a yearly basis.

Either each company and the city are each given a number or color so one knows who sprays where, but I suspect that lawn care companies won't want their customer addresses to be known. Or the numbers could represent the chemicals sprayed, for instance any formulation containing 2,4-D, mecoprop and dicamba (basic lawn spray) would be #1, glyphosate #2, malathion #3, Vectobac # 4, BT for elms #5 etc. and clicking on the number could give you details (what is sprayed and why i.e. for a lawn care co: what is used on private properties in South Lakeview for instance).

I am sure the city likely already has such maps for indicating road repair work, etc.

2b The current City of Regina notification has not been working adequately to protect the public for years.

The current phone line only gives the upcoming day spraying while I react to pesticide (herbicide, insecticide, etc) for up to 2 weeks after spraying. Also, the city is now divided in 'regions' or something and any spray applied locally never makes it to the phone line. For instance, last fall all the sidewalk cracks were sprayed with glyphosate on Pasqua and Elphinstone with no notification at all because it was a local spraying. In the past, I have also been caught in spray near the bowling greens in Kiwanis where there was also no prior notification.

Wascana Center now provides their pesticide spraying schedule on line at <https://wascana.ca/about-us/pesticide-spraying-schedules>. This is much more useful than an audio description of what area 45 or 81 is bordered by. It would even be more useful put on a map which gives a visual of the area. For instance glyphosate on sidewalks of x street in the area marked on the map. There is much more technology available than when this notification process was started. Let's update it.

2c. Insecticides:

Let's face it, products containing pyrethrins at the very least are widely available to consumers as mosquito bombs, candles, sprays, diffusers and likely many other forms. That is an issue that is likely outside the bounds of the current discussion but causing problems to neighbours and the environment.

When you talk about malathion and pyrethrins, I assume then that you mean for other issues than mosquitoes and you likely exclude indoors. Extending the use of Bt for canker worms as mandatory on private trees would be a small step in the right direction that would not change much to current tree spraying businesses.

2d Available alternatives to insecticides

There are commercial alternatives locally available for many uses: nematodes for ants, a wet vac for wasps, maple bugs, spiders, chinch bugs. etc, Bt for caterpillars, row covers for garden pests, etc. SNAP has several pages of free information on all kinds of alternative pest management at <https://www.snapinfo.ca/info/alternatives-to-pesticides>. When we start teaching alternatives in community colleges and University campuses, we will see a change in approach from pesticides. SNAP understands that the use of goats by the City for Leafy spurge control could be considered which could be coupled with beetle releases to increase impact. That is a welcome approach.

3. current companies losing business

There would be an opportunity to learn new skills for existing companies, or for new companies to get established in Regina.

4. Bringing Alternatives Lawn Care Companies to Regina

What I would suggest is that the city investigates incentives for companies that offer alternative lawn care in other provinces to establish businesses in Regina so there is a true commercial alternative to current lawn care companies. Courses are available that cost around \$5000 to be certified in alternative lawn

care. Were the city to sponsor applicants with an agreement to practice locally for a period of time, The City would produce long term change and meet its environmental goals.

5. Glyphosate reduction

You mention trimming would reduce use of glyphosate by 2/3. I would like to see the city try again a steam/water weeder on hard surfaces (gravel, sidewalks, streets) like Prince Albert is doing and seemingly happy with. I believe it can be rented to purchase and one could think of new uses with practice.

6. Education

Public education is always mentioned in general but never specified. You already have a website with good suggestions. One cheap suggestion would be to get someone from the City to help coordinate appearance of people who know alternatives on CBC Blue Sky or other similar radio or media programs. That would only take a few minutes of their time and reach the most people. I have alternative U of S gardening info on flea beetles, so they are moving away from pesticides. After review of their materials and choosing suitable or appropriate alternative ones, one could also team with them for alternatives teaching. For instance I believe some of their people do the CBC garden line and also write articles for gardening magazines. (also see section 2d)

7. Tracking Pesticide Use in Regina

There is currently no base data on pesticide use in Regina other than your survey which seems to indicate that most people still use herbicides or insecticides. So few people were sent the questions by Stats Canada that their data is unreliable. A base survey to figure out landowner pesticide use in Regina would be useful. In addition, an interactive map such as the one mentioned in 2a would help understand pattern and time of use.

Survey data will always be biased in favor of the status quo because this is what people are familiar with. It is easier for lawn care companies to produce a letter or postcard to send in favour of pesticide use to distribute to their customers than it is for cosmetic bylaw supporters to identify and contact supporters at the City level so the results will always be biased towards pesticide use. I don't personally know over 800 people who don't use pesticides or who do. I would like to see survey Q6 on 'Have you ever used cosmetic pesticide in maintaining your own property?' followed by a question on current use, which we still don't get from the survey. After all, I used to be 'normal' and even used glyphosate once over 40 years ago. It does not reflect my current position.

SNAP therefore urge development of metrics to track pesticide use by the city and on private property with annual reporting of the metrics.

8 Conclusion

SNAP supports a full cosmetic pesticide ban. SNAP rejects option 2 because we believe it would lead to an increase in pesticide use and risk if companies are not regulated properly as to acceptable practices (not 'accepted practices'), notification, and use of safety equipment. SNAP believes that provincial and federal requirements regarding safe use practices are very basic and way out of date with current health

and environmental data. Therefore the statement that 'Licenced applicators are aware of provincial and federal requirements regarding safe use practices' has to be taken with a big grain of salt.

If the City decides not to go with option 1, a full cosmetic pesticide ban, the City should set up a better notification website with interactive maps that companies and the city will enter daily data in (see 2a and b). This site should be advertised and made available to the public. Daily maps would be retained and available for the spray year and hopefully longer. Such maps would allow a visual to study pesticide use in the city, (at least city and commercial use) which would be one metric the administration could use. Hopefully it would lead to future improvements in pesticide reduction.

The City should look at bringing in alternative lawn care businesses, as well as using 'free' education opportunities, as well as pursue its own pesticide reduction goals. The City should also develop metrics to track pesticide use by the city and on private property with annual reporting of the metrics.

SNAP reiterates that we are available to discuss any alternatives to pesticides. We are only a web site, phone call or email away.

Thank you

Paule Hjertaas.

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