



## **PRESS RELEASE ISSUED ON 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011**

### **AMENITY FORUM EXPRESSES CONCERNS ABOUT THE PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION INTO LAW OF THE SUSTAINABLE USE DIRECTIVE**

The Amenity Forum has written to the DEFRA Secretary of State and other Government Ministers. They have expressed concerns about comments being made recently and emerging from discussions within Government departments. These relate to the implementation into law of the EU Sustainable Use Directive. The concern is that current controls on the use and distribution of pesticides may not be maintained but reduced. The Forum fear that this will put back much that has been achieved and penalise those in the sector who have helped so much to improve standards and public safety.

The Forum recognises the Government's wish not to unduly add to requirements in the Directive unless absolutely necessary but, if the current text of the Directive was just transposed into UK law, it believes that the changes would undermine the status of current professional standards on user and adviser certification and training. The Forum has done much recently to improve standards and encourage wide scale use of continuing professional development and qualified staff. The wording of the Directive states that Member States would be required to *provide access* to training, rather than stating that all sprayer operators and advisers must be trained and certificated by law. This is seen as a backward step and the Forum urges the UK government to make clear its commitment to current standards.

The Chairman of the Amenity Forum, John Moverley said, "In considering the consultation on the changes last year, we had always believed that the Directive sought to reinforce controls on the use and distribution of pesticides, rather than weaken them. We urge the Government for a continuation of the UK's current statutory requirement for certification of sprayer operators and an extension of this requirement to all advisers, as well as provisions for ongoing training and professional development"

Gary Harland, Chairman of the Communications group of the Forum said, "The Forum remains committed to promoting best practice in the distribution and use of pesticides and we feel that this must be underpinned by legislation to protect and enforce minimum standards". Steve Hewitt, Chairman of the Education and Training group of the Forum said, "Whilst application of the measures may be maintained through our membership by existing voluntary approaches, changes in legislative needs would be a backwards step after the agricultural and horticultural sector has worked hard to set the very best standards. In amenity we recognise there remains much to be done and we do not want to see slippage in this area of requirement".

## Notes to Editors

*The Amenity Forum is an independent body to bring 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 establish the Amenity Forum as 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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