

## **BASIS Activity in the Amenity Sector**

**2008**

During 2008 there has been a very high level of activity by BASIS in the Amenity area of pesticide use, indeed the highest ever. The inputs have been on three key fronts.

### **Lobbying/Networking**

Frequent discussions with PSD and the Environment Agency; discussions with and visits to Amenity contractors; Amenity Forum involvement; presentations to contractors, the London Amenity Forum conference and, in January 2009, the Northern Amenity Forum conference.

In 2008 BASIS has written to Local and MEPs to lobby for a scientific and impact assessed outcome to the 91/414 and sustainable use intended legislation.

All of these to further BASIS courses, the AMENITY ASSURED Scheme and industry interests.

### **Examination and Certification**

The two important qualifications which BASIS offers to the Amenity sector have both been substantially revised during the last 12-18 months. In consequence both the POWER and the Field Sales and Technical Staff (FSTS) BASIS certificates have a close fit to the industry practitioner needs. This has led to a greater interest and uptake of both qualifications.

The POWER (Protection of Water, the Environment and Recommendations) course usually spans 3 days, including the exam, and is highly appropriate for Managers and Foremen/Supervisors who have pesticide-spraying responsibility. The fit with the Water Framework Directive and current, strong environmental focus is first class. So far 77 managers have taken the POWER course and exam and two more courses are booked for the near future.

The FSTS qualification is statutory for all those selling and giving advice on pesticides. The changes to the FSTS course for Amenity Horticulture mean that candidates now choose the skill area that suits their job profile. The choices are from three: -

- Hard surface weed control
- Turf and sports grass care
- Shrubs and borders care

Candidates are required to pass a group of core modules, which cover safety, legislation, control options, application, etc, and to pass a skill area from the list above. Second or third skill areas can be added at later dates, but the core modules are examined only once for successful candidates. 183 candidates have taken the course and the exam over recent time, and four further courses are booked for 2009.

## **AMENITY ASSURED**

This new scheme was launched at the beginning of 2008 after individual company auditing and preparation in 2007.

It is very pleasing to report that in its first year there has been wide-scale and positive use of Amenity Assured contractors by many organisations needing professional, Best Practice weed control services.

In 2008 all of Network Rail 18,000 miles of mainline track was sprayed by Amenity Assured contractors. Also, and equally important, 202 Local Authorities had their weed control contracts carried out by Amenity Assured contractors. There were also significant areas of highways; landscape; parks and other Amenity areas cared for by Amenity Assured contractors.

The scheme independently audits, verifies and certificates (annually) those contractors which meet wide-ranging and stringent Best Practice criteria. The standards are set by BASIS, NAAC and NPTC.

For the future there will undoubtedly be significant challenges arising from water monitoring, sustainable use of pesticides and 91/414 legislation, and the economic climate in which we all live. What must sustain is a constant drive to improve standards, adopt Best Practice, and focus on user needs and benefits.

The AMENITY ASSURED scheme is key to those aims.