

Stay on the right side of the SUD law

An Old Trafford-based seminar on the Sustainable Use Directive (SUD) presented delegates with a greater understanding and awareness of the EU legislation, as Rigby Taylor's Richard Fry reports



By: Richard Fry



Lighting rigs at Manchester's Old Trafford Stadium, venue of the SUD seminar

Hosted by Chris Clark, executive chairman of Rigby Taylor, the RTechnical seminar at Manchester's Old Trafford stadium saw industry experts present overviews of SUDs issues and how best the 130 delegates could keep on the right side of the law:

- Dr Ruth Mann of STRI detailed the implications for the workplace;
- Consultant Peter Corbett spoke about spraying efficacy and efficiency;
- Andrew McMahon of Rigby Taylor explained the essential role of nutrition in managed turf;
- James Dixon of Bargam highlighted sprayer testing and servicing; and
- Stephen Kateley of BFS focused on effective spray targeting.

Dr Mann said that while many of SUD's requirements were likely to already be met by those in the workplace, it was now essential that organisations needed to show proof that this was the case. She stated that everyone involved needed to pay due attention to factors such as ensuring adequate training, proper monitoring and testing of equipment, correct selection of products, proper storage and handling, as well as the steps necessary in the mitigation of risks to water pollution.

In the case of pesticides, SUD is intended to introduce, across the EU, a greater degree of uniformity of good practice. It aims to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides specifically by reducing the risks and

impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment, and it promotes integrated pest management and alternative approaches/techniques such as non-chemical substitutes.

In terms of spraying, it was stated that as from November 2016, every 3m boom sprayer would have to be tested every three years and any smaller sprayer every six years. This was further confirmed by James Dixon who recommended that spray operators and their managers have the machines serviced regularly and fully calibrated to ensure the correct volume of material was hitting its intended target. He emphasised that as much as 20 per cent of the product could be mis-applied when spraying with worn nozzles and through drift.



More than 130 delegates attended Rigby Taylor's SUDs event at Manchester United's Old Trafford Stadium

The fitting of low drift, air induction nozzles - such as those from BFS - was recommended.

James also commented on the difference between the agricultural industry and the amenity sector, saying there was still too little uptake of regular sprayer testing in amenity, which was not just a safety issue but could also reduce significantly the performance and efficiency of operations. He highlighted some of the key issues that are discovered when testing amenity sprayer equipment and stressed the importance of properly tested and inspected equipment in the amenity sector where proximity to the public was greater than in agriculture.

Complementing this, Stephen Kateley of BFS - the inventors of the Air Bubble Jet - demonstrated the difference between the drift potential of conventional nozzles compared to air induction nozzles. Independent tests have demonstrated that drift can be reduced by 75 per cent when fitting boom sprayers with BFS Air Bubble Jets. Stephen commented that it was unnecessary to spend money on expensive 'speciality turf nozzles' as these were basically the same nozzles used in agriculture but at inflated prices.

Peter Corbett also offered advice on spray nozzle selection, using slides to indicate the various spray patterns achieved with different nozzles. He emphasised that correct nozzle selection could mean the difference between product success and failure, and that 'not one size fits all'. He said it was important to select the most

appropriate method of control for a given task - for instance, a different size nozzle should be used when applying a spray to achieve medium quality compared to one requiring a coarse spray.

He also commented on the responsibility of everyone involved in spraying to take 'reasonable precautions' as by doing so it would persuade the European law makers that a total ban on pesticides was not the best route to take.

The day ended with Kevin Scarce of Turfkeeper.com giving a brief overview of the benefits of an online management system that offered amenity professionals a resource for recording, analysing, reporting and storing of all information involved in the management and maintenance of sports and amenity sporting surfaces.

Another RTechnical 'SUD's', held at Rangers FC Ibrox Stadium on 18 February, attracted 94 delegates, a number which emphasises the interest our industry has for such educational programmes. ●

Further seminars are planned throughout 2014. Contact sales@rigbytaylor.co.uk for further information.



The Rigby Taylor team is hosting a number of informative and educational seminars throughout 2014

Pitch perfect Tony

A highlight of the event was when the delegates went onto the pitch where Tony Sinclair, Manchester United FC's head groundsman, talked about the management and maintenance of the playing surface.

Tony revealed that over a period of 10 years, the pitch had been re-laid 18 times; to highlight the problem, in

2012 the pitch had 96 'usages'. However, since the introduction of the Desso system, the groundstaff had much more confidence in its ability to withstand wear.

A major problem affecting pitch quality and turf regeneration is shade, "though the introduction of lighting rigs has been a great benefit", Tony added.