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THE EUROPEAN GOLF ASSOCIATION GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE

ENGAGING LOCALLY IN PESTICIDE ACTION PLANS

I. Introduction

What is the EGA Golf Course Committee?

The EGA Golf Course Committee (EGA GCC) was formed in November 2008. Its purpose is to present a single European voice to the EU, representing the game of golf, on environmental matters to build relationships with appropriate contacts in Brussels. The Committee anticipates and provides advice on EU legislation which may affect golf courses in Europe to the national associations who are members of the European organisations represented on the Committee to raise awareness and encourage appropriate action at national and local levels.

The Committee is comprised of the following organisations:

- European Golf Association
- European Golf Course Owners Association
- European Institute of Golf Course Architects
- Federation of European Golf Greenkeeper Associations
- PGA European Tour
- Professional Golf Associations of Europe
- Club Managers Association of Europe
- The R&A

What is the issue?

The EU Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides directs national governments to produce action plans which must include targets for the reduction of pesticide use. The Directive is to be implemented by December 2011 and Member States shall communicate their National Action Plans to the Commission by December 2012. Member States may prioritise agriculture needs which do not always match the interests of the golf sector. Golf may be a 'soft target' for regulators looking for an overall national reduction in pesticide use, due to it being a recreational pursuit.

Why should your golf organisation care about this?

Decisions on the most appropriate measures to achieve reductions in pesticide use will be taken in your locality without your input, unless you engage with the process. Your organisation can influence the direction of national legislation on this issue. This is an opportunity to communicate golf's needs to your national authorities and to have them reflected in the final action plan. In addition, by getting in contact with the national authorities in charge of pesticide use you will also establish a broader network for future needs.

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2. How to engage

How can your golf organisation get involved?

You can easily get involved in the preparation of the national action plan by following the following steps:

- contact your national authority in charge of pesticide use
- introduce your golf organisation
- explain that the purpose of your call is to have a brief discussion on the preparation of a national action plan for pesticide reduction, which can have a direct impact on golf
- present any initiatives you are undertaking to reduce pesticide use and assess whether they can be taken on board in the plan before it is submitted to the European Commission
- follow up the contact by requesting a meeting or by restating your messages in a letter
- send feedback of your contact to your EGA GCC member so that it can be centrally recorded.

What information will be useful to collate before you contact national officials?

Data on the use of pesticides on golf courses in your country will be invaluable. If you express a wish to discuss plans to reduce pesticide use, a good starting point is to present figures on current usage and consider the possibility of presenting a case study. If you do not have such information, consider asking the courses in your country to supply it anonymously. The R&A benchmarking service at www.bestcourseforgolf.org can help with this process.

If you have a policy on pesticide use, present it to your national authority to demonstrate that you understand the issues. The EGA GCC guidance note on pesticide directives is attached which includes the committee's position on pesticide use. This may help you formulate your own position if you do not already have one.

3. Background information

Why is the EU focused on pesticides?

Environmental policy has always been one of the priorities on the EU Agenda. In this context, the EU is aiming at ensuring a better management and reduction in the use of pesticides to enhance a high level of human health and environmental protection. The pesticide directives are aimed at minimising this risk, as are other anti-pollution measures such as the Water Framework Directive.

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What are the goals of the pesticides directives?

- To minimise the risk of polluting the environment
- To minimise the risk to human health
- To remove all harmful pesticides
- To achieve a managed reduction in pesticide use

What is the timing?

Member States must adopt National Action Plans by December 2011. If you have not already engaged in this process, it is important that you do so before this deadline and that you advise your EGA GCC member of any action you have taken.