

Pesticides termed 'a necessary evil'

By REE WEIL
Of the Emerald

Donzil Ferguson, from the Malheur Environmental Field Station in Burns, discussed the pros and cons of pesticide usage in the Dad's Room Monday.

Ferguson explained the origin of the problem. "Early man started out as an omnivorous scrounger, seeking food as best he could. When man shifted from a food collector to a food producer, he opened up Pandora's Box. No, man is the dominant primary consumer on earth. We have 4 billion people, and we are unwilling to make concessions to our competitors, the insects."

Ferguson said that the movement towards farming produced a monoculture, or thousands of acres of one plant. This creates an environment where the natural predators of the pests infesting crops are not attracted to the same crops,

Ferguson said.

The density of population encouraging disease-spreading insects, and the concentration cities where buildings provide hiding places for pests were further reasons cited for the pest problem.

Ferguson presented the case in favor of pesticides first. He claimed certain chemical compounds such as DDT have literally saved millions of lives, citing examples in India where disease-bearing insects were whipped.

Ferguson said most foods have much less than the tolerance level of DDT. culture, he said, predicted food production would drop 25 per cent to 30 per cent without pesticides in the United States.

He also said no alternative exists for DDT. "Biological control is not the answer for large scale agricultural farmers. Now, DDT is replaced in some places

by Organo-Phosphate Compounds which are much more toxic. We'd stop killing fish and start killing people."

Many chemical companies are no longer producing insecticides for fear of loss of profit if the pesticide is banned, Ferguson said.

Ferguson pointed out that pesticides are used in places with little damage to wildlife, such as the monoculture environment. Little wildlife exists in acres and acres of cornfields, he said.

Presenting the case against pesticides, Ferguson said, "Chemicals are molecular structures that don't occur in nature. When you release them, you initiate a worldwide, uncontrolled experiment."

Ferguson said pesticides "should be called biocides, because they endanger more than just pests." He said pesticides get into food chains, recycle, and enter them again and again, as animals store the

chemicals in body fat. Chemicals don't disintegrate, he said, they just move around.

Ferguson said it was true that DDT did save lives, but the more insidious effects, such as muted genesis, abnormal genesis and carcinogenesis are not mentioned by industry.

Killing off the insects' predators produces more insects, compounding the problem, Ferguson said. Also, as insects develop resistance to chemicals, the farmer is eventually forced to

drench his crops with insecticides with little results.

As a solution, Ferguson advocated a national conference to rank insects according to what kind and how much pesticide they require, and to systematically start campaigns to find non-chemical pesticides.

Are pesticides a boon or a bane? "If we had to call them anything," Ferguson said, "we'd have to call them a necessary evil."

Senate votes 26-2

Meetings bill passed

By NAN HENDERSON
Of the Emerald

SALEM (Special)—A bill requiring public governing bodies to hold open meetings, but also outlining several circumstances allowing those bodies to hold executive sessions (closed meetings) passed the Senate Monday, 26-2.

Many of the Senators, however, felt the bill (SB 15) is only "a half-way bill" and voted in favor of a motion to re-refer the bill back to the Joint Committee on Professional Responsibilities. The motion to re-refer failed, 13-15.

As it now stands, the bill requires that "all meetings of the governing body of a public body shall be open to the public and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting except as otherwise provided by this Act."

The other provisions in the bill state that closed meetings may be held:

—to consider employment of a public employee.

—to hear complaints against any employee.

—for labor negotiations.

—to consider records that are exempt by law from public inspection.

—"to consult with counsel on matters that may involve litigation."

The bill also states, however, that no final action shall be taken in an executive session.

There was some feeling among the legislators that allowing meetings involving litigation (legal action) to be closed could be used as a way for many governing bodies to avoid holding public meetings since almost all matters considered by governing bodies relate in some way to possible court action.

And Senator John Smith (R-Burns) who made the motion to re-refer stated that provisions in the bill allowing either labor or management to close labor negotiations will assure that all negotiations will be closed.

Smith said he wanted the committee to reconsider "Some of the exemptions in the bill" including labor negotiations.

Sen. Jack Ripper (D-North Bend) disagreed with Smith saying "There are some things that are in the public's best interest not to know." Ripper said that labor negotiations fall into that category since many of the proposals made during negotiations "are only ploys for other proposals and could be misunderstood."

The professional responsibilities committee spent weeks considering the bill and listened to numerous pleas for dozens of exemptions from the measure.

Besides exempting all governing bodies from holding open meetings under certain circumstances, the committee placed provisions in the bill which exempt the State Parole Board, the State Banking Board, the Commission on Judicial Fitness and the Workmen's Compensation Board from holding any public meetings during their deliberations.

The committee also removed a "penalty clause" from the original proposal which stated that any governing body violating the open meetings law could be fined up to \$1000 in a civil court suit and added a clause stating that no action taken in secret session may be overturned by a court.

In addition, the committee changed a clause in the bill which said reporters shall be admitted to executive session meetings to read "representatives of the news media may be allowed to attend executive sessions."

There was some indication Monday that legislators may try to strengthen the bill during consideration by the House by moving to reinstate the penalty clause, add provisions for a court to overturn action taken during closed meetings, remove the litigation exemption or replacing "may" with "shall" in the section dealing with the news media.

Bill sent to House floor to put students on Board

SALEM (Special)—A bill directing the governor to appoint two students to the State Board of Higher Education passed the House Education Committee Sunday and now goes to the House floor with a "do pass" recommendation.

The action came after the committee amended the bill (HB 2147, which originally called for three students to be appointed to the Board.

Rep. Mary Rieke (R-Portland) attempted to also amend the bill so that the governor might appoint two students to the Board, but would not be forced to make the appointments.

Presently, the law states that no person in any way connected with an institution in the State System of Higher Education may be appointed to the Board.

Rep. Glen Otto (D-Troutdale) opposed Rieke's amendment saying that "it would make the bill meaningless."

"It is time we assure students some participation on the State Board of Higher Education and also in other parts of government," Otto continued.

Rieke's amendment failed the committee by a 6-3 vote and the final adoption of the bill passed 8-1.

Rep. Wayne Whitehead (R-Eugene) voted against the measure because, as he explained before the vote, any governor "should not have his hands tied" in making any appointments.

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