

April 12, 2007

To whom it may concern,

As turfgrass scientists at the University of Florida, we are frequently asked to provide input on issues relating to fertilization of turfgrass and nonpoint source pollution. Our combined decades of research experience on this topic may assist you in making decisions regarding regulation of fertilizer materials. Here is a brief synopsis of our findings based on research conducted throughout the state of Florida:

- A healthy turfgrass stand provides an excellent filter for potential pollutants in storm water runoff and may alleviate effects of nonpoint source pollutants in both leachate and runoff. Healthy turfgrass requires appropriate levels of fertilization to provide a dense root and shoot system for this.
- A healthy turfgrass stand has a better ability for nutrient uptake than one which is not appropriately fertilized to provide a dense root and shoot system.
- Excessive nutrient leaching may occur from a turfgrass system under the following conditions:
 - Application of excessive fertilizer (at rates greater than those recommended in the Green Industries Best Management Practices manual)
 - When fertilizer application is followed by heavy rainfall shortly after application
 - When fertilizer particles are left on impervious surfaces
- When fertilizer is properly applied, nitrogen source is not a determinant in nitrate leaching
- Large expanses of untreated buffer zones may result in greater nutrient leaching or runoff into water bodies
- Turfgrass requires fertilizer during the growing season to maintain health and vigor and to provide the needed cover for filtering storm water runoff
- Turfgrass under stress (wear, traffic, compaction, mechanical injury, etc.) requires fertilizer to recover appropriately.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions regarding these issues.

Dr. John Cisar, Professor of Environmental Horticulture

Dr. Jerry Sartain, Professor of Soil and Water Science

Dr. George Snyder, Distinguished Professor and Professor Emeritus, Soil and Water Science

Dr. Laurie Trenholm, Associate Professor, Environmental Horticulture

Dr. Bryan Unruh, Associate Professor, Environmental Horticulture