Lawn care company critical of municipalities

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guidelines for this in 2001 and adopt them as policy next year.

Most of the region's targets for this initiative have scaled back their pesticide use in recent years. Newmarket, Aurora and Whitchurch-Stouffville already do no non-essential spraying, and spraying stopped on parks this summer in one Thornhill ward in Markham.

The region launched an educational campaign this year to educate people to use pesticides as a last resort. Humeniuk said it will form an advisory committee to work on public-use guidelines and consider pest-control alternatives.

She said she wants to see grassroots groups such as the York Region Environmental Alliance, which has said it will campaign for municipal bans similar to Hudson's, included in the committee.

"We can't all act independently," Humeniuk said. "We have to be following the same guidelines if we're going to have effective change."

Humeniuk said the president of a Newmarket lawn care franchise has also accepted an invitation to sit on the committee.

The region's effort on pesticides accelerated after a federal report last year recommended convincing municipalities not to spray parks, forests or children's playgrounds.

A federal Healthy Lawn Strategy is being developed which "will emphasize pest prevention, use of reduced-risk products and application of pesticides only when necessary," the region stated in a recent report.

> **"...municipalities lack the qualified staff and financial resources required to evaluate pesticides for benefits and safety."**
>
> *— Weed Man, one of Ontario's largest lawn care companies*

A public statement this week from Weed Man, one of the province's largest lawn care companies, emphasized an interest in safety, arguing Canada's approved pesticides are well-regulated and well-tested.

"Unlike Health Canada and the provincial ministry of the environment, municipalities lack the qualified staff and financial resources required to evaluate pesticides for benefits and safety," the statement suggested.

"Local officials involved in making recommendations concerning pesticide use may not fully understand the scientific risk assessment undertaken by Health Canada."

Last week, Aurora Mayor Tim Jones said he has asked Hudson to explain that town's policy on poison ivy and other exceptional cases.

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