

Pesticide restrictions could come north

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or two.

Ms Humeniuk recently headed a regional task force on pesticide-reduction. Its guidelines, stressing use of pesticides only as a last resort, were approved this month and are circulating to municipalities for their suggestions, she said.

Ms Humeniuk said she hopes the guidelines — covering only lands owned by the region, such the spaces along arterial roads — will be regional policy by next summer.

She suggested the lawn-care industry is changing, providing more natural ways of dealing with pests and better staff training, to reflect consumer demand. "That's called smart marketing."

Whitchurch-Stouffville council's environmental advisory committee has a working group on pesticides which may take its findings public this fall.

Councillor Mark Carroll said the group has participation from the golf course and tree-care industries, farmers and licensed sprayers, as well as from members of the public. "The first couple of meetings have been really good. They've left their biases at the door," he said this week.

Mr. Carroll said some members of the EAC wanted a pesticide ban or wanted to restrict pesticide around kettle lakes and other sensitive areas in the town.

But he said the group is looking at whether common organic alternatives to chemical pesticides are safe along with restrictions on pesticide use.

Pesticide users have been less welcome on Markham's pesticide reduction committee. On Tuesday, Markham council decided a lawn care industry representative should be a member of the group, which has met for a year under the leadership of Councillor Erin Shapero. Councillor Stan Daurio, who complained the group was not receiving balanced information, will be another

new member, along with an allergy specialist chosen by the region's health department.

Ms Shapero said the pesticide committee has dealt only with Markham's municipal lands but added many residents are wondering when their council will deal with private use. "We haven't had that debate, and we need to have it."

Brenda Hogg, Richmond Hill's

deputy mayor, said it would be good for that town to hold its own meetings on private pesticide use.

Ms Hogg predicted private use will follow the lead set by public-sector pesticide users. "Chemicals have a place in our environment but when you're using chemicals to make something pretty at the risk of public health, that's wrong," she added.



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