

SUMMARY OF MEETING: The meeting was requested by Chairman Brown to discuss any additional steps individual manufacturers believe they can take to help reduce the number of injuries associated with riding mowers. Chairman Brown gave opening remarks, and each company then made a brief presentation and emphasized that they are committed to riding mower safety.

Several of the companies provided copies of product brochures and warning decals. Toro also provided a copy of a 10 minute video that it will be distributing with all new riding mowers. Copies of these materials will be kept on file by Roy Deppa.

David Morris stated that Toro is studying the rollover, backover and runover hazard patterns. Mr. Morris said that any design changes it makes must represent a net improvement in safety, not simply a shift in injuries from one group to another. Mr. Seifert described Toro's work in conducting focus groups of its safety information. Toro found that its decals generally received high marks for recognition and comprehension, with the exception of a few that may have contained too much information. Toro has made certain changes in the presentation of its safety information based on the results of its focus group work. At the conclusion of the meeting, Chairman Brown, Mr. Rubel and Mr. Deppa met separately with Mr. Morris and Mr. Seifert of Toro so that they could present certain trade secret and confidential commercial information.

Don Henderson stated that Deere is studying the issue of the controllability of mowers on slopes. He also noted that runover incidents could be reduced by keeping children off of mowers and away from the machines. Mr. Henderson described the safety kits that Deere is putting together. Deere plans to distribute these kits widely, including through the 4H and teacher groups. Deere is also working on a safety video that will be available next year. In addition, Mr. Henderson summarized the number of people that Deere had reached with video and audio PSAs. He said that Deere is working on a new safety video, and would like to coordinate the release of safety materials with the other companies and with CPSC to insure maximum exposure.

Bill Willen said that Honda has not had any suits or claims in the 9 years that it has been selling riding mowers. Chuck Lebo said that because of this lack of incident information from Honda's own products, although the company is always trying to make safety improvements, it has to look to incident information from CPSC and other companies. Honda offers a limited line of mowers, and has maintained the same safety messages during the 9 years that the company has sold these products.

John Ulmer said that Snapper questions CPSC's injury data. He noted that while Snapper has a 10% market share, the company believes it accounts for only 1/10 of 1% of the injuries. Snapper believes the most effective messages are carried on the

product. In addition, the company has provided strong safety messages in its manuals for about 20 years. However, Snapper will work to improve its warnings, manuals and safety booklets.

Chairman Brown and Mr. Rubel then asked follow-up questions. They encouraged the companies to draw on CPSC's expertise with respect to information and education, as well as engineering. Chairman Brown said that it is extremely difficult to change the behavior of consumers, and that effective information and education campaigns are very costly. For I&E to have any significant impact, the messages must be delivered over and over again, and in as many ways as possible. She noted that we see much more potential for video news releases than for public service announcements, which tend to be played late at night if at all. In addition, companies should consider buying radio time to air safety messages. Chairman Brown also encouraged the companies to look to her to participate personally in appropriate safety campaigns.