



## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to test several elements of an advertising campaign to educate residents about proper fertilizing techniques. Eight focus groups were held from June 28 to July 1, 2010. Two groups each were held at Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) offices in Tampa, Sarasota, Bartow, and Brooksville. Participants all had lawns for which they made watering and fertilizing decisions. The focus group script and all exercises and printed materials used in the study are shown in the Appendix. Participants were exposed to six different taglines, six graphics with taglines on them, six video draft advertisements that had been produced by District staff, and two previous television advertisements that had been produced to affect watering frequency during winter months. There were seven participants in each focus group and all groups were moderated by Phillip Downs, Ph.D., Senior Partner of Kerr & Downs Research.

# Topline Results

## TAGLINES

The best taglines were (in priority order):

- Florida-Friendly Fertilizing - It just makes sense
- Be Florida Friendly - Fertilize right
- Florida-Friendly Fertilizing: Get the Facts!

“Florida Friendly” scored very well with nearly all participants. Focus group participants associated this phrase with taking care of Florida, being environmentally appropriate, and doing what is best suited for Florida’s unique characteristics. Most participants also liked the alliteration. Some had already heard the term Florida Friendly from other sources, so it was familiar and had a positive association.

The two taglines incorporating “Florida-Friendly Fertilizing” benefitted from all of the above factors, plus their endings were perceived as factual without being demanding.

“Healthy habits for healthy lawns” had considerable appeal, yet this tagline did have some negative connotations for some focus group participants. The word “habit” cut both ways:

1. Getting into the habit of taking care of your lawn was a positive connotation, but
2. Habit also connoted too much work, and to a lesser extent, “habit” has negative meaning when associated with certain behaviors.

“I want my lawn green, not my water” did not have the same appeal as the “Florida Friendly” taglines, plus it was a bit confusing as a stand-alone tagline. The connection of this tagline to proper fertilizing techniques was too oblique.

“Feed your lawn right” was too often interpreted as a command, plus not enough participants associated the word “feed” with fertilizing one’s lawn.

## GRAPHICS

The top graphic in terms of reinforcing its tagline was “Florida-Friendly Fertilizing: Get the Facts!” The picture of the Guide was the number one element of the graphic, and the picture of Stan and Tom also contributed to the overall effectiveness of the graphic.

The second best graphic in reinforcing its tagline was “Florida-Friendly Fertilizing - It just makes sense.” While there was some positive and negative discussion of the grass shown in this graphic (many thought the lawn was too long or that the grass was sawgrass or grass near a water body), the strength of the tagline along with the fact that most participants expected to see a healthy (albeit more manicured) lawn made this graphic the second most effective in reinforcing its tagline.

Each graphic with Betty Blade of Grass scored poorly – Betty was distracting to most participants. The graphic that shows a family in water was not very effective. While most participants eventually made the connection between fertilizer run off and green water, the connection was not immediate for many and not direct enough to the concept of fertilizing properly. The graphic for “Healthy habits for healthy lawns” scored better than the Betty Blade of Grass graphics, yet it was not nearly as strong as the top two rated graphics.

### VIDEOS

The number one video was “Follow Directions” with “Heavy Rain” a close second. “Follow Directions” was perceived as informative, natural, direct without being demanding, relatable, and friendly. Most participants liked one of the actors speaking directly to them (the camera) near the end of the advertisement.

“Heavy Rain” scored well because it gives solutions to common fertilizing mistakes, shows the effect of improper fertilizing in an outdoors scene, directs people without being demanding, and has a positive interaction between neighbors.

Participants liked information about the Guide and the website at the end of each advertisement.

**Characters/Themes.** Betty Blade of Grass was a distracting character. Dr. Greenthumb was considered amiable, but participants thought he should have been cast as the expert, not Betty Blade of Grass. Focus group participants classified interaction between characters in “Heavy Rain” and “Follow Directions” as natural, friendly, neighborly, and comfortable.

The call in talk radio concept was considered feasible by most focus group participants, yet Betty Blade of Grass killed the current video. Hardware scenes were clearly appropriate and liked by most participants. Outdoor scenes were liked as well. Participants sometimes remarked (on videos without outdoor scenes) that it would be helpful if healthy lawns or contrasts (e.g., clear water vs. algae infested water or healthy grass vs. not healthy grass) were included in the videos.

### ACTORS IN 2009 ADS

Approximately half of the focus group participants have seen at least one of the two “Skip a Week” advertisements featuring Stan and Tom. Most participants who have seen the advertisements, and most participants who saw them for the first time in the focus groups, had positive reactions to the advertisements and the actors. The consensus across participants was that Stan should be retained as an actor in the new series of advertisements although many participants thought that Stan was more appropriate for advertisements that contain humor.

# Findings

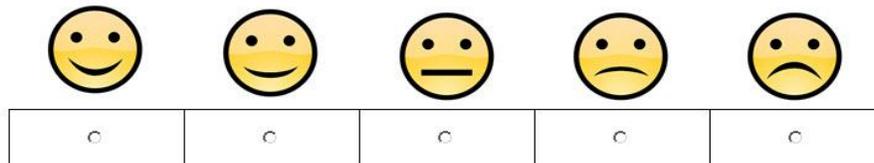
## Taglines

Focus group participants were shown the following six taglines that were printed on paper:

- Florida-Friendly Fertilizing - It just makes sense
- Be Florida Friendly - Fertilize right
- I want my lawn green, not my water
- Florida-Friendly Fertilizing: Get the Facts!
- Feed your lawn right
- Healthy habits for healthy lawns

Beneath each tagline were five faces with varying degrees of happy or sad faces (see below). Participants were instructed to give their gut level reaction to each tagline by circling a face that captured their emotional response to each tagline. Participants were told that smiling faces meant that they understood the tagline, or that it had a positive connotation, or that they liked it. Frowning faces meant that they did not like the tagline, or that they did not understand it, or that it did not resonate with them.

I want my lawn green, not my water



After circling a face that reflected their emotional reaction to the tagline, participants were told to turn over the tagline and check each of the following attributes they associated with the tagline:

- \_\_\_ Makes sense
- \_\_\_ Memorable
- \_\_\_ I understand it
- \_\_\_ Motivates me to fertilize properly
- \_\_\_ Believable
- \_\_\_ I can relate to it

After presentation of all six taglines, participants were asked to indicate which taglines were their first and second preferred choices. Information in the following section summarizes how many participants

selected each tagline as their first or second choice, how many participants circled a happy face for each tagline, how many participants checked each of the attributes (e.g., I understand it) for each tagline, how each tagline was ranked against the others across the attributes, and the average ranking of each tagline across all attributes.

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

	<b>Top 2 Pick</b>	<b>Happy Faces Score</b>	<b>Average Attribute Ranking</b>
• Florida-Friendly Fertilizing- It just makes sense	28*	3.8**	2.0***
• Be Florida Friendly- Fertilize right	28	3.9	2.5
• I want my lawn green, not my water	5	3.4	4.8
• Florida-Friendly Fertilizing: Get the Facts!	24	3.8	3.5
• Feed your lawn right	7	3.6	4.7
• Healthy habits for healthy lawns	14	3.8	3.0

\*Higher scores are better

\*\*Higher scores are better

\*\*\*Lower scores are better

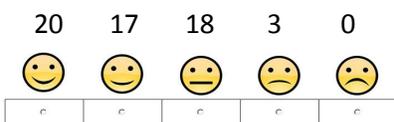
The best tagline, based on the three measures above, was “Florida Friendly Fertilizing – It just makes sense.” It had the highest number of top picks (21, as well as 7 #2 picks) and it had the best average ranking across attributes (2.0).

The second best tagline was “Be Florida Friendly- Fertilize Right.” It tied “Florida Friendly Fertilizing – It just makes sense” as the best tagline for the number of top two picks (28) and it had the second best average score across attributes as well as the best score (3.9) on the happy faces scale.

**Be Florida Friendly- Fertilize Right**

Average ranking = 2.5<sup>2</sup>

- 11 people picked this as the top choice
- 17 people picked this as the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice
- Average happy face score = 3.9<sup>3</sup>



Makes Sense	43 <sup>1</sup> - #1
Memorable	15 - #5
I understand it	43 - #1
Motivates me to fertilize properly	30 - #1
Believable	24 - #4
I can relate to it	23 - #3

<sup>1</sup> 43 people said this tagline made sense.

<sup>2</sup> Attributes for this tagline were ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>. The average of these rankings is 2.5.

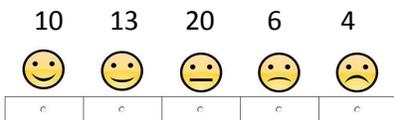
<sup>3</sup> Average score on the happy face scale was calculated as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> smiley face value is 5; next smiley face value is 4, middle face is value 3, the next face value is 2, and the last frowning face value is 1.

With eleven people picking it as their first choice and seventeen people picking it as their second choice, “Be Florida Friendly – Fertilize right” was one of the top two taglines. Thirty-seven people circled a happy face for this tagline indicating that it was positive, resonated with them, or made sense. Assigning scores to happy faces (5 for most happy face down to 1 for the least happy face), “Be Florida Friendly – Fertilize right” had the highest average score (3.9) among the six taglines. Forty-three people checked that this tagline “makes sense.” No tagline garnered more checks on this attribute. “Be Florida Friendly – Fertilize right” was also ranked #1 across all taglines for being understandable and for motivating people to fertilize properly.

**I want my lawn green, not my water**

Average ranking = 4.8<sup>5</sup>

- 0 people picked this as the top choice
- 5 people picked this as the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice
- Average happy face score = 3.4<sup>6</sup>



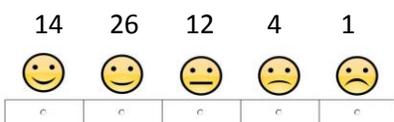
Makes Sense	25 <sup>4</sup> - #6
Memorable	22 - #2
I understand it	29 - #6
Motivates me to fertilize properly	11 - #6
Believable	17 - #5
I can relate to it	22 - #4

No focus group participants selected “I want my lawn green, not my water” as the most preferred tagline, and only 5 people selected it as the second most effective tagline. The average score on the happy face scale (3.4) for “I want my lawn green, not my water” was the lowest across the six taglines. This tagline ranked lowest in terms of making sense, being understandable, and motivating people to fertilize properly.

**Florida-Friendly Fertilizing: Get the Facts!**

Average ranking = 3.5<sup>8</sup>

- 19 people picked this as the top choice
- 5 people picked this as the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice
- Average happy face score = 3.8<sup>9</sup>



Makes Sense	41 <sup>7</sup> - #4
Memorable	16 - #4
I understand it	42 - #2
Motivates me to fertilize properly	20 - #3
Believable	27 - #2
I can relate to it	18 - #6

Nineteen focus group participants selected “Florida Friendly Fertilizing: Get the Facts” as the number one tagline and another five participants selected it as the second best tagline. The average score for

<sup>4</sup> 25 people said this tagline made sense.

<sup>5</sup> Attributes for this tagline were ranked 6<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>. The average of these rankings is 4.8.

<sup>6</sup> Average score on the happy face scale was calculated as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> smiley face value is 5; next smiley face value is 4, middle face is value 3, the next face value is 2, and the last frowning face value is 1.

<sup>7</sup> 41 people said this tagline made sense.

<sup>8</sup> Attributes for this tagline were ranked 4<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup>. The average of these rankings is 3.5.

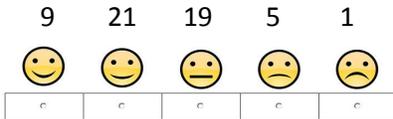
<sup>9</sup> Average score on the happy face scale was calculated as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> smiley face value is 5; next smiley face value is 4, middle face is value 3, the next face value is 2, and the last frowning face value is 1.

this tagline on the happy faces scale tied for the second highest. Rankings for this tagline along the six attributes, however, were not as high as some other taglines. “Florida Friendly Fertilizing: Get the Facts” achieved the second highest ranking on being understandable and being believable.

**Feed your lawn right**

Average ranking = 4.7<sup>11</sup>

- 2 people picked this as the top choice
- 5 people picked this as the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice
- Average happy face score = 3.6<sup>12</sup>



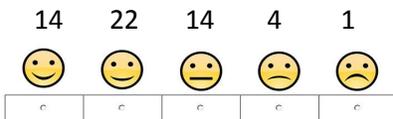
Makes Sense	38 <sup>10</sup> - #5
Memorable	10 - #6
I understand it	38 - #3
Motivates me to fertilize properly	17 - #4
Believable	16 - #6
I can relate to it	22 - #4

“Feed your lawn right” was selected as the top tagline by only two people and as the second best tagline by five focus group participants. The average score on the happy faces scale was 3.6, ranking “Feed your lawn right” behind several other taglines. The average ranking for this tagline across the six attributes was 4.7, which is the second lowest average ranking.

**Healthy habits for healthy lawns**

Average ranking = 3.0<sup>14</sup>

- 7 people picked this as the top choice
- 7 people picked this as the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice
- Average happy face score = 3.8<sup>15</sup>



Makes Sense	42 <sup>13</sup> - #3
Memorable	23 - #1
I understand it	31 - #5
Motivates me to fertilize properly	17 - #4
Believable	25 - #3
I can relate to it	26 - #2

Seven focus group participants selected “Healthy habits for healthy lawns” as the best tagline, and seven additional persons selected it as the second best tagline. The average score for this tagline on the happy faces scale is 3.8, tied for second. The average ranking for “Healthy habits for healthy lawns” is 3.0, which is the third best average ranking across attributes. This tagline was ranked first for being memorable and second for being relatable.

<sup>10</sup> 38 people said this tagline made sense.

<sup>11</sup> Attributes for this tagline were ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>. The average of these rankings is 4.7.

<sup>12</sup> Average score on the happy face scale was calculated as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> smiley face value is 5; next smiley face value is 4, middle face is value 3, the next face value is 2, and the last frowning face value is 1.

<sup>13</sup> 42 people said this tagline made sense.

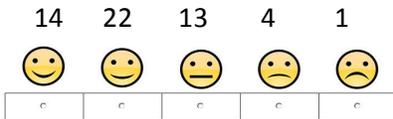
<sup>14</sup> Attributes for this tagline were ranked 3<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>th</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup>. The average of these rankings is 3.0.

<sup>15</sup> Average score on the happy face scale was calculated as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> smiley face value is 5; next smiley face value is 4, middle face is value 3, the next face value is 2, and the last frowning face value is 1.

**Florida-Friendly Fertilizing- It just makes sense**

Average ranking = 2.0<sup>17</sup>

- 21 people picked this as the top choice
- 7 people picked this as the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice
- Average happy face score = 3.8<sup>18</sup>



Makes Sense	43 <sup>16</sup> - #1
Memorable	18 - #3
I understand it	35 - #4
Motivates me to fertilize properly	26 - #2
Believable	31 - #1
I can relate to it	31 - #1

Twenty-one focus group participants selected “Florida Friendly Fertilizing – It just makes sense” as the number one tagline, while seven participants selected it as the second best tagline. The average score along the happy faces scale for “Florida Friendly Fertilizing – It just makes sense” was tied for second across the six taglines, and the average ranking across six attributes is 2.0, which was the best ranking.

**TAGLINES – SELECTED VERBATIM COMMENTS**

***Florida-Friendly Fertilizing- It just makes sense***

- I thought what it was saying as far as friendly fertilizer was that it was more eco-friendly fertilizer since we have a big problem with fertilizer run-off.
- It makes sense to me, you always hear about different needs that lawns have. When you go to one of the big stores, you see southern lawns, weed and feed, and Florida fertilizers. If you live near bodies of water, you want to keep the nitrates out of there, so friendly for your area - it grabs you. It makes sense, it was easy to understand.
- I only liked it personally because it said the word Florida. It makes it sound like it is environmentally friendly and you wouldn't have to worry about chemicals and things going into the soil and aquifer affecting the water supply.
- It makes me feel like we're doing the right thing.
- Florida friendly means to me it's good for the environment and Florida.
- I thought Florida friendly was memorable.
- I like the Florida friendly part.

***Be Florida Friendly- Fertilize right***

- It was a nice combination. Everybody wants to be Florida-friendly and feel good and fertilize right.
- That one definitely works.
- Any kind of slogan that has Florida in it is going to make you think more about your specific lawn directly and then fertilizer. It's straight to the point.
- It's very environmentally conscious and the older I get the more conscious I become. You have to respect the environment when you're constantly adding chemicals to the environment.

<sup>16</sup> 43 people said this tagline made sense.

<sup>17</sup> Attributes for this tagline were ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>. The average of these rankings is 2.0.

<sup>18</sup> Average score on the happy face scale was calculated as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> smiley face value is 5; next smiley face value is 4, middle face is value 3, the next face value is 2, and the last frowning face value is 1.

- I liked it because it had the Florida friendly and makes me think what's good for our state. It makes you think of the right way to fertilize, it's more understandable.
- Sounds like it's giving you a choice, not shouting at you.

***I want my lawn green, not my water***

- I like it. It made me chuckle, because it is so true.
- Without context, it doesn't make much sense. Why would my water be green? What does "not my water mean"?
- I'm sure it's talking about fertilizer run off and going into the water system.
- Think this is telling me to not use a lot of fertilizer because it washes into the water system.
- I've never had green water.
- I thought it was a little more negative than other slogans, more cynical.
- It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me.

***Florida-Friendly Fertilizing: Get the Facts!***

- It is telling us that we need to do this right, get the information you need and do what is best for the water and Florida.
- Think you need one representation of knowledge or authority when it comes to the fertilizer.
- Where do I get the book? I like this one because it makes you wonder: what are the facts?
- I say always get your facts straight first. Educate yourself. When you realize the facts and consequences and damages, it will give you a conscious.
- If you're going to fertilize, you got to know what you're doing.
- Sounds like work, like I got to get the facts.
- I might go home and Google it, but not enough motivation to contact the company.
- This motivates me to look further into get more information.
- Organic, environmentally conscious.

***Feed your lawn right***

- To me it was catchy. It is kind of like a pun for "treat your lawn right." I thought it was cute. I'd remember it.
- I understand it, but I give it a straight face (happy face scale) because it didn't grab me.
- I didn't think it was memorable, and I didn't see anything funny about it.
- This is probably the worst one to me so far. It's too generic. You're not telling anybody anything.
- I relate to feed your lawn right because I'm environmentally conscious.
- I don't associate feed with fertilizing.
- Your lawn is going to be happy if you feed it, and it's the right thing to do. It motivates one to look more into it.
- I just can't relate to this.
- I envision a healthy lawn. I see a green lawn.

***Healthy habits for healthy lawns***

- (I like) the term healthy. Our society is very health conscious, so I think that people are attracted to that and they want to do it in a healthy way.

- Easy to remember. I think this is the best one. As far as it being a good, catchy phrase, this is the best one. Everybody wants to be healthy, wants their grass to be healthy, and wants their plants to be healthy. It is something that’s going to grab people.
- It made me think of deed restrictions and the nasty grams they send you if your grass isn’t good enough.
- We are all health conscious so healthy habits is a very common word. We don’t always talk about it every day.
- I don’t mind doing it right, I just don’t want to be told to do it. Don’t be too authoritarian.
- It’s my favorite slogan. I like the healthy habits, healthy lawn. I like the word play. It sends a positive message. I don’t know if it’s going to inspire me to go get any facts though.
- The word healthy has a positive connotation. Something you do on a regular basis.
- A little alliteration.

## Graphics & Taglines

Focus group participants were asked to react to six graphics that supported the taglines. They were requested to evaluate the graphics in terms of their ability to support and reinforce their taglines. After discussing each graphic, participants were requested to select their first and second choices. Graphics that contained the phrase “Florida Friendly Fertilizing” scored the highest.

	<b>Top Pick</b>	<b>2nd Pick</b>	<b>Top 2 Picks</b>
Florida-Friendly Fertilizing - It just makes sense	9	17	26
Be Florida Friendly - Fertilize right	2	0	0
I want my lawn green, not my water	2	5	7
Florida-Friendly Fertilizing: Get the Facts!	37	6	43
Feed your lawn right	1	1	2
Healthy habits for healthy lawns	5	17	22

“Florida Friendly Fertilizer – Get the Facts” was the number one graphic. Participants especially liked the picture of the guide labeled “A Step-by-Step Guide to Florida Friendly Fertilizing.” The picture of the Guide reinforced the message of “getting the facts.” The picture of Stan and Tom on the left side of the page also fit the tagline according to most participants. This graphic received the most number one rankings (37) by a wide margin.

The graphic associated with “Florida Friendly Fertilizing - It Just Makes Sense” was the second best graphic. The popularity of the tagline apparently helped the graphic score well because it received positive and negative reactions. Many participants remarked that the grass seemed too long. Many participants preferred a well manicured lawn for this tagline. Most participants thought it made sense, no pun intended, to show a lawn with this tagline.

“Healthy habits for healthy lawns” received some support as the number one graphic, yet not enough participants felt the graphic reinforced the tagline to move this graphic into the top two. The picture of Tom and Stan in the hardware store drew mixed responses – some participants really liked this visual, while others were looking for certainty regarding the roles of the two characters. Neither was clearly identified as the authoritative character. Many participants wanted one character to be in a store uniform.

The graphics for “Feed your lawn right” and “Be Florida Friendly - Fertilize right” did not help either tagline. Betty Blade of Grass was a negative influence to nearly all participants.

### GRAPHICS & TAGLINES – SELECTED VERBATIM COMMENTS

#### ***Florida-Friendly Fertilizing - It just makes sense***

- This doesn't look like it takes any work. This takes no effort. You do it right, it makes sense.
- The lake in the back is very nice. I like it because the lake looks serene, unpolluted and not green.
- It looks like a picture of a lake, but it looks like the lake is missing The grass looks really healthy, good and tall.
- What I'm seeing is not grass – this looks like weeds. It needs to be cut.
- It looks like a healthy yard because it's saw blades and natural habitat.
- It's not how I want my yard to look. It looks too tall.
- I would like to see a picture of a lawn more beautiful.
- I like the idea of the grass being there, but I don't like that grass.

#### ***Be Florida Friendly - Fertilize right***

- (There should be a picture of) somebody fertilizing.
- I do not want this growing in my lawn.
- She looks like the fertilizing fairy.
- She reminds me of a Disney movie witch.
- She looks like a green rat with her ears on backwards.
- The wording is really good, but the picture doesn't make sense.
- What is she, a green bunny?
- I don't understand why she is there.
- I don't think it relates to each other but could be an attention getter.

#### ***I want my lawn green, not my water***

- There is not a picture of green grass.
- (There should be) someone standing at the edge of a lake. I think you'll have a stronger message if you have a picture of like a retention pond with green ooze in it.
- I think you need a lawn and water.
- If you had this family standing at the edge of a green pond wanting to enjoy the water, that would be better.
- I don't think people are going to get it. If it's a fertilizer thing, they're not going to get people being in a pool.
- Sweet, family oriented, that's cute. Florida fun.

- I don't think it makes sense with the pool, but it would make more sense if it were a glass of water.
- Green water and dead fish should be in the picture.

***Florida-Friendly Fertilizing: Get the Facts!***

- This one makes more sense to me.
- It is like a step-by-step guide.
- Where do I get the book? This implies that this book will be available for you to get your hands on. If it was available, where do they sell it? I don't want to have to go buy the book.
- I liked that he is learning what's on that bag, and on top of that there's a manual.
- It's better; he's getting the facts.
- For me it says get the facts and then it shows you a guy and it really reinforces that.
- I like it because there's something for my brain and something for me to do.
- It means to me that somebody is taking the time to read the directions on the back.

***Feed your lawn right***

- She's back!
- That's the worst picture I've ever seen.
- With her in the picture it really looks bizarre, like a sugarcane field or something.
- It's too cheesy for a Florida billboard.
- Some jungle lady with some weird hat on.
- She's got to go.

***Healthy habits for healthy lawns***

- One of these guys should have an apron or a name tag.
- (This is not the right picture), not for this tagline.
- He's telling them that this is the good stuff. If you get this, it'll be good for your lawn and the environment.
- Yes, it reinforces the message. He's buying a bag of fertilizer.
- I'd rather see the guy outside with the spreader.
- There should be a different picture - maybe a nice green lawn and children playing on it. So there's no chemicals, and it's healthy for your kids to be on.
- He needs to be in some sort of staff shirt. Not sure who is working there.
- Doesn't seem to flow with the lines.

## **Video Advertisements**

Focus group participants rated video advertisements in three ways.

- Emotional reaction
- "Hand" meter
- Quantitative checklists

## Emotional reaction

Participants reacted to each advertisement after viewing it the first time. This reaction was often stimulated by the moderator saying “Is this a winner?”

Positive emotional reactions were greatest for:

- Heavy Rain
- Follow Directions
- Fertilizer Fun

“I Want My Lawn Green, Not My Water” and “Fertilizer Feud” received mostly neutral reactions, although each video had its supporters. “Feed Me Right” received mostly negative emotional reactions.

## “Hand Meter”

Participants viewed each advertisement a second time and were instructed to hold their hands over the table and give a thumbs up (for positive reactions), thumbs down (for negative reactions), or a “flat, waving hand” (for no or neutral reactions) while watching each advertisement. This exercise enabled participants to give their reactions to advertisements on a second-by-second basis. Participants changed their hand positions often during each advertisement indicating that different elements of each advertisement affected them differently.

The three best videos based on the “hand meter” were:

- Follow Directions
- Heavy Rain
- Fertilizer Fun

The numbers of times that at least 5 of the participants in each group had a “thumbs up” gesture at key points in the video were considerably greater for these three videos.

**Follow Directions** – participants liked that one character was clearly asking for advice and the other character was clearly identified as the expert. Participants also liked the amount of information contained in this video, and they liked how the expert looked directly into the camera at the end and gave them advice. The one weakness for this video was the absence of any evidence of improper or proper fertilizer use, that is, there were no outdoor scenes that show healthy lawns, or green water bodies, or unhealthy lawns, etc.

**Heavy Rain** – participants really liked the positive and friendly level of interaction between Stan and Tom in this video. Scenes showing run off into the drain and algae in a water body were also rated very highly. The humor and emotion near the end of the video was effective, especially with females.

**Fertilizer Fun** – Most participants liked the interaction between Stan and Tom in this video. There was some consternation that neither actor was “dressed” as the expert. Most participants liked the humor near the end although some participants clearly missed the joke.

## Quantitative checklist

The most quantitative measure of the videos involved the following checklist of attributes:

- Understandable
- Memorable
- Contains useful information
- Motivates to visit website
- Relatable
- Motivates to fertilize properly
- Talk to a friend about it
- Has new information
- Motivates to order fertilizing guide

Participants could check whether or not each advertisement met each of the above attributes. The following tables show the number of focus group participants who indicated that each advertisement achieved each objective. The tables also contain the ranking of each advertisement on each attribute. For example, the advertisement “Follow Directions” was checked by 38 participants as being “understandable.” “Follow Directions” ranked #3 out of 6 advertisements in terms of being understandable.

An average ranking across attributes was calculated for each advertisement. This figure reflects the overall strength of each advertisement. Average rankings were as follows (lower numbers mean higher rankings):

Heavy Rain	1.3
Follow Directions	2.9
Fertilizer Feud	3.4
I Want My Lawn Green	3.9
Fertilizer Fun	4.4
Feed Me Right	4.7

### Follow Directions

I understand it	38 <sup>19</sup> - #3 <sup>20</sup>
It’s memorable	19 - #4
Contains useful information	36 - #4
It motivates me to visit <a href="http://www.waterrmatters.org">www.waterrmatters.org</a>	24 - #3
I can relate to it	26 - #2
It motivates me to fertilize differently	19 - #2
I’d talk to a friend about this ad	9 - #4
Has information I’ve never heard or seen before	14 - #3
Motivates me to order a guide to fertilizing	27 - #1

**Average rank = 2.9<sup>21</sup>**

<sup>19</sup> 38 participants checked that “Follow Directions” was understandable.

<sup>20</sup> Out of 6 taglines, “Follow Directions” ranked #3 in terms of the number of participants who checked that it was “understandable.”

“Follow Directions” garnered the second best average ranking across nine attributes. This tagline ranked first in terms of motivating people to order fertilizer guides, and it ranked second in terms of being relatable and motivating people to fertilize differently.

### Heavy Rain

I understand it	41 - #1
It’s memorable	28 - #1
Contains useful information	36 - #4
It motivates me to visit <a href="http://www.watermatters.org">www.watermatters.org</a>	25 - #1
I can relate to it	27 - #1
It motivates me to fertilize differently	25 - #1
I’d talk to a friend about this ad	12 - #1
Has information I’ve never heard or seen before	19 - #1
Motivates me to order a guide to fertilizing	27 - #1

**Average rank = 1.3**

“Heavy Rain” received the best average ranking (1.3) across the nine attributes, easily outdistancing the second highest rated advertisement. “Heavy Rain” was ranked best in terms of all attributes except containing useful information where it trailed the number one ranked advertisement by a fairly narrow margin.

### Feed Me Right

I understand it	33 - #5
It’s memorable	10 - #6
Contains useful information	40 - #1
It motivates me to visit <a href="http://www.watermatters.org">www.watermatters.org</a>	21 - #4
I can relate to it	10 - #6
It motivates me to fertilize differently	8 - #6
I’d talk to a friend about this ad	9 - #4
Has information I’ve never heard or seen before	10 - #6
Motivates me to order a guide to fertilizing	18 - #4

**Average rank = 4.7**

“Feed Me Right” received the lowest average ranking (4.7) across the nine attributes. It ranked first in terms of containing useful information, but ranked last in terms of being memorable, being relatable, motivating one to fertilize differently, and containing new information.

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<sup>21</sup> Each participant checked whether or not a tag line was understandable, memorable, contained useful information, etc. For “Follow Directions,” 38 participants checked that it was understandable; 19 participants checked that “Follow Directions” was memorable; etc. Across the 6 taglines, “Follow Directions ranked #3 for “understandable,” ranked #4 for “memorable,” etc. Across all attributes and all participants the average rank for “Follow Directions” was 2.9.

### Fertilizer Fun

I understand it	37 - #4
It's memorable	15 - #5
Contains useful information	37 - #3
It motivates me to visit <a href="http://www.watermatters.org">www.watermatters.org</a>	20 - #6
I can relate to it	22 - #3
It motivates me to fertilize differently	12 - #6
I'd talk to a friend about this ad	11 - #5
Has information I've never heard or seen before	12 - #5
Motivates me to order a guide to fertilizing	19 - #3

**Average rank = 4.4**

“Fertilizer Fun” ranked second from the bottom in terms of average ranking across nine attributes. It did not receive a first or second place finish on any attribute. It was ranked last in terms of motivating people to visit the website and in terms of motivating people to fertilize differently.

### I Want My Lawn Green

I understand it	39 - #2
It's memorable	21 - #3
Contains useful information	32 - #6
It motivates me to visit <a href="http://www.watermatters.org">www.watermatters.org</a>	25 - #1
I can relate to it	21 - #4
It motivates me to fertilize differently	15 - #3
I'd talk to a friend about this ad	7 - #6
Has information I've never heard or seen before	12 - #4
Motivates me to order a guide to fertilizing	13 - #6

**Average rank = 3.9**

“I want my lawn green” was fourth among six advertisements with regard to average ranking across the nine attributes. It ranked first in terms of motivating people to visit the website and second in terms of being understandable. Conversely, it ranked last for containing new information, spurring conversation about it, and motivating people to order a guide on fertilizing.

### Fertilizer Feud

I understand it	32 - #6
It's memorable	25 - #2
Contains useful information	38 - #2
It motivates me to visit <a href="http://www.watermatters.org">www.watermatters.org</a>	21 - #4
I can relate to it	14 - #5
It motivates me to fertilize differently	15 - #3
I'd talk to a friend about this ad	10 - #3
Has information I've never heard or seen before	18 - #2
Motivates me to order a guide to fertilizing	18 - #4

**Average rank = 3.4**

“Fertilizer Feud” ranked third among six advertisements with regard to average ranking across the nine attributes. It ranked second for being memorable, containing useful information, and containing new information. However, it ranked last for being understandable.

### VIDEOS – SELECTED VERBATIM COMMENTS

#### ***Feed Me right***

- I liked Dr. Green Thumb as an expert.
- The radio concept has potential.
- I still think she looked like poison ivy, but the information was pretty good. If that was on TV and I saw it, because she looks so strange, I’d be paying attention.
- It’s got a lot of good information, it’s just that the lady is so cheesy.
- I found her annoying.
- I liked her better on the video than on the picture.
- She’s not very soft or inviting; hard.

#### ***Fertilizer Feud***

- I was so distracted by the buzzers that I missed the message.
- It covered a lot of material.
- (It would) appeal to the older crowd that watches Family Feud. The game show aspect of it makes it more relatable to more people.
- It was just obnoxious. It was too much. I would just mute it and walk into another room.
- That was enjoyable. I wouldn’t put it on TV.
- It engages you because you want to see what the right answer is going to be and a curiosity to see how the contestants will do.
- It was fun, but not my favorite.
- It’s so stupid that it’s effective.
- It was a little gimmicky.
- Too silly.

#### ***Fertilizer Fun***

- It was a realistic scenario.
- The best part was when he takes his hat off and says “it comes easy.”
- The only problem I had with it was the clothing of the two individuals. I would have dressed the young man, if he’s the customer, in the Hawaiian shirt. People that work in a store like that don’t go to work in a Hawaiian shirt.
- I thought that Fertilizer Fun gave the same message as Follow Directions, but was better. The two guys were more likable. It seemed more natural. They got the message across.
- Instead of being in a hardware store, it might be better to be in a back green lawn.
- In any hardware store it’s a very common thing to see that; what was going on in the ad.
- You’re getting good advice from an experienced older person.
- I think the whole tone of it is calm, casual, two people talking. It doesn’t seem contrived.
- I liked that one because they are neighbors.
- I liked seeing the men in the hardware store as opposed to being outside. A uniform would establish him as an expert in his field.

- If I asked someone for advice, I want them to give me advice not to read the bag.

### ***Follow Directions***

- He encouraged us to read the directions. The whole idea doesn't need to be complicated.
- The store helper looked right at the camera like he knew his product, and he wasn't shy about sharing that.
- The thing that I like was in the second part where you were just looking at the guy that was working there. He was talking to you. So they're interacting at first, and then it makes you the customer.
- The person giving the directions is dressed properly, more authoritative. He explained the information. What I liked the most at the end (was) the tag line that brings the brochure into view. You know where to get it; you know how to order it.
- It was a good thing to kneel down. It matters. If they just stood there and talked, the ad would've had less of an impact.
- He told you why you should get the right fertilizer and what not to do.
- I liked the part when he was talking to you. Usually you're going to pay more attention.
- It's convincing.
- I like that message, it's direct and informative.
- I liked that he was talking to "you."
- The two guys weren't as natural as the other ones.
- It's what you expect when you go to a hardware store.
- It was informative and it kept it simple.

### ***Heavy Rain***

- It educated people right up front without looking at the pamphlet. I like the part where it showed water in the lake.
- Does it matter that there are two men and no women? No. I would expect two men. Generally speaking, the woman is not going to be sitting in the backyard having fertilized her lawn and another woman coming over.
- It gave you good information. It was easy to understand. A lot of people don't realize that if you put down fertilizer before rain that it just washes off. They think it soaks it down into the ground instead of running off.
- It gives the consequences. It shows you and gives you a picture of what can happen when you don't fertilize right.
- Neighbor-to-neighbor relations.
- I really like how they panned to the algae.
- I liked the relationship between the two guys.
- This is best one because it's informative and they're talking to each other. Also showing you different angles and they mention money and you can relate better.
- The information is actually something I can use. It has neighbors and they're actually giving you information.
- It makes me worry more about the environment.

### ***I Want My Lawn Green***

- I loved when she said "not my water" with a look of utter disgust on her face. There was humor there that I could appreciate.

- The concept was good, but the overall delivery killed it. I didn't like it because it separated the information through it until the end. Once you got to the end, you got to that picture there which was good. That part was good, but the rest separated the information. I didn't like that.
- I like it. That is the first time I liked the green water thing.
- Seeing the algae in the lake makes you more environmentally conscious.
- It makes you interact with it because you have to take the time to read.
- Too many cue cards.
- Too repetitious.
- The guy just standing there; what water? He doesn't have anything to do with it. I couldn't read the signs. I think they're dorky and not effective.
- It doesn't motivate me to fertilize right. It doesn't connect with me.

# Appendix

## FOCUS GROUP SCRIPT

### **INTRODUCTION**

Good evening. Thank you for joining us. My name is Phillip Downs.

All of you have something in common – you are responsible for deciding, at least in part, when to fertilize your lawns. Is that correct?

- You will be reviewing some advertising materials tonight. We want your reactions, BUT we do NOT want you to act like advertising critics or professors.
- We want you to act like how you are – real people with lawns.
- I don't want you to study these advertising materials – I want your gut reactions.
- Think of how you react to ads in a normal day – you don't study them and say, "Hmm, this is the wrong font." OR "I think this is too small."
- We want to know if you understand these ads, if you remember certain things, if the ads motivate you, and so on.

As you can see, we're taping this discussion – that's because my job at the end is to put a report together – I simply won't remember everything you say.

We want this to be spontaneous – don't hold up your hand to talk – don't look at me when you talk – talk to one another. Jump in at any time – if you say too much, I'll say chill out, give someone else a chance. Otherwise jump in at any point.

Let's go around the room quickly and do brief introductions.

### **Taglines (change order each group)**

The Ultimate Driving Machine. Beef, It's What's for Dinner. Got Milk. These are taglines.

I'm going to pass out some taglines that could be used for an ad campaign to educate people about fertilizing.

As soon as you get each tagline:

Look at it briefly as you would look at an ad; then write down your gut level reaction. **DISCUSS**

Now turn it over: Check each of the following that are true about the tagline:

- Makes sense
- Memorable
- I understand it
- Motivates me to fertilize properly
- Believable
- I can relate to it

**DISCUSS BRIEFLY**

### **Print ads with taglines (change order each group)**

Does the artwork clarify the tagline? **SHOW OF HANDS – DISCUSS BRIEFLY**

Does the artwork change their perception of the tagline? How?

## **Video Ads (change order each group)**

Write down gut level reaction/ **DISCUSS**

Check each of the following that is true for the ad:

- I understand it
- It's memorable
- Contains useful information
- It motivates me to visit [www.watermatters.org](http://www.watermatters.org)
- I can relate to it
- It motivates me to fertilize differently
- I'd talk to a friend about this ad
- Has information I've never heard or seen before
- Motivates me to order a guide to fertilizing

### **DISCUSS EACH BRIEFLY – PROBE FOR EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT**

What's this ad asking you to do?

**SHOW OF HANDS** – So this ad is asking you to\_\_\_\_\_.

How many of you would do it after seeing this ad? WHY/Why not

### **Explore concepts/actors/scenes of each ad**

Feed me right (Dr Greenthumb/Betty blade of grass)

- What's your reaction to Betty the blade of grass; to Dr. Greenthumb

Fertilizer Feud (game show)

- What do you think of this concept for fertilizing messages

Fertilizer Fun (Tom/Stan in hardware store)

- What's your reaction to Tom & Stan; to hardware store scene

Follow Directions (hardware store-guy with blue shirt)

- What's your reaction to the 2 male characters

Heavy Rain (Tom/Stan & street drain)

- What's your reaction to Tom & Stan; to street drain scene

I want my lawn green

- What's your reaction to the cast of characters; to the scenes

Write down which ad is best. Write down which is worst.

### **DISCUSS**

## **2009 Ads**

Skip a Week (Lawn chairs)

Skip a Week (Grill & timer)

Taglines & Checklists

I want my lawn green, not my  
water

				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

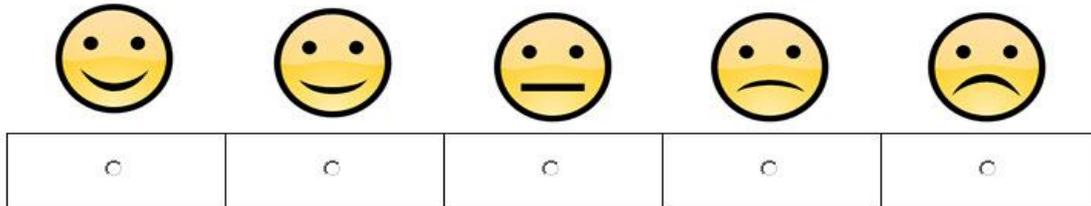
Feed your lawn right

				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

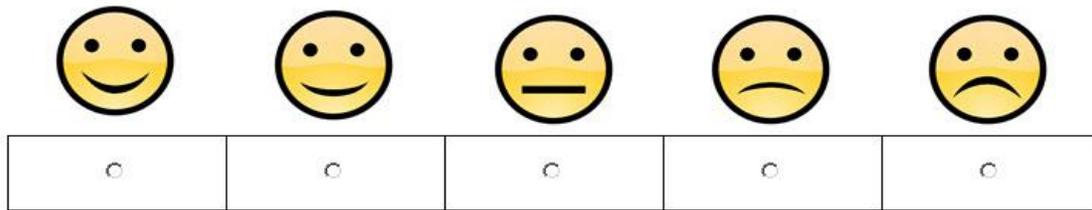
Healthy habits for healthy lawns

				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

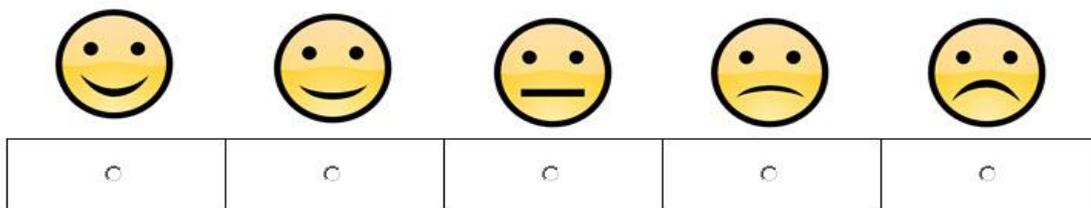
# Florida-Friendly Fertilizing—It just makes sense



# Be Florida-Friendly—Fertilize Right



# Florida-Friendly Fertilizing: Get the Facts!



## Checklist for Taglines

Check each that is true for this tagline:

- Makes sense
- Memorable
- I understand it
- Motivates me to fertilize properly
- Believable
- I can relate to it

## Checklist for Video Ads

Check each of the following that is true for the **Feed Me Right** ad:

- I understand it
- It's memorable
- Contains useful information
- It motivates me to visit [www.watermatters.org](http://www.watermatters.org)
- I can relate to it
- It motivates me to fertilize differently
- I'd talk to a friend about this ad
- Has information I've never heard or seen before
- Motivates me to order a guide to fertilizing

Check each of the following that is true for the **Fertilizer Feud** ad:

- I understand it
- It's memorable
- Contains useful information
- It motivates me to visit [www.watermatters.org](http://www.watermatters.org)
- I can relate to it
- It motivates me to fertilize differently
- I'd talk to a friend about this ad
- Has information I've never heard or seen before
- Motivates me to order a guide to fertilizing

Check each of the following that is true for the **Fertilizer Fun** ad:

- I understand it
- It's memorable
- Contains useful information
- It motivates me to visit [www.watermatters.org](http://www.watermatters.org)
- I can relate to it
- It motivates me to fertilize differently
- I'd talk to a friend about this ad
- Has information I've never heard or seen before
- Motivates me to order a guide to fertilizing

Check each of the following that is true for the **Follow Directions** ad:

- I understand it
- It's memorable
- Contains useful information
- It motivates me to visit [www.watermatters.org](http://www.watermatters.org)
- I can relate to it
- It motivates me to fertilize differently
- I'd talk to a friend about this ad
- Has information I've never heard or seen before
- Motivates me to order a guide to fertilizing

Check each of the following that is true for the **Heavy Rain** ad:

- I understand it
- It's memorable
- Contains useful information
- It motivates me to visit [www.watermatters.org](http://www.watermatters.org)
- I can relate to it
- It motivates me to fertilize differently
- I'd talk to a friend about this ad
- Has information I've never heard or seen before
- Motivates me to order a guide to fertilizing

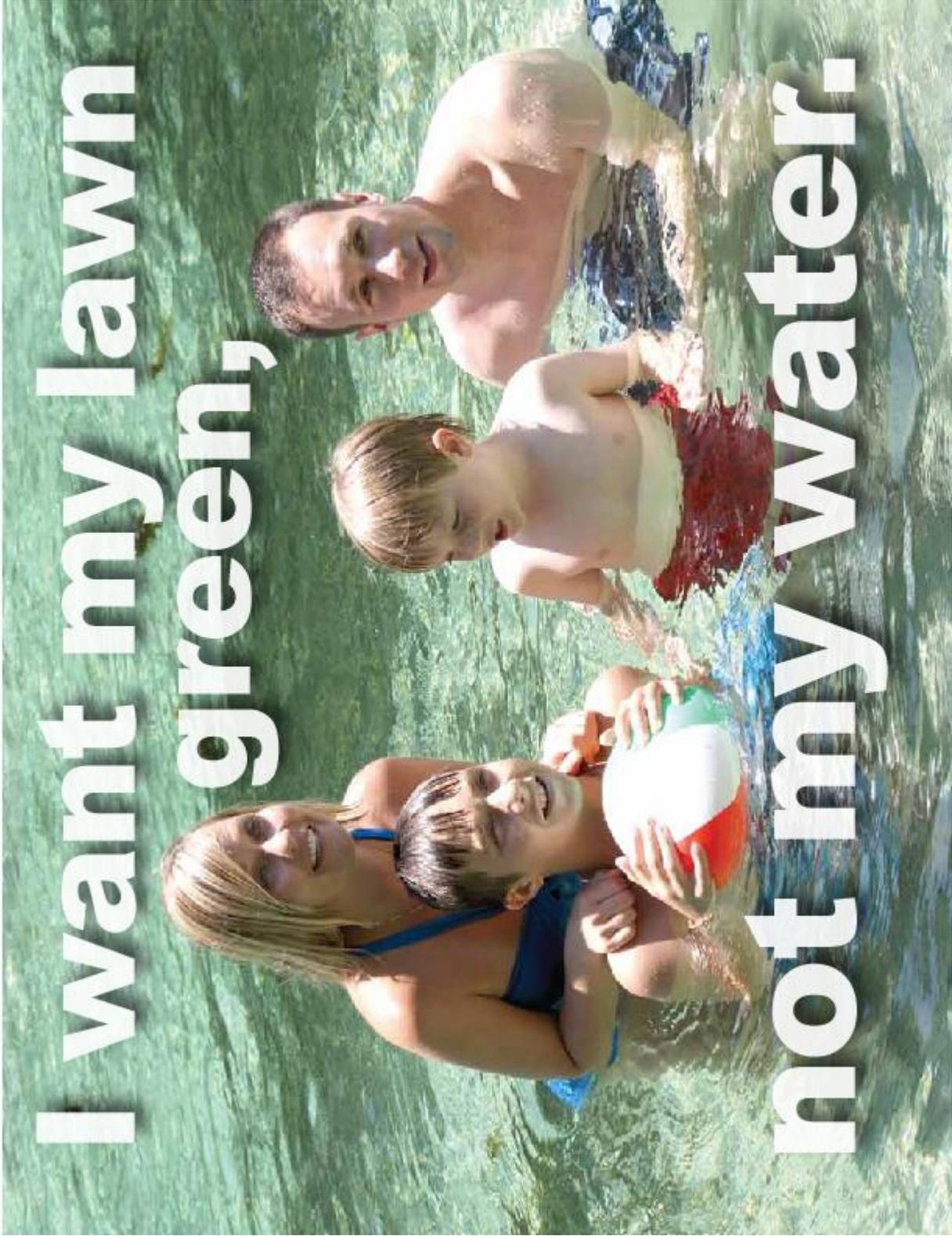
Check each of the following that is true for the **I Want My Lawn Green** ad:

- I understand it
- It's memorable
- Contains useful information
- It motivates me to visit [www.watermatters.org](http://www.watermatters.org)
- I can relate to it
- It motivates me to fertilize differently
- I'd talk to a friend about this ad
- Has information I've never heard or seen before
- Motivates me to order a guide to fertilizing

# Florida-Friendly Fertilizing

**It just makes sense.**





# Florida-Friendly Fertilizing



# Florida-Friendly Fertilizing

Healthy  
habits for  
healthy  
lawns





