

American Sod Producers Association

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Hastings, Nebraska

MARYLAND CONVENTION — FIELD DAYS WAS "BELLRINGER"

Over 400 producers, employees, equipment and supply representatives and families were on hand for this gala event in Maryland and surrounding areas July 16-19. A full day and a half of field demonstrations by the nation's leading equipment manufacturers and distributors went without a hitch, and

attendees were able to see first hand exactly what improvement and developments have been made in this area of sod production activity.

The Maryland Turfgrass Association proved to be tremendous hosts and arranged numerous social activities for both men and families. A highlight was the

crab feast and eastern shore dinner following the first day of demonstrations. A note of thanks is extended to all of the members of the Maryland group with special thanks to "prime movers" Gus Day, Jack Hall, Maryland President Larry Moore and Maryland Exec Merilyn Jacobs.

ANNUAL BANQUET ATTENDED BY OVER 230

A full house — over 230 persons — attended the annual banquet on the final evening of the ASPA Convention. The cocktail hour preceding the event was hosted by the Maryland Turfgrass Association as a gesture of goodwill to ASPA members from across the country who came to their delightful state in order to attend the convention.

Guest speaker was Herbert Wallace, Executive Vice-President of the clothing firm of Hart-Schafer & Marx. He was a dynamic, aggressive individual who spoke about the needs of varying marketing methods to meet the needs of today and tomorrow. He outlined his reasons for strongly believing the competitor to the sod producer is not another sod producer but rather is some other product or unit which would be completely different from sod but which might replace it in the landscape. For example, sellers of cement who advocated wide expanses of this very expensive and non-esthetic product were selling their unit instead of the use of sod.

A number of individuals crowded around our speaker at the conclusion of his presentation hoping to delve more deeply into the marketing question.

Families Not Overlooked at ASPA Convention

The historic tour of Annapolis on an all day trip which combined shopping, sight seeing and delightful sociability was a superb family event.

Utilizing chartered buses, the group had a full day, which culminated in the shore dinner where they met the husbands.

Field Days — Demonstrations Were Well Organized, Informative

The Field Days and Demonstrations held in conjunction with ASPA's annual meeting were a real highlight, according to many of the persons interviewed. Scheduling was superb, ample opportunity was allowed the various equipment suppliers to demonstrate their equipment and have it available for inspection, and the well over 200 individuals who went via bus to the various farms agreed that the entire field day activities were the best ever.

Coordinating the efforts on the field days were Gus Day and Jack Hall of the Maryland Turfgrass Association. A number of compliments were received

from viewers for the pre-planning which provided for the roping off of the demonstration area and thus having the opportunity for everyone to see rather than a limited few who might otherwise cluster around the equipment, obscuring the view of the rest. This was not the case and the demonstrations were extremely well presented and received.

A sincere thanks goes to those demonstrating equipment and particularly to those sod producers in the Maryland area who allowed their farms to be utilized for the purposes of these demonstrations!!!

HOSPITALITY DESK AT CONVENTION WAS MOST HELPFUL

Manned (or should we say womaned) by wives of Maryland Turfgrass members, the hospitality desk in the convention area was a great "assist" to families attending the convention.

Arranging of trips, giving out information regarding points of interest, baby-sitters, and a host of other personalized services were provided by the friendly hospitality gals of MTA.

This service was greatly appreciated by those who were not familiar with the area and who were combining a vacation with the business trip.

Did you know that the average 18-hole golf course can provide the oxygen required by a town of 7,000 people?

DAVIS HEADS ASPA FOR COMING YEAR

At an election held by the new Board of Trustees, Charles Davis of Wharton Turf Grass in Wharton, Texas was elected President of ASPA, succeeding Jack Kidwell of Culpeper, Virginia. New Vice-President is Paul Florence of Paul Florence Turfgrass, Marysville, Ohio; Secretary is Charles Lain, Pine Island Turf Nursery, Sussex, New Jersey; and Treasurer is Wallace Huggett, Huggett Sod Farm, Marlette, Michigan.

Newly elected Trustees include Norm LaGrande of Hendricks Sod, Lincoln, Nebraska and Thomas Thornton of Thornton's Turf Nursery, Elgin, Illinois. Retiring directors include Tobias Grether of Cal-Turf, Camarillo, California; Bill Latta of Princeton Turf of Kansas City, Missouri and John Nunes of Nunes Turfgrass Industries in Patterson, California.

To the Exhibitors and Suppliers at the ASPA Convention and Field Days

May we publicly say "thank you" for your participation and support of our outstandingly successful event July 16-19 in Maryland. Certainly equipment and supply firms are dependent on the sod industry but likewise is the sod industry dependent on YOU! We look to you for new developments, new techniques, improved quality, and it is through the mutual participation in events such as our convention and field days that we all can benefit.

We appreciate your tolerance in our first inside exhibit which was held prior to the demonstrations. Many of the producers as well as suppliers indicated they appreciated this relaxed opportunity to visit, to explain their products and to operate without the pressures of a large crowd, impatient to move on to something else.

We welcome suggestions of all of you in making our future ASPA meetings an even greater success.

OFFICERS, BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AND STAFF

Crab Feast Highlighted Shore Dinner

Following the first day's demonstration, several buses descended on a Maryland VFW Post's home where the Maryland Sod Producers Association had arranged for a shore dinner and crab feast. (see photo)

There were a lot of green horns when it came to attacking that crab but once they learned to be savage and brutal and to tear into the delicious crab as it lay there ready to be eaten, everyone agreed that it was pretty hard to beat a feast like that!

For those who got a little thirsty in the process, a brewery truck with its tank loaded and several attendants ready to assist the thirsty was available to those in need.

Ladies who went on the Annapolis Tour joined with the touring husbands and took part in the feed.

Annual Business Meeting Was Forum for Discussion

In addition to attending to the regular business affairs of the organization such as minutes, reports of activities and election, the annual business meeting provides extremely valuable functions in serving as a forum for discussions of various topics.

Of major importance was the discussions of the pros and cons of including "installation" within the scope of activities of ASPA.

Many excellent points were raised by both pros and cons in the discussion of the issues and considerable time was spent on the subject.

The membership were given their opportunity to indicate their preference through a mail ballot tabulated as of noon, August 15th.

"KEY MEN" ARE VITAL TO THE OPERATION OF ASPA

A "Key Man" selected to represent each state is a real focal point for ASPA activities. Of primary concern, of course, is the development of new membership and increasing membership strength to support increased ASPA activities.

It is hoped that in the future, the Key Man can provide information to ASPA on things which are taking place within the state, legislative bills which might affect the industry, and provide other information which would be beneficial to the entire ASPA membership. This would be included in future ASPA publications.

Know a Non-Member Sod Producer?

If so, why don't you do yourself and the Association a favor and invite them to join? As the sod industry continues to develop, every member thereof likewise has the opportunity to develop. Through joint effort any industry can achieve those goals which are most helpful to it so your friends and competitors become your associates in the sod production industry through ASPA membership.

Membership applications and information are available through the ASPA office.



Midwinter Conference In Tucson in '75

Annual Mid-Winter Conference is scheduled for Wednesday, February 26th through Friday, February 28th. The location will be Tucson, Arizona at the Double Tree Inn. A descriptive brochure and a room reservation card are enclosed. Rates are \$25.00 single and \$32.00 double plus tax. Mark your calendar now, reserve the space, and plan to attend what will be another fine and really productive, practical conference. (November, New Orleans?).

Media Covers Convention

Margaret Herbst, representing Turf Grass Times, was present at the ASPA Summer Conference. She reported that she made three minute recordings which are used on over 200 stations regarding the expanding sod industry and she gave considerable mention to the ASPA meeting contents and program.

Representing Weeds, Trees and Turf, a publication which serves the entire turf grass industry were publishers Art Edwards and staff representatives Don Miller and Roger Yount. They took a considerable number of photographs which they have made available to ASPA and were busy covering the various aspects of the meeting.

Busy Exhibits



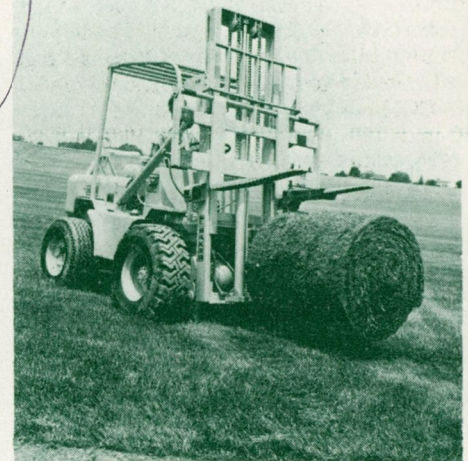
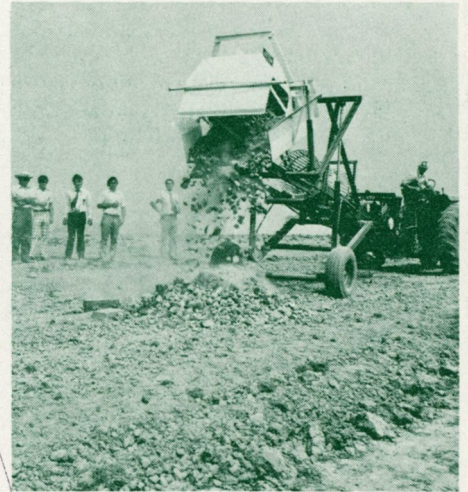
Mid-Winter Seminar and Summer Convention — Field Days Dates Set for 1975:

The Mid-winter Seminar is scheduled for Tucson, Arizona February 26-28 with a Doubletree Inn as the site. For you northerners, it would be a good place to get away from the blizzards and spend an extremely productive two days in practical, down-to-earth sessions. Paul Florence is general chairman and your recommendations for topics and information to be exchanged should be relayed to Paul at Box 232 A, Marysville, Ohio 43040. Phone (513)642-7487.

The 1975 Summer Convention and Field Days is scheduled for Kansas City,

Missouri at the Crown Center on July 16-18. The Crown Center is perhaps one of the country's most sensational new hotel-convention facilities with its multi-story waterfall in the main lobby being an additional "wonder of the world." There are a lot of interesting places in Mid-America and Kansas City would be a good place to begin. You might want to make it your family vacation in conjunction with the meeting. The Colorado Rockies are a few hours to the west, and the Black Hills, a few hours to the north, are excellent vacation spots.

Field Demonstrations



State Activities

Through the efforts of the California Sod Producers Association, the California Legislature has passed a law declaring sod to be exempt from personal property tax on the basis of its being a growing crop and thus agriculture in character.

Colorado Sod producers prevailed in the reversal of the Colorado Department of Revenue which would have prohibited sod producers from using farm motor vehicle plates. ASPA's legal counsel provided considerable information regarding the designation of sod production as agriculture by a number of other federal agencies and the precedent established thereby.



The following have joined ASPA since our last printed publication:

Leavitt Lane Farm (Paul R. Eveland) Ames, Nebr. 68621 (402)-721-3298
 Grass Farms, Inc. (B. A. Grimm) 5123 Ozark, Antonio, Texas, 78201 (512)694-3481
 Limekiln Sod Co. (Jordan L. Baisher) RD No. 1, Box 148, Reading, Pa. 19606 (215)779-4624
 Instant Lawns, Ltd., 1055 Bayview Dr., Delta, B.C. (604)943-4540
 Otto Pick & Sons Seeds Ltd., Box 126, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada (416)884-1147
 Don E. Stone Grass Farms, (Don E. Stone) Box 980, Bay City, Texas 77414 (713)245-2941 or (713)245-2388
 Shuback Farms, Inc., (Marilyn Shuback, President, RD 2, Box 368, Goshen, New York 10924 (914)651-4074
 Schiltgen Farms, Inc., (Peter Schiltgen), Box 174, Lake Elmo, Minnesota 55042 (612)777-2894
 The Toro Co., (James A. Fisher) 8111 Lyndale Ave. South, Bloomington, Minnesota 55420
 Cottrill Sodding Service (W. F. Cottrill) 3350 Wylie Dr., Helena, Montana 59601 (406)227-5646
 Kerrick Sod Co., (Robert Plonk) 2839 Midway Rd., Duluth, Minnesota 55810 (218)624-1811
 Champ Sales Corp., (Mike Simorich) 2439 N. Rosemead Blvd., El Monte, Calif. 91733 (213)283-6514
 Edling Grass Farm, (Thomas Edling) Box 475, West Columbia, Texas 77486 (713)345-4457
 Ludema Sod Farm, (Joe, Steve & Bob) 6312 Clarksville Rd., Clarksville, Michigan 48815 (616)693-2287
 Canberra Turf Pty, Ltd., (Wm. A. Davy) Turalla, Bungen dore, N.S.W. Australia 2621
 Van Neste Sod Farms, (W. F. Schuch) RR 1, Henderson Rd., Portland, Michigan 07041 (201)376-6060
 J & J Sodding Co., (Billy Jo Rape) 9603 Blue Ridge, Kansas City, Missouri 64134 (816)761-6899
 Williamstown Irrigation (David DeGraff) Box 68, Williamstown, New York 13493 (315)964-2214
 Williams Sod Farm, (Malcolm D. Williams) 7520 Polk Rd., Box 138, Minden City, Michigan 48456 (517)864-3506
 Marshall County Sod Farms, (Lyle Reiss) Rt. 4, Marshall Town, Iowa 50158 (515)752-2423
 Walker Landscaping Inc., (Joe Walker) RR No. 1, Box 179, Brookville, Ohio 45309 (513)836-3202
 T.S. Sod Farm (E. M. Selkregg) Box 2113, Naples, Florida 33940 (813)649-6913
 Greensward Turf Farm, (David C. Hamilton) Rt. 2, Box 253, Waldorf, Maryland 20601 (301)645-5088
 Trenso Turf Farms, (David Trenum) 3362 Tara Lane, Indianapolis, Indiana 46224 (317)291-8532
 Hassinger Turf Farm (John Hassinger) Rt. 2, Box 179, Constantine, Michigan 49042 (616)435-7605
 J. B. Sod & Seed Co., (Paul Jensen) Rt. 2, Box 195, Silverton, Oregon 97381 (503)581-7823
 Tulsa Grass & Sod Farms, (Ray Valentine, Jr.) 5638 So. Rockford, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74120 (918)742-8161
 Turf-Seed Inc., (R. H. Bailey) Box 25, Hubbard, Oregon 97032 (503)981-9571
 Jenks White Seed Co., Inc. (R. P. Jenks) Box 267, Hubbard, Oregon 97032 (503)362-2478
 Moore Sod Farm (Daniel Moore), Berlin, Maryland 21872 (301)641-2177
 Brookmeade Sod Farm, (Louis L. Brooking) Rt. 1, box 293, Doswell, Virginia 23047 (804)883-6338
 Triangle Sod Farms, Inc. (Carl Grisham & Arthur Wolf) Box 714, Belle Glade, Florida 33430 (305)996-2271
 Oakland Plantation, (Mauney-Ballew Inc.) 3600 Margrove Ave., Kings Mountain, North Carolina 28086 (704)739-4583 or (704)739-4585
 Green Carpet Turf Farms, (Wendyl L. Jarvis) Rt. 1, Box 173, Pleasant Grove, Utah 84062 (801)785-3937

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Thoughts for Coping With Inflation

Inflation will not go away. It is our single most important economic problem and one which troubles all of us. The following is a brief discussion of areas of concern and action you can take.

Your Suppliers

1. Concentrate your purchases.

If you buy some \$3000 per year, one or two wholesalers can fill this order at a far lower cost than ten or twelve each selling from \$250 to \$300 per year. From your selfish point of view some of these savings will, in the long run, be passed on to you. A \$3000 per year customer is likely to fare better in a period of shortages than is a \$250 customer.

If you spread your purchases among too many wholesalers, your business is worth little or nothing to any; but you may be a valuable customer of only one or possibly two. It may possibly be all right for me to be a "cherry picker" (one who buys only the specials) when I shop for groceries since I furnish my own transportation, wait on myself, and pay cash, but it may be harmful for you to treat your supply sources in that manner.

Remember that this period of inflation, energy crunch, and shortages is the time to cement your relationship with your suppliers. You owners who have been playing one wholesaler against another will be the first to be hurt in the present situation. Now is the time to earn your wholesaler's loyalty and to make sure that you are building dependable long-term relations with him. He is extremely necessary to you in your success.

2. Buy in as large quantity as possible.

It costs a wholesaler some three times as much in labor cost to fill three small orders as one larger order of the same amount. If at all possible, always buy in case lots rather than expect to be served on a broken package basis.

In this connection, make as few fill-in orders as possible. It must be discouraging as well as expensive to a wholesaler to send his salesman to see you

on Monday only to have you order something on Tuesday you forgot to tell the salesman on Monday. Many grocery wholesalers, for example, either do not fill such orders or make a special charge for the service.

3. Cooperate in cost saving measures.

If a salesman has been calling on you every X day, it would save a great deal if he could call on you only every 2X days. If your finder would like to cut his calls to you by one-half, with your cooperation in planning he can serve you as well and at far less cost. In some areas, many of your orders could be mailed in at far less cost than having a salesman call every time you needed something.

4. Consider your salesman's time.

Have your order ready when the wholesaler's salesman calls so that you can use his time in learning of new materials, items of merchandise, selling and management ideas, and so on. Don't make him a free inventory clerk who spends time checking your stock, and discussing the things you must have to stay in business.

5. Pay promptly.

It costs money to extend credit to even the best of risks. If you receive credit, cooperate by paying in full very promptly.

Your Line of Service and Merchandise.

List all present services and items of merchandise and try to determine the percentage of sales made from each. More importantly the percentages of my total profits made from each as well as the percentages of total costs that might be charged against each. This is for the purposes of possible deletions in present lines. Then add to this list all additional services and items of merchandise that you might consider. After having made these two lists correctly and as completely as possible, consider each item on the list against the following criteria.

1. Your customers, their needs and buying habits.

Take a fresh look at your customers and their problems. Remember it is your job and your opportunity to help your customers solve their problems. If they have problems, and they do, don't act as if it were their problems alone. If your customers need durable items and services that will make their present belongings more lasting, provide them.

2. Your costs and profits.

Your costs and both your gross and net profits vary from service to service and from merchandise item to merchandise item. First, be sure you know these costs and profits and then consider each item both on your present lines and also on your proposed lines.

3. Availability of manpower.

There is little use for you to consider adding a service, only to find you can't get the help necessary to offer the service.

4. Available materials.

As you know, some materials are in short supply. It is obvious that it is poor business to promote at some expense a new item or service for which the materials may not be available. If it is an established service, the situation is different. You already have your source of supply and you should probably keep it going, if it is profitable, as long as possible.

5. Your shop and its location.

What this really amounts to is that some shops and some locations can profitably sell services and merchandise that others can not. Examine your own shop and location and customer needs.

Your Inventory

If you have been buying goods for say an X day need, I would certainly suggest lengthening this to a 2X or perhaps even a 3X day need. Remember your next order will probably be filled at higher prices or perhaps not completely filled at all.

Your Records

The first step is an exact determination of present costs. However important the subject was in a time of fairly level prices, it is much, much more important in a time of rising prices.

Anon