



BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

AMERICAN SOD PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

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AUGUST / SEPTEMBER, 1992

FARM EMPLOYERS FACE DILEMMA AS INS & DOL STEP-UP ENFORCEMENT

Since passage of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), all employers are required to complete an I-9 form on every new employee, and as part of that process verify required documents. Lax enforcement by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Department of Labor (DOL) and easy availability of forged documents has created what many believe to be a very large group of so-called "documented illegal workers" (workers using high-quality forged documents to complete the I-9 paperwork process).

With expected increases in enforcement activities by the INS and DOL, farm employers will face a certain dilemma in attempting to satisfy all aspects of the law.

If an employer refuses to accept documents that turn out to be genuine, he could face charges of illegal discrimination. However, if he accepts documents that appear genuine, but are later proven forged, the employer may face a fraud claim under the IRCAS's new provisions.

ASPA recently mailed each of its members a booklet entitled, "How To Avoid Immigration-Related Employment Discrimination," prepared by the National Council of Agricultural Employers. Members are encouraged to review this publication and become familiar with all aspects of the law to avoid any potential problems.

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ASPA'S MIDWINTER CONFERENCE -- February 3-5, New Orleans, Louisiana
Watch "Turf News" magazine and your mail for complete
information and registration materials. Don't miss it!

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is provided with the understanding that this publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting or other professional service. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought. Published bi-monthly for members of the American Sod Producers Association, under the auspices of the ASPA Business Management Committee. We invite your comments and recommendations.

SUMMER HEAT -- BEWARE OF HEALTH PROBLEMS

Working outdoors all day can lead to at least three forms of heat-related health problems that both employers and employees should be aware of and ready to treat.

Heat Cramps -- the least severe type of problem, causes lower leg and abdomen cramps. Remedy: move out of the heat and into an area where there's increased air circulation, slowly drink ample amounts of fluids.

Heat Exhaustion -- next most serious, causes disorientation, nausea and excessive sweating. Remedy: Immediately stop all work with any mechanized implement and apply methods described for heat cramps.

Heat Stroke -- the most serious problem, can be fatal. Heat stroke victims usually don't sweat, but may have temperatures of 104 degrees or higher. Dry and hot skin signals a need for immediate medical attention. Remedy: (while waiting for medical help) get the person to a cool, shaded area; loosen or remove clothing; cool the person with water, but do not directly apply ice; massage the victim's arms and legs to increase blood flow which helps to release build-up body heat.

POOR QUALITY IS INVISIBLE COST

While almost everyone thinks of quality as something that's readily apparent and visible, the real profit-killing aspects of poor quality are often hidden and perhaps just as often ignored. Just because poor quality isn't visible or just because it doesn't jump off of the income statement, don't think it doesn't exist. Consider these indicators of poor quality:

1. The number of times a customer calls to order, gets a busy signal and hangs up before someone answers the phone.
2. The number of times a customer has to call back to question anything about an order. Add to this, your cost of finding the answer.
3. The word of mouth that results from any poor service and the resulting lack of referral business.
4. Doing something over that should have been done right the first time.
5. The amount of time required to respond to complaints, returned materials or shipping and billing errors.
6. The lost revenue of late mailings (promotions, reminders, bills, etc.) or the additional cost of first-class versus bulk rate postage.
7. The hundreds of hours wasted in filing and storing records that are never needed.
8. The attrition cost of losing valuable, well-trained staff members who simply burn-out because of the pressure and distress. Don't forget to add in the cost of hiring and training replacements.

Quality takes on many different appearances and forms. You should always look beyond the obvious to determine where quality can be improved in your operation.

ASPA MARKETING PRODUCT SALE

**SAVE 33%!
(while supplies last)**

	Original Price	Sale Price	Quantity Ordered	Cost Item
JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL TURFGRASS				
1990 Issue	\$3	\$2		
1989 Issue	\$3	\$2		
'TURF & THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT'	\$3	\$2		
			Add Shipping Charges**	
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**** SHIPPING INFORMATION**

For shipping charges, use the following:

U.S. Orders:

Under \$50 \$3
 \$51 - \$100 \$5
 \$101 - \$150 \$7
 \$151 - \$200 \$9
 \$201 - \$250 \$12
 over \$250 \$18

CANADIAN & INTERNATIONAL ORDERS — leave the shipping section blank - you will be billed for shipping charges after shipment is sent.
 PLEASE CHECK THE FOLLOWING:

- ☐ Ship fastest method regardless of cost.
☐ Ship most economical method (approximately 8-10 weeks for delivery)

Charge to:

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

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Phone _____ / _____

ALL ORDERS MUST BE PREPAID. U.S. FUNDS ONLY.

Payment is not tax-deductible as a charitable contribution, but may be deductible as an ordinary and necessary business expense.

Return to: ASPA, 1855-A Hicks Road, Rolling Meadows, Illinois 60008
 Phone: 708/705-9898 Fax: 708/705-8347

SELLING SOD VS. HYDROSEEDING

Prepared by Mike Holmes, Warren's Turf Nursery, Crystal Lake, IL

More and more often our competition for that sod order seems to come not from our competitor on the neighboring sod farm, but from a grassing contractor offering instant grass from hydroseeding. You've heard their sales pitch before; "A beautiful lawn in just a few weeks for a fraction of the price of sod," is the claim that gets the prospect's attention. It's hard to argue the price issue, when generally around the U.S., hydroseeding is being priced at 15% to 25% of the price of installed sod -- that's a huge difference!

If we can't compete on price, then what tool can we use to secure the order? One great selling tool is offering VALUE! You and I know that your sod is going to give the prospect a greater value than the seeded or hydroseeded lawn. Obviously however, we must convince the prospect of this greater value. How?? By showing him the benefits he can enjoy by buying our product. A recent "Wall Street Journal" survey showed that today's customer is better informed than ever before, and, is actually more afraid of paying too little and thus receiving cheap or shoddy products, than he is of paying too much!

So, we can begin by showing the prospect why our sod costs more; we're handling most of the unknowns and worries of the lawn before it ever gets to him. We've handled the seeding, the nursing of the baby grass plants, the weed and pest control, and are delivering him a finished product -- all this obviously costs money, whether he does it and takes all the risk, or we do it and take the risk.

I've listed several other features and benefits of a quality sodded lawn that you can use. Most of these and more are found in the ASPA sales helper entitled, "Turfgrass and Seed Installation, A Contractor's Estimator," these sales helper work-sheets can be ordered from the ASPA Office.

FEATURES AND BENEFITS OF SODDING

1. Sodded lawn is instantaneous - stops mud and dirt problems immediately, looks beautiful and adds instant value to the property.
2. Sod can be installed at virtually any time of the year, with a high degree of success -- seeding or hydroseeding works best in the fall, and can be pretty risky for the rest of the year.
3. Seed quality (and thus plant quality) used by ASPA member farms is of the highest quality available, usually gold tag, certified sod quality. Hydroseeders often use the cheapest seed they can buy, and are more interested in fast germination than long-term lawn quality.
4. Almost immediate erosion and run-off control with sod. Heavy rains, especially on sloping areas, can cause big problems for the seeded or hydroseeded lawn, with lots of seed and topsoil being washed onto sidewalks, streets and into storm sewers.

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Selling Sod vs. Hydroseeding (continued from Page 3)

5. Weed control for a new sodded lawn is very minimal, if anything. The weeds have been taken out at the ASPA member's farm, and the vigorous, healthy and thick turf naturally crowds out future weed challenges.

6. Water requirements are actually less for the sodded lawn. The seeded or hydroseeded lawn must remain wet throughout the germination, phase, all the way through the juvenile stage.

In summary, our high quality sodded lawn is a much higher value than the cheaper seeded or hydroseeded lawn. We intuitively know that, but we must remember to use factual features and benefits to convince our prospects.

MEMBER MARKETING TIP -- DRESS THEM UP AND MAKE THEM PROUD!

Prepared by Wayne Thorson, Chairman Business Management Committee
Todd Valley Farms, Mead, Nebraska

Ever have one of your employees come to work in the morning wearing the same dirty clothes he wore home the night before? Were you embarrassed to let your customers see him? I used to encountered this many times. We now have uniforms provided by a professional linen service. For about \$1.25 per day, they furnish clean pants and shirts, with the employee's name and our company name and logo. The service sews on buttons and mends any tears. Our employees love it, as they feel more professional. Their wives love it as they have less laundry to do. This had become a great benefit to all and sure has helped improve the image of our employees and company to everyone we market to.

INCREASE DEMAND WITH MARKETING PROGRAM

Richard Ott, author of the newly published, "Creating Demand" suggests the following division of marketing resources to maximize the results:

Advertising -- 50 to 60 percent to reach and affect masses of people quickly with a controlled message.

Promotions -- 20 to 30 percent to involve customers in events like open houses, festivals and exhibits.

Publicity -- 5 to 10 percent to maintain regular media contacts with releases and activities for the media.

Contests -- 10 to 20 percent to attract new customers and encourage existing customers to purchase more, as you increase your database with entrant names.

Ott's book goes into meaningful detail in each of these areas. If the book is not available in your bookstores or library, orders can be placed by calling 800/521-1227 in the U.S. and Canada or 800/453-4062 from other locations.