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Ontario Golf Superintendents Association

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WINTER 1991





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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I would like to acknowledge and thank all OGSA Board members for their voluntary efforts during the previous year and I anticipate hard work and dedication from all the Board members for the upcoming year. In this time when work and family commitments are so demanding it sometimes is very difficult to find time to volunteer. I urge all members to lend a hand to your Association if asked to help out. The experience is often rewarding.

Now is the time of year to slow down and reflect on your successes of the previous season, learn from the disappointments, but more so prepare yourself for the upcoming season. There is no better way to do this than to participate in the educational seminars provided by the various associations. Unfortunately if you missed the Ontario Turfgrass Symposium you missed an excellent program. Congratulations to Neil Acton and his entire committee.

The movement between employment is in full swing. I remind all Superintendents to show true professionalism and follow our Association's "Ethical Standards". Take some time to introduce yourself and welcome new members to your area. That friendly gesture in a time of adjustment and settling in can make life and the task at hand much more enjoyable. If you know of anyone who is not a member of OGSA, encourage them to join the Association. It is a great benefit to the new members and our Association.

Again this year Environmental issues will be a hot point of discussion. We as an Association will do our best to represent the golf course Superintendent's concerns. If you do your part and practice safe pesticide control programs we will be able to prove to the Environmentalists and Government that golf course managers are just as concerned about their Environment and know how to deal with pest products responsibly.

I would like to wish all members a successful 1991 golfing season.

Mark Hagen
President, O.G.S.A.

Annette Anderson
Turf Extension Specialist
Plant Industry Branch

Ministry of Agriculture and Food
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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to 1991 and the first edition of *Green is Beautiful* for 1991.

Activity remains strong in our industry even in this period of economic slow down. We should all feel very proud and fortunate to be involved in an industry that is still growing in leaps and bounds. Judging by the number of courses being built and the renovation of existing courses, 1991 is looking like a very busy year ahead.

The O.G.S.A. continues to grow and is very busy putting together an interesting program for 1991.

Simon George

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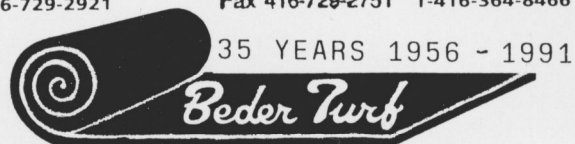
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ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

WHAT'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE? *An Opinion on Unreasonable Expectations*

by Stanley J. Zontek

Director, Mid-Atlantic Region, USGA Green Section

Golfers are well known for making comparisons. They seem to take pride in telling anyone who will listen how a course down the road does something this way or that. They compare budgets, acreage maintained, soils, grass types, green speed, the amount of labor, and many other facts. Sometimes the comparisons are accurate, sometimes not.

Let's take this comparison one step further. It's not really valid, but it is interesting nonetheless.

Baseball: A .250 batting average is just that — an average. A ball player hits safely one at-bat in four. A "star" bats .300, and an immortal like Ted Williams bats .400. If you are keeping score, and you should be, that's four out of ten.

Basketball: Superstars shoot just over 50% from the field. They shoot a ball into a hoop at a distance of zero (a dunk) to 18-22 feet or more.

Golf: A par round of golf is normally about 72. Golfers who consistently shoot less than par are found on the PGA Tour, making lots of money. Golfers who shoot consistently over par are found everywhere, and includes those people making the comparisons. The average handicap in the country is just over 18. The average golfer, therefore, shoots about 25% over par.

At what percentage do golf course superintendents produce quality turfgrass? As a basis for comparison, golf courses contain about 30 acres of fairways, 2.5 acres of greens, and 2.5 acres of tees. This equates to about 100,000 sq. ft. of greens and tees and 1,320,000 sq. ft. of fairways. Thus, if a superintendent "bats" .400, which would put him in great company in baseball, it means your superstar would lose the equivalent of 10.8 greens and tees out of 18. On fairways, he would lose about 18 acres of turf.

While this .400 batting average might get you into the Baseball Hall of Fame, you would probably lose your job as a golf course superintendent.

All of this may sound ludicrous, but the fact remains that golfers have set such high standards for their golf courses that maintaining these standards is difficult, expensive, and sometimes impossible to achieve. To keep alive every blade of grass on every green, tee, and fairway regardless of the conditions, and not being willing to accept anything less, is wishful thinking and a mistake.

Everything cannot be perfect on every golf course every day. Even if it were possible, what would it cost?

So, look at your golf course. My message to golf course officials reading this opinion is not to be so concerned if the golf course superintendent bats only .998. After all, this equates to losing about 200 sq. ft. of turf, a 10 ft. by 20 ft. area of greens or tees and 2,640 sq. ft. of fairways, or .06 of an acre.

Anyone who bats this percentage or better deserves a pat on the back, not a kick in the pants. After all, what other industry which deals so closely with Mother Nature can boast a 99% average or better? Not many.

Therefore, the next time you read about a professional athlete making \$2,000,000 a year to achieve only a 30% batting average, be proud . . . because golf course superintendents are batting 99% or better.

Independent Study from the University of Guelph

Turf management correspondence courses have been available from Independent Study at the University of Guelph since the early sixties. The program includes a professional development opportunity for turf managers unable to attend full-time on-campus programs. It allows turf managers to receive the University of Guelph Ontario Diploma in Horticulture without leaving their job, home or family. Graduates of the program include superintendents from Prince Edward Island to California.

Specific courses for turf managers include Introduction to Turf Management, Machinery for Turf, Irrigation and Weed Control in Turf as well as twenty-nine other horticultural courses covering everything from arboriculture to communications to landscape design. All courses include a workbook and usually some form of audiovisual material. New courses include videotapes that illustrate many of the practices and principles described in the course. In addition, a number of videotapes are being developed to be used as staff training tools. Available titles include Pruning Ornamental Trees & Shrubs, Protective Clothing & Equipment for Pesticide Use, Tractor Tips and Machinery Maintenance & Safety. Training videotapes will allow superintendents to utilize slow periods, such as rainy days, for productive staff training sessions.

For further information contact Independent Study by phone (519/697-5050), fax (519/824-9813) or mail (Independent Study, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1).

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1991 Ontario Turfgrass Symposium Report

January 9 & 10, 1991

The Ontario Turfgrass Symposium, presented annually at the University of Guelph, was attended by 230 interested individuals. After opening remarks from the OAC dean, Dr. R. McLaughlin and OGSA President, Gord Nimmo CGCS, the educational sessions commenced.

We were most fortunate to hear Golf Course Superintendents Association of America President, Gerald Faubel CGCS, deliver a forceful message entitled "Golf in the Environmental 90's". To its credit, GCSAA has been very pro-active and professional regarding golf's positive impact on the environment. Jerry stressed how important it is for each and every superintendent to do their part, both practicing and preaching responsible environmental behaviour.

Doug Carrick, a Canadian golf course architect designing some of the country's premier new golf courses, followed with a presentation depicting some of the unique environmental concerns he has encountered in some of his recent projects. Professional assistance offered by both the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food via Annette Anderson and the Royal Canadian Golf Association Green Section represented by Teri Yamada were the highlights of the next two presentations.

John Lajeunesse started the afternoon session describing the technical and financial assistance available to golf courses through the Ontario Skills Development Office. We personally utilize this service at Deer Creek and I highly recommend it. Occupational hygiene concerning pesticides and other workplace substances was the topic of David Wallace. Dave has done research in the lawn care industry for the Ministry of Labour and will be approaching golf courses in the Kitchener area to implement some pertinent studies. Dave Smith gave a historic as well as agronomic talk detailing the past and present at Muskoka Lakes Golf & Country Club. Another Muskoka native, Scott Robinson from Arborists Tree Service, followed with a presentation concerning tree care. Scott also will provide an information package to superintendents to assist them in implementing tree care programs at their courses. The OGSA Annual Meeting followed with the election of new directors to assist in running the Association for the next year.

Thursday morning commenced with Allied Association Reports from the OTRF, CGSA and the GCSAA. Kent Groves gave a brief Green Care Report before addressing the subject of our environmental management responsibilities to our industry. Through the efforts of Kent and Thom Charters, Green Care has become a very credible National Association of Horticultural Associations. Bill Fach, CGCS, presented a talk describing the extensive projects he has completed at Rosedale in his short tenure there. After a short break, Dr. Chris Hall introduced the audience to new pesticide detection technology. Immunoassays provide for an inexpensive, quick easy and reliable test of water in the field. Commercially available now for certain pesticides, this technology is going to make all chemical applicators much more accountable for their actions. The utilization of computers for turfgrass management was discussed by Graham Wilkinson representing Acrow Canada. This firm distributes the TRIMS turf management software program in Ontario. Graham is very aware of our requirements in this industry and provided some excellent information for those considering computers. Operating a busy public course is no easy task but judging from Tim Clarridges presentation, he has everything under control at Parkview G.C. Golfers at Parkview rave about the "private club" conditions they now enjoy which is a credit to Tim and his staff.

Dick Psolla, under the threat of an impending snow storm, completed the educational sessions. This is the second year in a row that Dick was the closing speaker. The interest participants have for Dick is testament to his knowledge and experience.

Many thanks to Norm McCollum, Bruce Clark, Barry Endicott and Jerry Richard for chairing the sessions. Special thanks to the University for their hospitality and to all of the speakers for their contributions.

Neil Acton, CGCS

Nostalgia from The St. Thomas Golf & Country Club

Around budgeting time last fall I ended up playing a round of golf with one of our long time members named Jim Gillick. As we stepped on to the first tee, I did my usual mental preparations for the humiliation I was about to once again endeavor (I have trouble breaking one hundred). I was expecting a round of golf that would create the normal Member-Superintendent discussions on why we were doing certain maintenance practices the way we were, but to my surprise this round of golf turned out to be an interesting and very valuable history lesson. It turned out that Jim was the Greens Chairman at the Club back in 1962, and as we approached each tee-off, there was a new individual story that would pertain to the hole that we were about to challenge (this was just fine with me since it took the main focus off my golf game). As we talked about past equipment and employees that were here twenty-nine years ago, we also started comparing operational costs. I was sure there was to be quite a change over the years, but the figures which Jim had mentioned from 1962 were far below the ones that I had expected. As luck would have it Jim had saved a copy of the old Course Operations Budget which he kindly passed along to me this winter.

In order to make a proper comparison with your own golf courses, it's important to know that the St. Thomas Golf & Country Club maintenance budget today has a very average dollar figure for an 18-hole private club with thirteen employees during peak season.

After examining this budget with the total dollar figure of \$16,565.00, I was very disturbed when it occurred to me that in 1991 our G.S.T. submissions from memberships alone is more than double that of the 1962 budget in total (and the Government says that the G.S.T. isn't creating much revenue).

So do your comparing and add up how many employees you would be able to employ if you were given the wage amounts from 1962. Remember, if a long time member at your club invites you to play a round of golf, don't pass up the offer, it may turn out to be your most interesting and educational round ever.

Ryan Beauchamp



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THE CHANGING TIMES

The Toronto Golf Club

By Bob Brewster, Property Manager

During the past two years, the turf industry has been recognized as "Big Business". Golf clubs both new and old are spending more money in the construction and upgrading of their golf courses. The boom in golf has helped increase profits of established industries and has introduced several new companies to the turf industry. There are now several sales people calling on golf superintendents throughout Ontario. The travelling salesman had declined in the early 1980's but has made a complete turn around for 1990. The larger companies have hired more sales people to sell equipment and more equipment companies are there to demonstrate their latest piece of equipment. The irrigation companies with their fancy pumphouse systems are appearing everywhere. The golf course superintendent now realizes that a good pumphouse is the key to the irrigation system before you install the pipe and irrigation heads.

The biggest change at the present time is in the number of companies selling fertilizer. Their prices are competitive and they all have their fall savings programs to attract buyers. Fertilizer companies have spent money to provide the customer with a good product. It will be interesting to see how many companies will be around in the year 2000. For you the golf course superintendent, make sure you check out all your products thoroughly. Remember the saying that is always "buyers beware market". How many times have you seen a salesman selling for one company today and another company tomorrow.



O.G.S.A. Director, David W. Gourlay presents GCSAA President Gerry Faubel with a donation from the O.G.S.A.

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O.G.S.A. President, Gord Nimmo presents 25 year plaques to O.J. Piccolo (top) and to Sam Di Pinto (bottom).

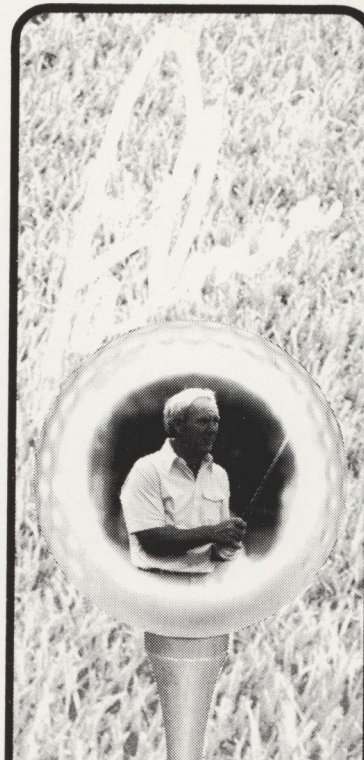


Grower Pesticide Safety Course

The Grower Pesticide Safety Course was developed by the Ontario Pesticide Education Program at Ridgetown College of the Agricultural Technology in co-operation with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment.

The purpose of this course is to increase the participant's knowledge of the safe handling of pesticides.

To register contact the Ontario Pesticide Education Program, Ridgetown College of Agricultural Technology, Ridgetown, Ontario (519) 674-5456. Please register two weeks in advance so that the course manual can be mailed out to you to read before the day of the course.



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The guest speakers will be Dr. Terry Tattar, Professor of Plant Pathology at the Shade Tree Laboratories of the University of Massachusetts, Dr. Glen Lumis, Professor of Horticulture Science at the University of Guelph and Tim Johnson, President and Chief Consulting Arborist of Artistic Arborist in Phoenix, Arizona.

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A SCIENTIFIC VIEWPOINT: Dr. Thomas L. Watschke

Turfgrasses Can Safely Clean Our Water Supplies

Finding 1: Water running off or passing through a well managed lawn is not likely to be of significantly lower quality than the tap water available in many cities.

Finding 2: Most chemicals applied to turfgrass are trapped within the thatch and rootzone areas of the plant and do not contaminate water supplies.

Finding 3: Lawns established with turfgrass sod are up to 15 more times effective in controlling runoff than seed-established lawns, even after three years.

Fears of adding to our pollution woes from homeowner or commercial lawncare are greatly unfounded and overstated based on the results of a three-year study of water quality impact conducted at The Pennsylvania State University. In fact, the results show that well managed turf areas have very little runoff and virtually no potential for chemical contamination. Applications of these findings to land use, city planners and environmental interests are very promising.

Funded in large measure by the U.S. Geological Survey, this study was initiated in 1986 to examine the water quality impact of pesticides and nutrients used in the urban landscape. A total of 9 test plots, with slopes ranging from 9 to 14 percent were prepared for the study. Water runoff and leachate trapping and measuring devices were installed on each plot, followed by the installation of identical irrigation systems and soil preparation. A sophisticated array of scientific instruments and specialized computer apparatus were connected to monitoring devices to measure and record what was taking place on each test plot.

Three of the plots were seeded with a mixture of Kentucky bluegrass/perennial ryegrass/fine fescue, while three others were seeded with a "contractor" mix of annual rye, common Kentucky bluegrass and creeping red fescue. The final three test plots were covered with three-year-old turfgrass sod grown from a blend of 100 percent certified Kentucky bluegrasses.

The plots were mowed weekly at a height of two inches and given four annual treatments of pesticides and fertilizers in accordance with label recommendations. After establishment, irrigation was applied only when the need to collect runoff was scheduled (two days after the chemicals had been applied).

Runoff Results

To examine the potential effects of turf on water quality as a function of runoff, Penn State researchers used a carefully controlled irrigation system to uniformly apply known amounts of water to the test areas. After failing to obtain even the slightest amount of runoff from the sodded area with irrigation applications equal to a 3-inch per hour rain, the system was revamped to create a 6-inch per hour output in order to be able to collect runoff from the sodded slopes for chemical analysis. According to rainfall probability data, a six-inch per hour storm in central Pennsylvania is not likely to ever occur.

The sodded test plots proved to be 15 times more effective than either of the seeded plots at controlling runoff. Only 0.8% of all the water applied was collected as runoff from the sodded areas while 13.4% ran off the "contractor" grade seeded area

and 11.6% ran off the classic seed area. The 15-fold better runoff control advantage for the sodded slopes has significant environmental implications because there would also be less likelihood that the water would contain significant amounts of sediment, chemicals or other potential pollutants.

Leachate collection devices were also used to capture water percolating through the soil to determine its chemical composition.

Clean Runoff Discovered

When analyzing the runoff and leachate at one part per billion (equal to one teaspoon of sugar in 1.3 million gallons of coffee), researchers found almost no detectable amounts of the eight pesticides and nutrients that had been applied to the turf. In fact, in a vast majority of the tests, the chemicals were not even detected or were below the federal drinking water standard.

While there are no federal drinking water standards for many of the chemicals, the runoff and leachate samples generally contained less potassium than the irrigation water that was used. This seems to further illustrate the grass plant's capacity to trap and hold many of the chemicals that a sound turf management scheme would require. It is also important to remember that the water samples analyzed were virtually collected in a situation analogous to "curbside". In a "real life" situation, considerable runoff water from other sources would already be in the street which would result in significant dilution of already low concentrations of chemicals.

Potential Application of Findings

When combined with the other known attributes of turfgrass such as conversion of carbon dioxide to oxygen, cooling effects, entrapment of particulate pollution and reduction of noise and glare, turf's water filtering capacities make it a very good candidate for additional environment improvement projects.

Directing urban runoff waters across turf and possibly into grass covered basins could provide not only a water cleansing effect, but also assist in:

- a. flood control and thereby a related reduction of waste water treatment facility requirements;
- b. pollution control from parking lot and/or animal feedlot runoff waters; and
- c. reduction of silation and topsoil losses at construction sites, farm fields and highway rights-of-way.

While additional research is required to determine the surface areas of turfgrass needed to best serve its purposes on various soil types, grades and natural runoff amounts, considerable progress is being made in recognizing the many unique capabilities of the seemingly simple grass plant.

What has been right under our feet for many years is beginning to be recognized for the contributions it can make to improving our environment. Just as it is man who is creating environmental problems, it will be up to man to better understand and properly use the tools of environment improvement we have available to us, particularly turfgrasses.



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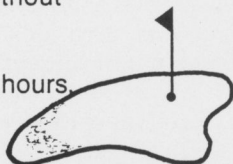
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by Anonymous

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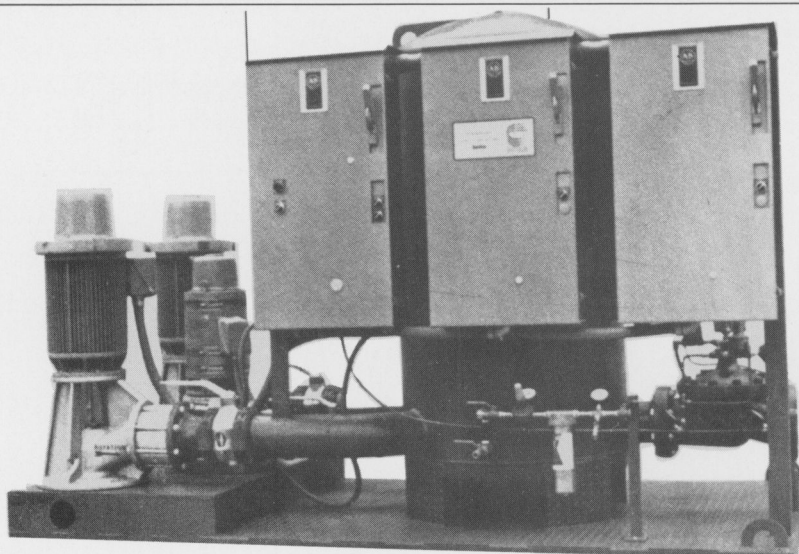
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"I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars."

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)



"Next in importance to the divine profusion of water, light and air—may be reckoned the universal beneficence of grass. Grass is the forgiveness of nature, her constant benediction."

Senator John J. Ingalls (1833-1900)



"Whoever could make ... two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together."

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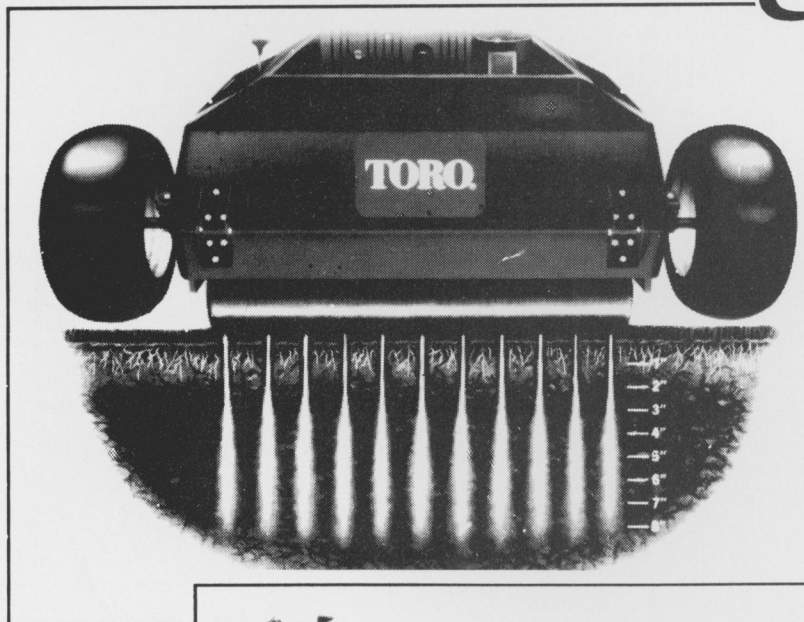
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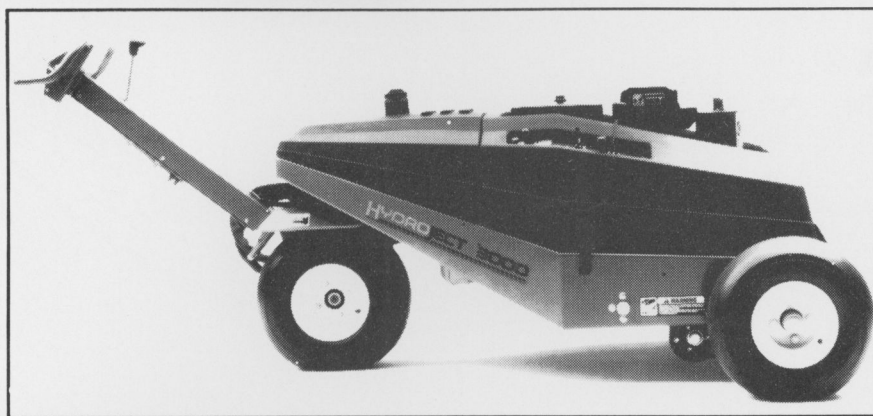
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MARCH 15, 1991
CGSA NATIONAL SEMINAR
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