

Selling the value of a renovation helps your profits

By JAMES E. GUYETTE
Editor

Educating customers on the value of a turf renovation—and knowing your own costs—can help guarantee that you get a good price for your services.

“People don’t have a sense of how much effort it

takes to renovate a lawn,” says Jeff Lefton, extension turf specialist at Purdue University.

A successful renovation requires extensive knowledge and is labor intensive. Turf managers should make sure that the customer realizes this, he points out.

Pitching a renovation job to a client can be more

successful “if they can somehow bridge that to painting the house and putting on a new roof,” says Lefton, noting that a homeowner will pay much more for painting and roofing, yet the lawn plays an equally important role in the appearance of the property.

And because most lawn renovation failures are caused by inadequate wa-

tering, the customer needs to be enlisted to help make sure the project gets enough moisture.

“If you can get homeowner participation, I’ve got to believe that your success rate is going to be much greater,” says Lefton.

That sense of cooperation can also be used to obtain a price acceptable to

See **VALUE** Page 16



Lefton: Get clients involved.

LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

Serving commercial mowing and chemical lawn care professionals

VOLUME 13 NUMBER 8

AN **EDGEHILL** PUBLICATION

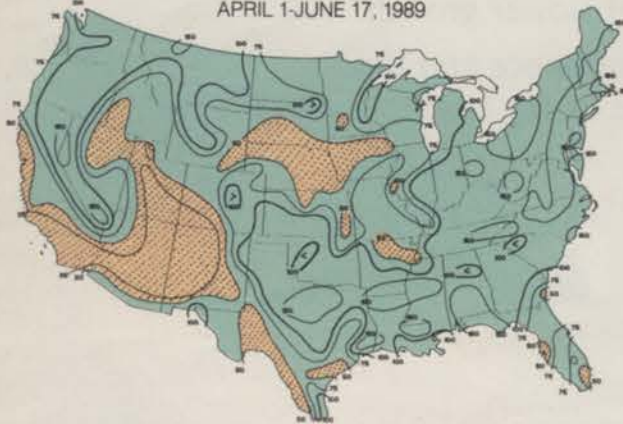
AUGUST 1989

Showers bringing more challenges

DROUGHT STILL HURTS SOME

PERCENT OF NORMAL PRECIPITATION

APRIL 1-JUNE 17, 1989



■ Areas having less than 50 percent of normal rainfall
■ Areas having 75 percent to 150 percent of normal rainfall

Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

By JAMES E. GUYETTE
Editor

April showers that poured on into May, June and July showers have made the Great Drought of 1988 a distant memory. Instead, many turf managers are concerned over what could be the Great Flood of 1989.

Outbreaks of disease and fungus are being reported, mowing and treatment schedules are being thrown for a loop, nutrients are leaching out of root zones and saturated soils are depriving grass plants of needed oxygen.

“All this rain is just driving people crazy. It’s a whole new ball of wax compared to what we had during the drought a year ago,” says Eliot C. Roberts, Ph.D., director of the

See **RAINFALL** Page 12

1989 MILLION DOLLAR LAWN CARE LIST

See it on Page 10!

Improved bermuda due on marketplace

An improved seeded variety of bermudagrass—suitable for the transition zone—is expected to be on the market by 1991.

“No doubt about it—it’s a revolution in the entire Southern seed industry,” says Ernie Millner, vice president and general manager of the Cactus Seed Co., Inc. in Roll, Ariz.

Cactus is producing the new Cheyenne bermudagrass in cooperation with Pennington Enterprises, Inc. of Madison, Ga. It was bred at the Jacklin Seed Co. in Post

Falls, Idaho.

“During my visits to the research nursery, I have been amazed at what lies in the future for the bermudagrass plant,” reports Brooks Pennington.

“We see bermuda with short nodes, fine textures, beautiful green color, drought tolerance, low maintenance requirements, the ability to hold some green color after frost and the ability to be propagated by seed,” he adds.

Pennington recalls a Janu-
See **Bermuda** Page 12

INSIDE

HYDROSEED

Hydroseeding may be another option to generate additional clients and revenue.

18

MOWING

The first in a series on how to increase the efficiency of your mowing crews.

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CLASSIFIED

See what’s for sale, miscellaneous items.

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Customers calling for additional services

MIDLAND, MICH.—LCOs are expanding into new services mainly because their customers are asking them too.

That was the consensus among LCOs interviewed by the Dow Chemical Co. at the Professional Lawn Care Association of America conference in New Orleans. Eighty eight percent said they’ve seen an increase in customer demand for new services.

Ninety percent said they

now provide services beyond the standard fertilization/weed control program.

Services other than weed control, insect control, fertilization and disease control were:

- Tree/shrub fertilization and insect spraying—64 percent.
- Mowing and lawn renovation—59 percent.
- Landscape planning—41 percent.
- Landscape installation and tree/shrub pruning—36 percent.
- Irrigation installation—33 percent.
- Building perimeter insect spraying—25 percent.
- Indoor pest control and

See **DOW** Page 14

LATE NEWS

Cushman, Lawn-Boy up for sale

WAUKEGAN, ILL.—Outboard Marine Corp. is seeking buyers for its Cushman and Lawn-Boy divisions.

“This decision will enable OMC to concentrate solely on its worldwide marine business, which has grown dramatically in the past few years,” said C.D. Strang, chairman and chief executive officer.

However, the company said that third quarter earnings are at least 50 percent below last year, when it gained net earnings of \$23.3 million, or \$1.48 a share.

The earnings reduction was attributed to a slowdown in demand for marine products and the continued impact of last year’s drought on the lawnmower business.

OMC did not set a purchase price for Cushman and Lawn-Boy, nor did it speculate on possible buyers or the industry impact of any sale. **LCI**

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LAWN CARE INDUSTRY (ISSN 0160-8042) is published monthly by Edgell Communications, Inc. Corporate and Editorial offices: 7500 Old Oak Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44130. Advertising Offices: 7500 Old Oak Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44130, 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60601 and 3475 Lenox Road, N.E. Suite 665 Atlanta, Georgia 30326. Accounting, Advertising Production and Circulation offices: 1 East First Street, Duluth, Minnesota 55802. Subscription rates: \$25 per year in the United States; \$50 per year in Canada. All other countries: \$100 per year. Current issue single copies (pre-paid only): \$2.50 in the U.S.; \$5.00 in Canada; elsewhere \$10.; add \$3.50 for shipping and handling per order. Back issues, if available \$10.; add \$3.50 per order for shipping and handling (pre-paid orders only). Office of publication: Edgell Communications, Inc., 1 East First Street, Duluth, Minnesota 55802. Second class postage paid at Duluth, Minnesota 55806. Copyright © 1989 by Edgell Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to LAWN CARE INDUSTRY, P.O. Box 6200, Duluth, Minnesota 55806.

ABP BPA

MEMOS

A new grass seed processing operation has been opened by Pennington Enterprises, Inc. in Lebanon, Ore.

The new \$1.5 million facility consists of 40,000 square feet. It will have the capability to handle 400 railroad cars of seed per year. Each car will average 140,000 pounds—totaling 56 million pounds of seed per year.

Growers are growing at Lofts/Great Western Seed Co. as the firm has added 5,000 acres to its production fields.

A new warehouse has been added that's able to store 4 million to 5 million pounds of

harvested turfseed.

Craig Potts has been promoted to director of marketing and communications for turf at The Andersons.

A proposed ordinance banning phosphorous-containing fertilizers has been postponed indefinitely in Mountain Lakes Township, N.J. after action by the Alliance For Environmental Concerns, Inc.

AEC Executive Director Ilona Gray spoke to the township's mayor, and the measure was then withdrawn from consideration.

A pesticide video produced by the American Council on Science and Health and narrated by Walter Cronkite is getting good reviews from the industry.

Big Fears Little Risks: A Report on Chemicals in the Environment is available by contacting Rena Buchanan at (212) 315-3950.

Dow and Elanco are uniting to produce ag chemicals. Dow is bringing insecticide and herbicide business, while Elanco has fungicide and herbicide expertise.

Dow-Elanco sales are expected to top \$4 billion in a decade. LCI

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Mean Turfgrass Quality Ratings of Tall Fescue Cultivars At Four Shade Locations in the United States

Name	Mean
Arid	6.0
Finelawn I	5.6
Trident	5.4
Pacer	5.3
Mustang	5.3
Apache	5.2
Tempo	5.1
KY-31	5.0
Falcon	5.0
Hounddog	5.0
Adventure	4.9
Jaguar	4.9
Bonanza	4.8
Olympic	4.8
Maverick	4.7
Willamette	4.6
Rebel	4.5
Clemfine	4.4
Brookston	4.4
Johnstone	4.0
Kenhy	3.4

Data from USDA National Turfgrass Evaluation Program

Drought Tolerance (Dormancy) Ratings of Tall Fescue Cultivars

Name	Mean	Name	Mean
Arid	7.7	Chesapeake	5.7
Olympic	7.7	Tempo	5.3
Apache	7.3	Hounddog	5.0
Jaguar	7.3	Pacer	5.0
Finelawn I	6.3	Johnstone	5.0
Mustang	6.3	Kenhy	5.0
Rebel	6.3	Maverick	5.0
Bonanza	6.0	Brookston	4.3
KY-31	6.0	Clemfine	4.3
Adventure	5.7	Trident	3.7
Falcon	5.7	Willamette	3.3
Finelawn 5GL	5.7		

Data from USDA National Turfgrass Evaluation Program

Brown Patch Ratings of Tall Fescue Cultivars

Name	Mean
Arid	6.3
Adventure	6.2
Jaguar	6.1
Rebel	6.0
Pacer	5.9
Maverick	5.8
Falcon	5.8
Clemfine	5.7
Apache	5.6
Tempo	5.6
Olympic	5.6
Hounddog	5.6
Chesapeake	5.5
Finelawn 5GL	5.5
KY-31	5.5
Mustang	5.5
Bonanza	5.5
Trident	5.5
Johnstone	5.5
Finelawn I	5.3
Kenhy	5.0
Willamette	4.9
Brookston	4.3

Data from USDA National Turfgrass Evaluation Program

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Think of customers before diversifying

When considering alternative business ventures, too many LCOs choose a new service for all the wrong reasons.

Simply put, you have to first determine if the consumers will accept the new offering.

That's the opinion of the Services Consulting Group in Columbus, Ohio. SCG has prepared a report outlining some of the factors used—rightly or wrongly—when considering expansion.

Some wrong reasons?

Company boredom: "We were getting bored with our old business. Everyone in the organization needed to be charged up."

SCG replies that "simple boredom is never a good reason to do anything without thinking deeply about the consequences. Companies that need a 'charge' should think about having a retention rate of 95 percent and a closing rate of 90 percent. That's a 'charge.'"

Name recognition: "Everyone knows our name. We



JAMES E. GUYETTE
EDITOR

should capitalize on this."

Says SCG, "Remember Xerox PC's and AT&T copiers? Just because your name is well respected in one area doesn't mean that the consumer will accept you in another."

There's room to grow: "We've got extra capacity. We should utilize our assets more."

SCG concedes that it could be a good idea, but "often the choices of the new service don't match the overall capacity of the company. Include management talent, capital, marketing opportunity, and other major factors and maybe that 'extra capacity' can't be used for anything other than the current offerings."

It's a natural extension:

"Carpet cleaning is a home service, so is lawn care. We should go into carpet cleaning."

Don't forget to ask the consumers first, warns SCG. "There are a great many home services. Some match up well with others, making them good combinations to use. Others (see above) are poor because the buying patterns, labor and ease of entry are completely different."

The urge to buy something: "There was a company for sale. We had the money. We wanted to diversify. We bought them."

According to SCG, "The next line might be, 'We went broke.' Certainly all strong companies want to be aware of market opportunity and be aggressive enough to take chances when appropriate. Simply because something is available scarcely makes buying it a brilliant management decision."

Some right reasons?

"We did market research, found out how, when and how much consumers want to buy, then matched that with our diversification strategy."

Says SCG, "If you base your planning on consumers rather than focus it on internal needs, you're much more likely to be successful."

"Planning done without an understanding of the consumer is usually destined to failure in the marketplace," they say.

"We knew the consumers' needs and then we also knew we had the management capacity necessary to lead the new diversification."

SCG points out that "managing different types of companies requires different knowledge and expertise. You may be a brilliant manager, but have little or no experience in a new area. Checking on management capacity is a key. If you don't have it, where will it come from?"

The total package of services being offered is acceptable to the consumer.

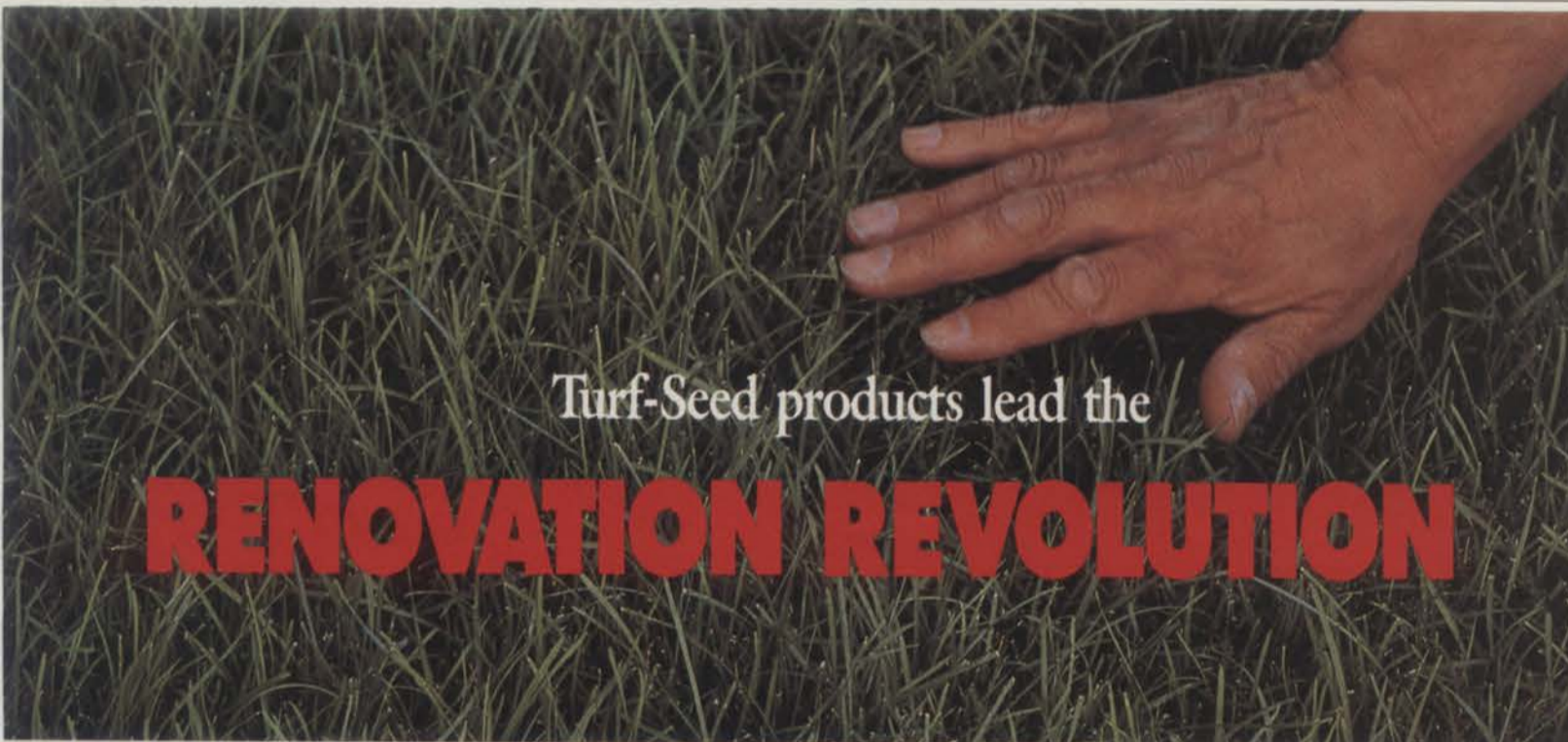
"A package of services must have compatibility in the consumer's mind," says SCG.

"It doesn't matter if the new service is easy for you to manage, uses up all your extra truck capacity, and has a very high ease of entry, if the consumer doesn't think it matches with your current offering."

Speaking of current offerings, Elliot Maras has been promoted to another Edgell publication and I've moved into the editor's slot here.

Your comments and suggestions are welcome. I can be reached at (216) 891-2763. The address is 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, Ohio 44130.

James E. Guyette



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112	127	142	157	172	187	202	217	232	247	262	277	292	307	322	337	352
113	128	143	158	173	188	203	218	233	248	263	278	293	308	323	338	353
114	129	144	159	174	189	204	219	234	249	264	279	294	309	324	339	354
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AUGUST 1989

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Firm	\$M 1989	\$M 1988	% Growth
1 ChemLawn Services Corp. Columbus, OH (Excludes franchise revenue)	314.7	306	2.8
2 Tru Green Corp. Atlanta, GA	100	52	92.3
3 Barefoot Grass Lawn Service, Inc. Worthington, OH <i>Corporate: 30.9 Franchise: 8.8</i>	39.7	30.9	28.5
4 Lawn Doctor, Inc. Matawan, NJ	33.38	31.35	6.5
5 The Weed Man, Ltd. Ontario, CN <i>Corporate: 14 Franchise: 14</i>	38	22	27.2
6 Leisure Lawn, Inc. Dayton, OH	12.2	10.28	18.6
7 Spring Green Lawn Care Corp. Plainfield, IL	11.7	9.9	18.6
8 Lawnmark Corp. Akron, OH	8.67	7.79	11.2

OVER \$5 MILLION, FIGURES NOT RELEASED:

Davey Tree Expert Co. Kent, OH	Orkin Lawn Care, Inc. Atlanta, GA
Ever-Green Lawns Corp. St. Louis, MO	Super Lawns, Inc. Bethesda, MD
Green Drop Lawn, Ltd. Calgary, CN	Thoma Bros., Inc. (ChemLawn franchise) Erie, PA
Hydro Lawn, Inc. Gaithersburg, MD	* Yearound Lawn Care, Inc. Ventura, CA
Lawn Medic, Inc. Bergen, NY	

MILLION DOLLAR COMPANIES, REVENUE UNDER \$5 MILLION:

*(Bought in 1989) □ Designates franchising or licensing operation

Firm	\$M 1989	\$M 1988	% Growth	Firm	\$M 1989	\$M 1988	% Growth	Firm	\$M 1989	\$M 1988	% Growth
9 ServiceMaster Lawn Care Downer's Grove, IL	4.7	3.2	46.8	10 Nitro-Green Corp. Fort Collins, CO	4.5	4.1	9.7	21 Senske Lawn & Tree Care Kennewick, WA	1.6	1.2	33.3
11 Perma-Green Lawn Co., Inc. Boise, ID	4.2	NA	—	12 Pro-Grass, Inc. Wilsonville, OR	3.7	3.2	15.6	22 All Natural Lawns, Inc. Brighton, MI	1.5	NA	—
13 J.C. Ehrlich Co., Inc. Reading, PA	2.9	4	-27.5	13 Monroe Tree A & Lawntender Rochester, NY	2.9	2.4	20.8	22 Lawn Masters, Inc. A Hawthorne, NY	1.5	1.1	36.4
14 The Lawn Co., Inc. (ChemLawn franchise) South Dennis, MA	2.7	2.3	17.4	15 Central Illinois Lawn Care, Inc. (ChemLawn franchise) East Peoria, IL	2.2	2	.1	22 Lawn Care Co. B (ChemLawn Franchise) Cedar Rapids, IA	1.5	1.5	0
16 A-One Lawn Care, Inc. Amlin, OH	2	2	0	17 Middleton Pest Control, Inc. Orlando, FL	1.9	NA	—	23 All-American Turf Beauty, Inc. Van Meter, IA	1.4	1.3	7.7
17 Greenlon, Inc. A Cincinnati, OH	1.9	1.5	26.7	18 Hydro-Green Lawn & Leaf Service Warminster, PA	1.8	1.6	12.5	24 Agro-Lawn Systems, Inc. Vienna, VA	1.3	1.2	8.3
19 Emerald Green, Inc. Cincinnati, OH	1.7	NA	—	20 Pennington Lawn Service, Inc. (ChemLawn franchise) Ankeny, IA	1.7	1.7	0	25 Green Care Lawn Service, Inc. Birmingham, AL	1.2	NA	—
								25 Lawnscape A Systems, Inc. Ontario, CA	1.2	NA	—
								25 Green-a-Lawn B Hillsdale, NY	1.2	NA	—
								26 Green Stuff, Inc. Golden Valley, MN	1.1	1.06	3.7
								26 Lawn Care of A Wisconsin, Inc. (Barefoot Grass franchise) Madison, WI	1.1	NA	—
								26 Nutri-lawn B International Winnipeg, CN <i>Corporate: 780,000 Franchise: 380,000</i>	1.1	NA	—
								27 Perfecturf USA, Inc. Mentor, OH	1	NA	—

UNDER \$5 MILLION, FIGURES NOT RELEASED:

Allgreen Lawn Care Marietta, GA	Green Lawn Care Co., Inc. Mississauga, CN	Lawnlife Corp. Salt Lake City, UT	Royal Lawns of Monmouth, Inc. (Franchise) Freehold, NJ
Bobby Lawn, Inc. Sarnia, CN	Lawn Builders Cincinnati, OH	Lawn Ranger, Inc. Spotswood, NY	Spenco, Inc. (ChemLawn franchise) Mt. Pleasant, SC
Dobson Turf, Inc. (Lawn Doctor Franchise) Stamford, CN	Lawn Doctor of Fairfax (Franchise) Fairfax, VA	Liqui-Green Lawn Care Corp. Peoria, IL	Tuckahoe Lawn Care Warwick, RI
Earthscapes Corp. Anaheim, CA	Lawn Doctor of Westport-Weston, CT (Franchise) Weston, CT	Nature Plus Montreal, CN	
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1989 Million Dollar Lawn Care List

Canadians boost their share of lawn care market

Canada's lawn care marketplace continues to increase as six Canadian firms are now members of LAWN CARE INDUSTRY'S "Million Dollar Lawn Care List."

Two Canadian companies are debuting on the 1989 list: Nature Plus of Montreal and Nutri-Lawn International of Winnipeg.

They join the four other Canadian operations already aboard the list. (Ontario's The Weed Man, Ltd., Green Lawn

Care Co., Ltd., and Bobby Lawn, Inc. were accompanied by Green Drop Lawn Ltd. of Alberta as they arrived on last year's list.)

To reach the LAWN CARE INDUSTRY "Million Dollar Lawn Care List," a company has to have at least \$1 million in 1988 lawn care sales.

Twelve new firms were added to the 11-year-old list.

Two of the newcomers were previously on the list—but had fallen off last year's tally. Green-a-Lawn of Hillsdale,

N.Y. and Green Care Lawn Service, Inc. of Birmingham, Ala. are now back among the top-grossing operations in North America.

The other new additions are All Green Lawn Care of Marietta, Ga., All Natural Lawns of Brighton, Mich., Emerald Green, Inc. of Cincinnati, Ohio, Landscape Systems, Inc. of Ontario, Calif., Lawn Care of Wisconsin, Inc. of Madison, Lawn Doctor of Fairfax, Va., Lawn Doctor of Westport-Weston, Conn. and

Perfecturf USA, Inc. of Mentor, Ohio.

The list now contains 61 firms, up from last year's 59.

Three companies dropped off because of reduced revenues.

Matthew Narog of the Lawn Clinic, Inc. in Mountainview, Calif. cites the drought. The firm serves the San Francisco Bay Area, and watering restrictions resulted in clients just letting their lawns go, he says.

The Green Scene of Tar-

zana, Calif. and Kapp's Green Lawn, Inc. of Fort Wayne, Ind. also fell off.

ChemLawn of Oklahoma has decided not to take part in the list, says the company's Jerry Mosely, so it, too, falls off.

A couple of other firms would have qualified for this year's list, but they declined to participate.

Some of the bigger players of years gone by have been bought out.

Tru Green purchased Ever-Green Lawns Corp. of Golden, Colo., Keystone Lawn Spray, Inc. of Wayne, Pa. and The Greenkeeper, Inc. of San Antonio, Texas.

Yearound Lawn Care, Inc. of Ventura, Calif. was bought this year by Orkin, so it will be gone from the rolls next year.

Tru Green posted the strongest growth figure, rising 92.3 percent from \$52 million to \$100 million in just one year.

ServiceMaster Lawn Care of Downer's Grove, Ill. reports a 46.8 percent growth rate. It has risen to \$4.7 million in sales, up from \$3.2 million.

Lawn Masters, Inc. grew 36.4 percent, reaching the \$1.5 million mark.

J.C. Ehrlich Co., Inc. of Reading, Pa. suffered a 27.5 percent reduction in billings last year, bringing its gross down from \$4 million to \$2.9 million.

ChemLawn (excluding franchise revenue) registered a 2.8 percent gain. LCI

Eric Nelson is appointed at Northrup King

MINNEAPOLIS—Eric Nelson is the new director of turf research at Northrup King.

Nelson will oversee the entire breeding and evaluation of cool- and warm-season proprietary turfgrasses at the company's Tangent, Ore. facility.

He received his B.S. degree in plant science, emphasizing turfgrass management, from the University of Rhode Island. He earned his M.S. degree in plant breeding at Penn State University and will complete a Ph.D. this year. LCI



Nelson: New at Northrup King.

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This excellent Kentucky bluegrass was discovered by Dr. C. Reed Funk of Rutgers University. It was found persisting in Huntsville, Alabama and has clearly demonstrated why it survived so well. It also scored high ratings in tests under high heat and humidity in the transition zone.

Medium green in color, Huntsville blends beautifully with Arid and the newer turf-type tall fescues because of its similar color and leaf texture.

Huntsville starts with a vigorous seedling and ultimately develops deep rhizomes giving the grass staying power under drought conditions. This strength was strongly evident during testing in the Nebraska and Great Plains areas where researchers sought cultivars less susceptible to drought and low maintenance conditions.

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New weed sprouts in American lawns

MARYSVILLE, OHIO—A tough new foreign weed is invading American lawns via imported grass seed.

Serrated tussock, a toxic perennial weed with unusual drought and herbicide resistance, is already considered a problem in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Argentina.

It has shown up in the United States recently in foreign-grown tall fescue, ryegrass and burmudagrass seed. In emergency legislation, nine states have placed it on their prohibited weeds list.

The grassy, clumpy weed, *Nassella trichotoma*, has the potential to be a particular threat to U.S. turf managers, according to Dale Kern, president of Seed Technology, Inc. in Marysville, Ohio.

Serrated tussock is an aggressive weed that spreads even under dry conditions. "It produces seeds rather profusely," says Kern.

Research has documented that serrated tussock is fatal to sheep and causes stall-out in cattle.

"Turf managers might be

concerned about this even if they aren't anywhere near a farm," Kern points out, because the weed's toxicity to deer, rabbits and other animals is uncertain.

It has been classified as a noxious weed by Maryland, Mississippi, Illinois, Washington, Oregon, Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina and Missouri.

No selective control is known.

"Some of these weeds (from other countries) may be very difficult or impossible to eradicate once they're in your turf," he advises. "Nine-tenths of the battle is prevention."

Turf managers can protect themselves by buying certified seed with the analysis tag still attached, says Kern.

"If a person buys uncertified seed, a person has no way of knowing where that seed was grown," Kern says. "You have to make sure the tag is on the bag."

Because of burning bans in the Northwest, seed producers are increasingly turning to foreign-grown seed. (Field burning is part of the seed growing process, but many citizens object to the practice.)

Kern foresees a five-fold increase in foreign-grown seed over the next three years.

"Unfortunately, as we see more and more imported seed entering the country, serrated tussock may only be the tip of the iceberg," warns Kern.

He points out that in Australia alone, 184 potentially serious weeds are known which do not appear in U.S. noxious weed classifications.

In regard to noxious weeds, Argentina lists 60, South Africa 79 and New Zealand up to 50. LCI



Kern: Look for the tag.

Nor-Am set to purchase ICI facility

WILMINGTON, DEL.—NOR-AM Chemical Co. has signed a letter of intent to buy the ICI Agricultural Products Group Eastern Research Center in Goldsboro, N.C., NOR-AM announced in a news release. Terms of the sale were not disclosed.

The center is located on 265 acres of land and includes research labs, environmental testing sites, a large-scale formulation facility, greenhouses, office buildings and a farm.

The site has been operated by ICI since 1972 and has undergone several expansions.

"The proposed acquisition of this outstanding research center represents a major step

forward and commitment by NOR-AM," says Leo Elkins, president. "It will strengthen our research capabilities, significantly allowing us to bring new products to the marketplace more quickly."

NOR-AM, based in Wilmington, Del., makes and markets a broad range of products for agriculture, professional pest control, turf and ornamentals, and other specialty areas.

NOR-AM is owned by Schering, AG, Berlin, West Germany, an international maker of pharmaceuticals, ag chemicals, and industrial chemical and electroplating products. LCI

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Heading to market: A combine reaps Kentucky bluegrass seed outside of Spokane, Wash. Growers are predicting a good crop this year, but demand remains high.

Ill. limiting disposal of clippings, etc.

SPRINGFIELD, ILL.—Illinois turf managers are looking into composting following the passage of a law that limits the disposal of landscape waste at landfills.

Lawmakers say the state's garbage dumps are filled to capacity.

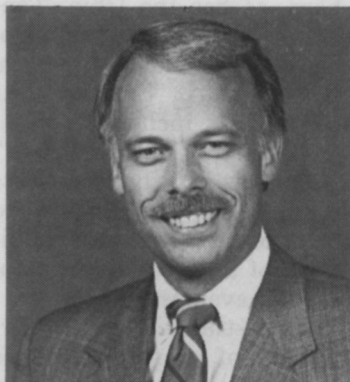
As of Sept. 1, sanitary landfills can't accept truckloads of leaves and other debris. Come July of next year that same waste will also be prohibited

Green industry newsletter new from Monsanto

ST. LOUIS, MO.—Monsanto is publishing a quarterly newsletter for professional turf managers.

The publication, *Green-Scene*, will contain news items and features, says Dave Duncan, director of the Monsanto Greens Business Group. "We also want readers of *Green-Scene* to become more familiar with Monsanto and our dedication to making their businesses more profitable."

To receive the publication, write to the Monsanto Greens Business Group, Suite 117, 1233 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, Wis. 53226. LCI



Duncan: Start the presses.

from being mixed in with other trash.

Turf managers have opted for composting, with some buying European-made composting machines, according to Patricia Cassady, executive director of the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association.

However, the state also regulates composting sites, and as of presstime few had been approved for operation. "We don't have a lot of options as far as composting goes," Cassady says.

Waste disposal will continue to be a concern, says William J. Davids, vice president of Clarence Davids & Sons, Inc. in Blue Island.

"Somehow I have to get rid of it," Davids notes, adding

that his company deals with a nearby composting facility. He says it's cheaper to take the waste to the compost pile than it is to take it to a landfill.

Illinois business owners are trying to come up with solutions to the dilemma, Cassady and Davids report.

A meeting with state officials is planned, and the ILCA may consider other action once members become more aware of the situation. "There are some out there who don't know about (the new law)," Cassady points out. LCI

Ringer acquires Reuter

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.—Ringer Corp., supplier of natural fertilizers, has acquired the assets of Reuter Laboratories, Inc., a Dallas-based supplier of natural insecticides, for an undisclosed sum.

The purchase makes Ringer the largest supplier of both natural fertilizer and pesticide products, for both the consumer and professional markets.

Reuter had curtailed its operations in the last two years due to poor finances.

The Dallas operations will be absorbed completely into Ringer's Minneapolis facility, says Rob Ringer, national training director for sales and development.

"Our number one objective will be to get Reuter up to speed" in producing and marketing its natural pesticide products, he says.

It will pick up the Ringer name in 1990. LCI

Fermenta changes name

MENTOR, OHIO—The Fermenta Crop Protection Co. has changed its name to Fermenta ASC Corp.

"The name change positions Fermenta in the agricultural and specialty chemicals industries and signals our desire to grow the business, developing new technologies and products in these fields and beyond," says Richard L. Urbanowski, president and chief operating officer.

Fermenta is a specialty chemical company with technical and marketing expertise in agricultural and industrial biocides.

Its parent company is Fermenta AB Corp., which develops, tests, registers and markets specialty fungicide and herbicide products. LCI

BERMUDA

from Page 1

any visit to the Jacklins in Post Falls, which is just 100 miles south of the Canadian border: "Our people brushed away the snow in temperatures near zero to look and see a Cheyenne bermuda plant still alive—dormant, but with some color remaining."

Cheyenne's deep root system helps it survive climate extremes, according to Jacklin breeder Judy Brede. "The same characteristics that make Cheyenne cold tolerant also make it drought tolerant."

Brede likes the plant's

"meadow muffin" growth pattern. Rather than sprawling outward it maintains a lower, denser area of coverage.

"You can mow Cheyenne very close to the ground," she says. In Arizona it has been mowed at 3/16 to 1/8 of an inch, and it has gone up to a month without water.

"Cheyenne is extremely cold tolerant and extremely drought tolerant," Brede emphasizes.

The new bermuda can survive winters that have fewer than five days of temperatures below zero, she points out.

Cheyenne will perform well in the transition zone, she says. Brede notes that Wash-



Brede: It's moving northward.

ington, D.C. gets extremely cold only about every five years or so.

"We can bring it up into Washington," she adds.

Jacklin's bermuda program is two-and-a-half-years old, and more than 1,000 grass plants from all over the world are being studied. One of Cheyenne's parents came from Yugoslavia.

The new grass is expected to be economical because it has good seed production, which is necessary to successfully market the variety.

"If the farmer can't grow seed it doesn't matter if it has great color and texture," Brede explains. "The No. 1 thing we look for is fertility."

The production fields will



Seed breeding: Jacklin's Heidi Bleasner tests new varieties.

be in the Southwest. "The bermuda doesn't make seed except in Arizona and Southern California," says Millner at Cactus.

The seeding aspect makes Cheyenne special for the turf manager trying to please clients, according to Millner. "We can put seed down at 20 percent of what it costs to sprig," he says. "It'll be 20 percent cheaper than sprigging."

Unlike common bermu-

dagrass, it is possible to use a rotary mower on the new variety. "All hybrid bermudas are mowed with a reel mower," he explains. "It would be better to do it with a reel, but the appearance with a rotary would be better than with a common."

Millner reports a high amount of interest already from Southern turf managers.

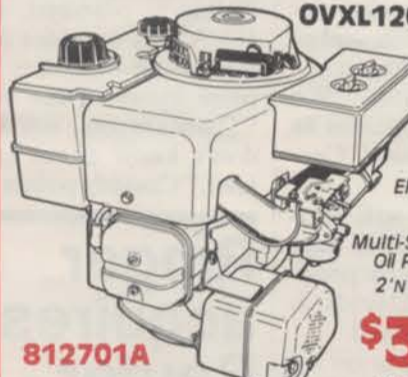
"I think people will be quite pleased with it," Millner predicts. LCI

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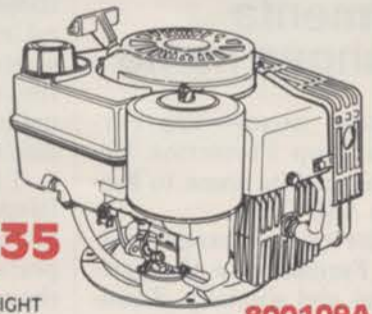
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RAINFALL

from Page 1

Lawn Institute.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, since April the spring rainfall patterns in many of the lower 48 states have been just the opposite of last year's.

Some areas remain under drought restrictions, but others are awash in excess water.

"The eastern half the the United States has really been soaked," reports Dave Miskus of NOAA's climate analysis center in Washington, D.C. "Some parts of Texas had over 20 inches."

The Dallas-Fort Worth area had May rainfall that equaled its normal annual total. Ohio had its fourth wettest May in history, and the Northeast had the second highest amount of rainfall since 1895.

The Atlantic and Eastern Gulf Coasts have been hit hard, as has the Ohio, Tennessee and lower Mississippi Valleys, plus the south-central Great Plains. "Surpluses exceeding six inches are widespread in the South and East."

Miskus feels that the excess rain of this year is likely to balance out the drought conditions of last year in terms of climate averages.

It is estimated that 70 percent of all turf problems stem from too much water, and conditions this year seem



Roberts: Timing is crucial.

to be providing a textbook example.

"So many things happen...when too much water is applied," says Roberts.

A primary complaint has been the fungus among us.

"The fungi just keep growing," Roberts says. "When it's wet and the humidity is high there's no break (in the growing cycle) to put the fungi back into dormancy. The fungi have a chance to spread through the plant without interruption."

If that isn't enough, a fungus growing in the backyard can easily wind up in the front yard after it's mowed. "A little bit of the clippings stick to the mower and you can spread it."

Rainfall can make treating fungi more difficult. "The fungicides will do a good job but you have to time them," Roberts points out.

At many firms, such as Cooper's Lawn Aeration Service in Virginia Beach, Va., several fungus treatments have had to be resprayed because of rain.

"Cool and wet weather (has) allowed fungal diseases, especially leaf spot and red thread, to thrive in some lawns," says Bill Pound, Ph.D., a turfgrass specialist at Ohio State University.

Some LCOs are seeing a bumper crop of weeds this year as the rain is keeping them healthy.

"These folks are battling weeds," says James F. Wilkinsons of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America. "The rain has diluted a lot of the weed management materials that would usually have lasted for a longer period were it not for all the water."

According to Bruce J. Bentcover of Ecolab, Inc., "The wet spring weather in many of ChemLawn's marketing areas has prevented timely lawn care and tree and shrub applications."

Roberts notes that "when it rains all the time the chemical is washed off the plants before it does any good."

A number of diseases are sprouting up on lawns and "crabgrass is really running rampant in parts of the country where there's been a lot of rainfall," he adds.

Not only are the treatments themselves often rendered useless, but the working day itself is shortened for crews



Pound: Avoid mowing delays.

that have already fallen behind.

"Most of the time you can only get a half day's work out of our teams and then it starts to rain," says Gary Cooper, owner of Cooper's Lawn Aeration Service.

On one given day he expected his crews to complete 20 sprays, but rainfall was likely to limit the workload to only 15 jobs. (Cooper typically schedules 20 sprays a day "because we talk to the customers" as part of the job.)

Mowing routines are being disrupted, which in turn leads to additional troubles. Yellowing is being seen as larger portions of grass leaves are being cut, and toxic burn can occur when clippings are allowed to lay on the ground in bunches.

It's better to mow tall grass on a wet lawn than it is to delay mowing in hopes that the lawn will dry thoroughly, says Pound at OSU. That's because mowing shocks the grass, and the taller the grass the greater the shock.

At Super Lawns of Gaithersburg, Inc. in Gaithersburg, Md. crews are raising the mower height and cutting more often.

Some LCOs are reporting insect problems, while others note that any bugs have yet to appear.

"The growth rate of the grass can create new tissues faster than the insect can eat them," explains Roberts. "It will outgrow the insects."

Be prepared, though, to battle bugs later in the season. "We're likely to see more insects than we have," Roberts warns. "You ought to be able to see the populations build."

Get expert local advice to avoid extra time and expense. Turf managers can check with their local extension agent or favorite supplier for up-to-date information on when to treat.

"The timing of the application will be determined by the activity of the insect," Roberts cautions. "It involves the life cycle of the specific insect. It's best to treat it right so you don't have to make a repeat application."

Another difficulty likely to surface during extended rainfall is that soil nutrients are subject to being washed out of the root zones.

"We're getting an im-

balance of the proper nutrients," says Roberts, who adds that oxygen can be scarce too. "There's not enough air in those water-soaked soils."

Even if the rain were to cease immediately, it could still mean trouble. An abrupt change to hot and dry conditions like last year could damage lawns and other plant material, says Pound.

The ideal growing conditions of this spring led plants to have a succulent growth that won't be ready for a sudden change to drought conditions, he says.

Mike Bailey, president of Super Lawns of Gaithersburg,

reports that so far he's experienced few hassles because of the rain.

"The grass is growing so fast that the fungus is gone by the time we get there. It's either cut off or it's gone through its cycle."

He is pleased with the performance of improved tall fescue. "It can bounce off any disease and come back strong."

Gaithersburg has had twice the normal rainfall, and people aren't signing up despite the condition of the lawns. "Even though they're weeds, they look green and thick," says Bailey, who notes that leads for new accounts are down 20 percent this year. **LCI**

Too much mulch putting damper on ornamentals

COLUMBUS, OHIO—The rainy weather experienced by much of the country could damage ornamentals that are heavily mulched. Mulch—placed around plants to conserve water—could now be suffocating them.

"A primary purpose of mulching is to retain soil moisture, but this year consistent rain has caused some soils under mulch to become waterlogged," says Barbara Williams of the Home Horticulture Center at Ohio State

University.

"Waterlogged soil doesn't allow oxygen to reach the roots. This causes the roots to suffocate and die, killing the plants. We usually strongly recommend mulching, which is also an excellent weed control, but not when it rains this much."

Because some soils have absorbed a lot of rain, Williams says to avoid mulching until the soil dries significantly.

If summer becomes very dry, be sure to mulch annuals,



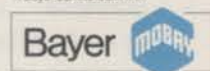
Give grubs an inch and they'll take a whole yard.

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says Williams.

There's already enough soil moisture in many areas of the country to carry perennials through the growing season without the need for summer mulching, she says.

"Check under the mulches you already have down to see if the soil is waterlogged," Williams says. "If it is, remove the mulch until the soil dries."

Mulch layers should never be more than three to four inches thick, Williams says. Deeper layers keep oxygen from reaching the roots no matter what the weather, she says.

Shallow-rooted plants will also root in deep mulch. When

the mulch dries, so will the roots.

"If you decide to apply mulch around your annuals during the summer, put down only one to two inches," Williams says.

"This will control weeds without the negative effect of retaining too much moisture. But don't use mulch to control weeds on poorly-drained sites. Use a hoe instead."

Avoid mulches that form thick mats or are easily compacted, Williams says. This also restricts air flow.

An ideal mulch is hardwood bark chips. Mulches should be checked periodically to make sure they haven't become

compacted, Williams says.

"Different plants react differently when their roots are suffocated," she says.

"Initial symptoms include brown leaf tips on deciduous trees and shrubs, as well as leaves or leaf stems that curl downward." **LCI**

Questions about Pesticides? Call 1-800-858-7378 National Pesticide Telecommunications Network

DOW

from Page 1

snow removal—13 percent.

Other services mentioned were garden center and pool chemical sales; pressure cleaning; and industrial weed control.

Customer turnover rates were reported as follows: 5 to 10 percent turnover, 40 percent; 15 to 20 percent, 28 percent; 10 to 15 percent, 25 percent; 25 to 30 percent, 7 percent.

Methods cited to reduce customer attrition included: better customer communication and education, better and more services, and correct use

of products.

"Improving customer relations and doing a better job on services presently offered will help cut down your customer cancellations," said Jack Robertson, owner of Jack Robertson Lawn Care, Inc., Springfield, Ill.

Reed Hull, spokesman for Vita Lawn Corp., Rancho Cordova, Calif. said a customer newsletter and periodic surveys of customer needs are good methods.

"Doing your job right the first time will reduce turnover," said Bill Johnston, spokesman for Pro-Mow, Inc., Kennesaw, Ga. He stressed the importance of better employee training.

"In order to reduce turnover, LCOs and their customers should have a better understanding of their mutual expectations," said Dan War-chime, a spokesman for Senske Lawn and Tree Care in Spokane, Wash.

Geographic breakdown of the respondents was: Midwest, 45 percent; East Coast, 22 percent; West, 20 percent; South, 13 percent.

The respondents had an average 9.2 years in the lawn care business. **LCI**

Gallery is approved as control for weeds

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.— Gallery 75 Dry Flowable has received federal Environmental Protection Agency registration for use on certain broadleaf weeds and annual grasses in established warm- and cool-season turf.

The selective preemergence herbicide contains a new chemical compound called isoxaben, which controls annual grass and 44 broadleaf weeds, including chickweed, henbit, plantain, purslane, oxalis, spurge and white clover, according to the Elanco Products Co.

Gallery's dry flowable formulation mixes with water and is compatible with many other turf chemicals, so it can be tank mixed for control of other species, the company says.

Gallery is stable on the soil surface, but it must be activated by one-half inch of rainfall or irrigation within 21 days.

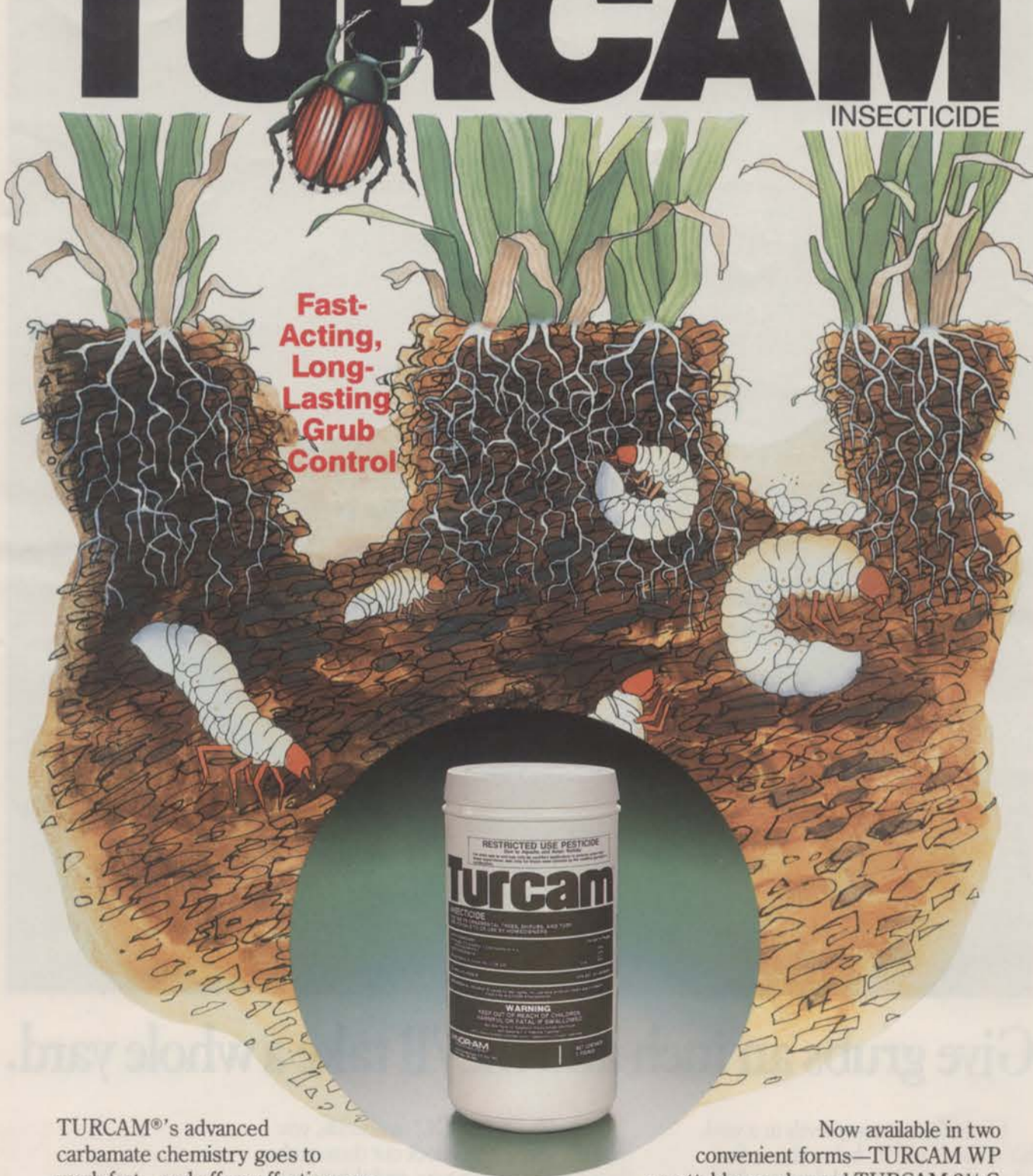
Established turf can be reseeded in the fall after a spring application, according to the company.

Application should be made in the spring or in the fall before weed emergence, Elanco says.

Gallery is also labeled for use on trees, ornamental shrubs and ground covers. **LCI**

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CAUTION: TURCAM® is a restricted use pesticide.

IMPORTANT: Please remember always to read and follow carefully all label directions when applying any chemical.

LCOs to benefit as producers vie for professional markets

Competition for sales of pesticides and fertilizers to professional turf managers continues to increase, according to a recent study by industry consultants Klein & Co., Inc. in Fairfield, N.J.

Faced with declining profitability in the agricultural sector and increasing product development and label registration costs, manufacturers are targeting LCOs, landscapers and other professionals for new specialty products to improve their bottom lines, according to Klein.

"Manufacturers are being attracted by profitability rather than the rate of market growth or even absolute market size," the report says.

"For example, total U.S. consumption of pesticides and fertilizers by agriculture was approximately \$10 billion in 1988, while sales of similar products to professional turf managers were approximately \$780 million.

"Manufacturers report, however, that sales to these specialty groups contribute almost as much to a company's profitability as the agricultural products due to lower development and selling costs."

Overall, professional turf management can be divided into seven distinct end-use segments, according to Klein. LCOs make up the largest group, accounting for about 45 percent of fertilizers and pesticides consumed by these segments.

Golf courses rank second with 27 percent, followed by landscapers at 11 percent.

New products that target the specialized needs of turf managers are receiving increased attention from suppliers of pesticides, Klein says.

Pendimethalin, introduced to the turf market in 1985, has become the leading pre-emergence material in 1988 due to its performance and cost advantages, according to the report.

Dow has introduced Turflon post-emergence herbicide, an alternative to traditional broadleaf herbicides containing 2,4-D and similar weed killers.

Hoechst has introduced Acclaim for improved post-emergence crabgrass control.

The report also notes that Monsanto's Dimension and Elanco's Gallery are due on the market this year.

"Recognizing increasing environmental concerns, marketers are launching new products having lower levels of toxicity than products introduced only 10 years ago," the report notes.

"At the same time," it con-

tinues, "advances in the sciences of plant and insect physiology have resulted in increased knowledge of the life processes of these organisms, allowing for the development of products which increasingly target only turf pests."

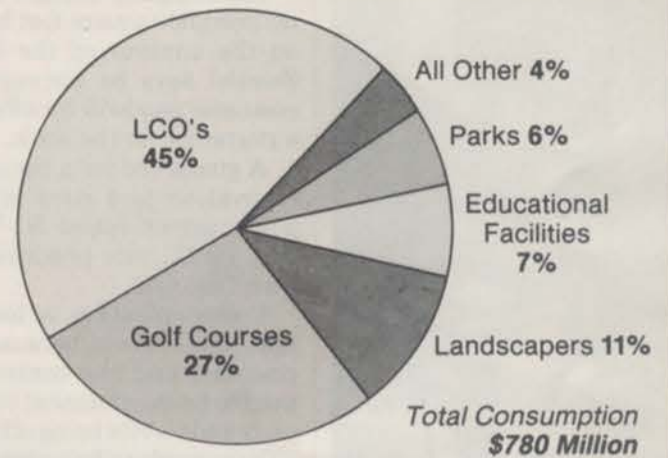
Competition can be expected to increase in the future, according to Klein. Since overall acreage maintained by turf professionals will exhibit slow growth, manufacturers will increase sales only by suc-

cessfully introducing new products that capture market share from competitors.

"Consequently, turf managers will have at their disposal the widest assortment of products ever with which to maintain residential, commercial and residential lawns."

The Klein report, *Professional Markets for Pesticides and Fertilizers 1988*, can be obtained from the firm, 165 Passiac Ave., Fairfield, N.J. 07006; (201) 227-6291. LCI

U.S. Consumption of Pesticides and Fertilizers by Professional Turf Managers 1988



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COVER STORY



Cooper: Figure your costs.

Mo. "The touch-up work is what kills you."

His company charges a flat fee per 1,000 square feet based on the contour of the land. Zweifel says he encourages customer goodwill by offering a guarantee on the work.

A guarantee for a complete renovation is a good selling point, agrees James R. Watson, Ph.D., vice president at The Toro Co.

Communication is important, says Watson, because the customer and the contractor need to be in agreement on the price and service being offered. "There needs to be a clear understanding of what's going to

be done."

Watson suggests that a renovation contract include a provision that the turf manager tend the property for at least three to four weeks after the seed is planted.

"You need maintenance and supervision for whatever was done on it," he says, noting that watering and other tasks are sure to be done correctly if the contractor remains on the scene. "People are not going to do things (such as watering) religiously."

Knowing your costs is the key to effective pricing, say the experts. Every single factor,

from transportation time to insurance premiums, has to be taken into account.

The Lawn Care Co. in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has a separate renovation department in order to keep track of the costs involved.

"The only way we make money on it is to have a separate budget," says Tom Korczyk, the president. The cost of the employees, equipment, gas and other materials is all computed separately from the rest of the business.

Lefton says that an hourly fee schedule should be prepared, with an index of charges listed for features such

as trees and hills. Experience should be able to give a good idea of how long each task takes. He emphasizes, though, to be sure that extra time is added into the price to allow for callbacks.

Gary Cooper, owner of Cooper's Lawn Aeration Service in Virginia Beach, Va., charges a minimum of \$20 for reseeding a bare spot after a renovation. "It stops those who say 'every little square inch isn't covered.'"

However, Cooper's crews carry bags of seed on their trucks, and if they spot a bare area while making their rounds it is reseeded for free.

These we waste.

VALUE

from Page 1

both the customer and contractor.

The technology is not yet available to conduct a lawn renovation that falls within the price range of most people's budgets, Lefton believes.

"The equipment is not there for what the homeowner wants to spend."

According to Lefton, a contractor needs to say, "Here's why it costs so much: Here's what you get for your money."

If a customer still balks, he or she can become a more direct participant in the project, says Lefton.

If your price is \$900, and the customer wants to spend only \$500, have the customer scalp the lawn and remove the debris. This way the customer "saves" \$400 and the contractor gets \$500. "You've quickened your dollar return—the time spent," says Lefton.

And if the customer puts forth that type of effort, he or she will have a new appreciation for the work involved. Also, the customer will be more motivated to follow through with the watering.

Lefton suggests that a watering brochure be left behind, and that the client should be called on the telephone to check on the progress of the sprinkling.

A pound of grass seed should be left with the customer, too, so that any bare spots can be covered without having to make a callback.

Even so, says Lefton, a renovation project should never be priced without at least a few callbacks written in. "I would add in a couple more hours because you know you're going to be back there."

That's right, says Randy E. Zweifel, president of Lawn Managers, Inc. in Ballwin,



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Watson: Handle the upkeep.

Cooper charges \$7 per 1,000 square feet for aeration, and that nets him a 55 percent profit. Dethatching costs \$23.50

per 1,000 square feet, which generates a 22 percent profit. Rebel II Turf-Type Tall Fescue is sold at the current retail price per bag. (Wholesale cost is about \$65 per bag; it is sold retail at \$107 per bag, leading to a 25 percent profit for Cooper.)

Liquid iron is applied to all of his accounts in August, and every property is inspected then. "We will look at each lawn and see what it needs," explains Cooper.

In the fall each client gets a letter containing Cooper's recommendations. About 80 percent of the customers will request that the recommended work be done.

Cooper does not own a slit-seeder. A LESCO spreader is used following a core aeration treatment on most properties. A chain link fence is then dragged across the yard on a lawn tractor to induce soil-to-seed contact.

Seeding is included in the yearly contracts offered by Super Lawns of Gaithersburg, Inc. in Gaithersburg, Md.

The client pays 7 cents a square foot for a complete package, with a minimum of 5,000 square feet. For the first year seed is applied at \$3 to \$4 a pound. In subsequent years the seeding is free if the customer renews.

The company has a 92 per-



Bailey: Seeds twice in the fall with improved tall fescues.

cent renewal rate, according to Mike Bailey, the president.

If needed, each lawn is spike aerated and seeded in

the fall with 5 pounds per square foot of improved tall fescue. (He maintains that the spike aeration does a better job than core aeration: "I buck the trend, but I have done it effectively.")

"I repeat that same seeding service six weeks later," says Bailey.

"You're getting two seedings at the optimum time. With that two-seeding format I am assured of at least 60 percent germination."

Bailey adds that "you can't miss with a fall seeding, especially with these improved tall fescues."

When advertising his services, Bailey avoids listing the prices at a set rate. He tells of colleagues who have run into trouble when unsuspected problems crop up while using such a strategy. "They advertise at a set rate and then they get stuck."

All the expenses are factored into his fees. His marketing plan is accepted by customers because Bailey is "pushing the program with the service aspect."

The majority of his customers value the increased service he offers. Bailey adds that his costs may be a bit less than others because 70 percent of his customers live within 5 miles of the company headquarters.

In addition to monitoring your own costs, pay close attention to what other local turf managers are charging, says Bob Brophy of Cushman in Lincoln, Neb.

"It's totally by market," he observes. Outfits in Southern California or Chicago, for example, can charge much more than an operation in Memphis, Tenn.

"It's really a hard thing to put a finger on," he says. LCI

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Brophy: Check local prices.

Hydroseeding touted as alternative revenue option



These new yards can result in steady accounts.

"If they do good work, this would be a great door-opener to get the lawn maintenance work," Stinson explains.

Selling hydroseeding services to homeowners shouldn't be too difficult because of the price and the quality of the turf, according to Carolyn Santoro of Southern California Hydroseed and Hydromulch, Inc. in Temecula, Calif.

"There's no way that you

can tell the difference, and it's a fraction of what you'd pay for sod," Santoro points out.

The rates vary according to the job at hand, but Santoro's company may charge, for example, \$175 to hydroseed a 2,000 square-foot front yard located within 20 miles of the firm's headquarters. "It's very economical."

Hydro-Seeding Service, Inc. of Anaheim, Calif. charges about 1.5 cents to 2.5 cents per square foot for a typical job, according to Scott Helm, vice president of mar-

keting.

The cost to the contractor is about 1.5 to 2 cents per square foot, says Reinecker at Reinco. (Pricing will depend on the market and costs in a given area.)

Stinson at Finn observes that hydroseeding works well when applied to residential renovation projects.

Some hydroseeders have more than 200 feet of hose, and "you can actually leave the machine in the driveway and be seeding in the backyard."

The use of a hose application permits seeding close to buildings and in other hard-to-reach places, and the equipment can be parked away from the prepared seedbed, says Stinson.

The use of a remote valve on the hose and a recirculation system on the hydroseeder allows for one-person operation, which reduces the required manpower, he notes.

"Hydroseeders are not labor intensive," Stinson says. "The most time-consuming part of it would be the ground

BY JAMES E. GUYETTE
Editor

Offering hydroseeding services can generate additional revenue and obtain new accounts, according to industry experts.

"I think it's up and coming for lawn care companies," says Neil P. Reinecker, vice president of sales and marketing at Reinco, Inc. in Plainfield, N.J. "We've tripled our sales in the last four years."

Hydroseeding involves using a machine that applies a spray mixture of seed, fertilizer, water, mulching materials and perhaps other amendments.

The process is particularly suited for use on properties that are hilly or that contain obstacles to preclude the use of a slitseeder, according to Reinecker.

Large areas requiring seeding, such as strip mine reclamation projects and highway rights-of-way, can be targets for a hydroseeding marketing program.

"It is used on real steep terrain because it sticks so well," notes Jill Dulaney, an inspector for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Division of Reclamation.

Dulaney, who is based in the Southeastern Ohio town of Jackson, works extensively with erosion-prone coal strip mine sites that are being converted into grassy hills.

She points out that a dye added to the hydroseed mix can help eliminate bare spots by insuring adequate coverage.

Bob Stinson, marketing manager at the Finn Corp. in Fairfield, Ohio, suggests that turf managers make arrangements with a developer to hydroseed entire new housing projects.

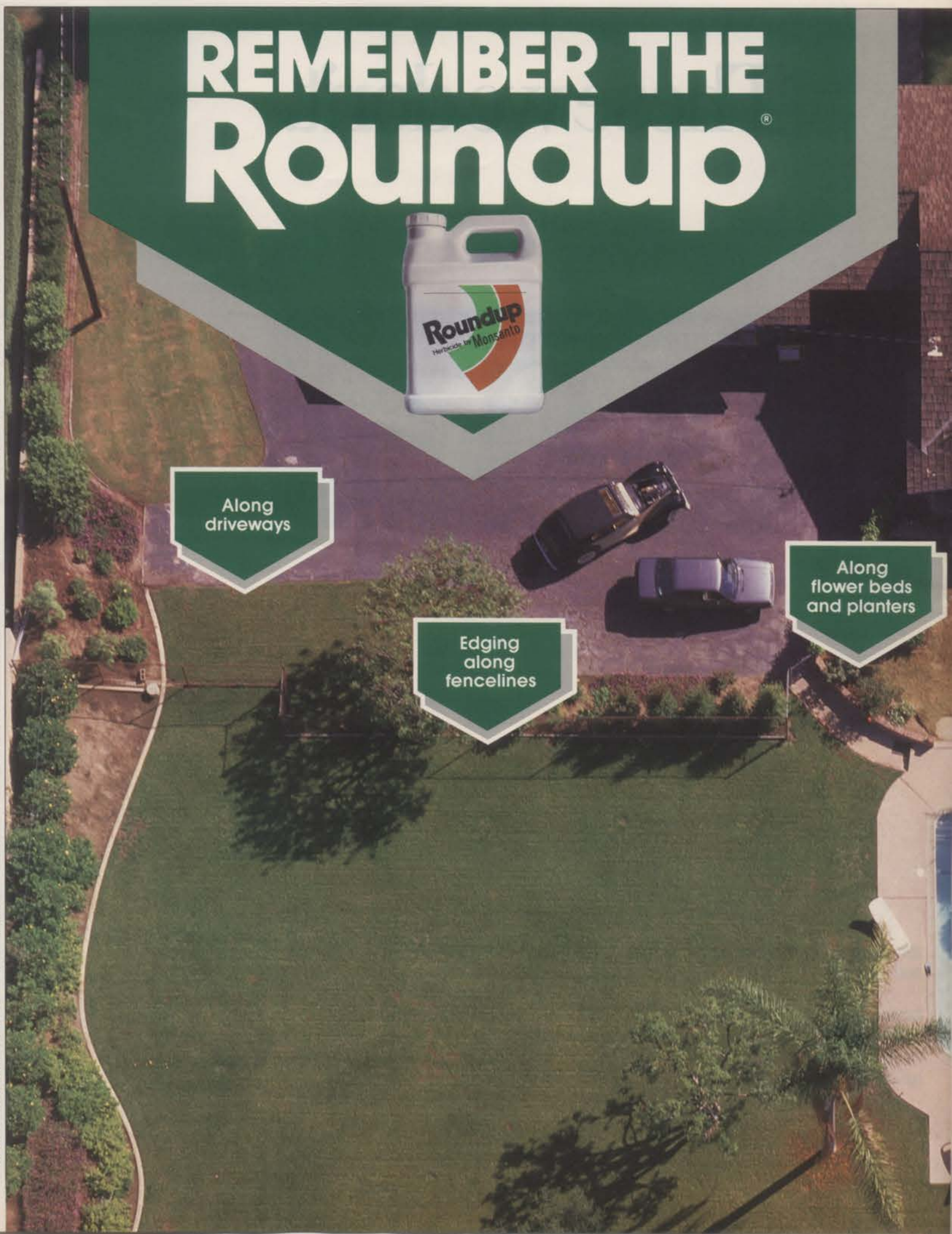
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preparation," and that has to be done anyway no matter what type of seeding is used.

Hydroseeding provides a good germination rate providing that the area has adequate

moisture, says Helm. "The seed will germinate, it wants to germinate—but it needs the proper environment—and that environment is well-watered."

Adequate drainage plays a role, too, says Reinecker. Nutrients, nitrogen, potassium and pH are also important. "I recommend that every hydroseeding contractor pay close attention to soil chemistry."

Investing in a hydroseeder should be well thought-out before taking the plunge. "The first question I have (for a potential buyer) is, 'How much work do you have lined

up?'" Reinecker observes.

He adds, though, that a \$20,000 hydroseeder can pay for itself in just 52 hours of use.

Smaller machines sell for \$12,000 and up. Reinecker and Stinson both say that LCOs are expressing increasing interest in the "entry level" hydroseeders.

Santoro and Helm have large machines costing about \$75,000 at their operations. An investment like that requires that the machine be used full-time. "You have to have that equipment working every day," says Helm.

A hydroseeding contractor needs to pay the workers an adequate salary to insure that

a skilled operator remains on the job, says Helm.

Santoro and Helm recommend that turf managers subcontract from an experienced hydroseeding contractor if they wish to have that type of work done. LCI

ChemLawn saves day in Syracuse

SYRACUSE, N.Y.—ChemLawn Service Corp.'s Syracuse branch won accolades from the community after a response crew cleaned up a spill from a competitor's truck. The incident was reported in Ecolab, Inc.'s third quarter shareholder's report.

Nine branch employees spent an hour cleaning chemicals that had spilled when a truck rolled over and burst into flames.

ChemLawn was called by an anonymous passerby who mistook the truck for a ChemLawn truck.

Since neither the competitor nor the assistant fire chief was sure how to handle the accident, the ChemLawn crew went into action.

The crew explained the equipment in the "spill pallet" to the fire officials. The "spill pallet," an emergency response kit that ChemLawn trucks carry, contains Hazorb pillows, activated charcoal, shovels, rakes, transfer pumps and other items.

ChemLawn was congratulated by the fire department, which asked the branch manager to conduct a workshop this fall to prepare officials for chemical spills. The company was also commended by the local press. LCI

Herb Gundell dies in Denver

DENVER, COLO.—Noted horticultural expert and author Herbert Carl Gundell, 69, died recently of a heart attack following a golf outing.

He was a county extension agent in Denver for 30 years until retiring in 1979. He then became a consultant for Ever-Green Lawns.

"The passion he carried for his profession was incredible," said John Eden, regional trainer. "Whether it was a discussion of plants over coffee or a formal seminar in front of hundreds, Herb's enthusiasm was indeed inspiring." LCI



Gundell: Enjoyed his work.



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Increase the mowing crew's productivity

Increased productivity by mowing maintenance crews is the challenge facing contractors in the 1990s.

The consumer's demand for high quality, full-service landscape management must be met. Consistently improving profits by increasing crew productivity will encourage good companies to remain in business.

The symptoms of low output by maintenance crews include—but are not limited to—low levels of customer satisfaction, unacceptable or in-

consistent profits, high turnover in the work force, equipment downtime and frustrated production managers.

In the past we have blamed the weather, an unreasonable customer or the quality of the work force for these problems. No matter what the cause, an increase in productivity on a day-to-day basis is a large part of the solution.

In the next three months this column will explore the basic elements of increased field productivity as they ap-

ply to the industry.

Each of these elements of production has a "quality connection." Convention tells us that increased production comes at the expense of quality.

If quality is viewed as simply doing good work, and you believe good work takes more time, then increased productivity and maintaining high quality are not compatible.

Phil Crosby, in his book, *Quality Without Tears*, suggests: "Convention says that quality is goodness and there-

fore something vague; reality says that quality is conformance to requirements and therefore very specific."

Conforming to requirements in this industry is difficult because requirements cannot be spelled out in specific terms. We must, therefore, depend on procedures that, if followed, will yield the desired result.

The landscape maintenance business is a non-product, intangible, service delivery business. The business requires mobile, multi-person

crews delivering complex services to the property owner/manager's front door.

In 30 visits, or deliveries, per year we perform an average of seven landscape maintenance activities using six different pieces of power equipment.

Landscape maintenance activities are considered by the average person as a series of menial tasks that anyone can perform.

Experience suggests, and tests confirm, that everyone who mows turf correctly must be trained on how to mow on schedule, at the correct height, while using the correct equipment in accordance with a set procedure that will yield a quality result.

Such procedures are not menial work. The people performing the work cannot be managed as non-skilled workers.

Let's look at some winning companies that have organized so-called low-skilled tasks into high-powered, high-profit, production units.

United Parcel Service has given new meaning to the delivery business. Waste Management revolutionized collection of solid waste. Domino's Pizza built its business on the premise that you can get a good pizza delivered to your home while it is still hot.

The modern lawn care industry is an example of a well-organized production unit.

All these successful companies have several things in common:

- They improve the image of the delivery people.

The most visible people in the company are those delivering the services. Whether they are delivering packages, pizzas or lawn care, they are the company to the customer.

The cooks, warehousemen and agronomists are important players, but they do not share the spotlight with the production people.

- These companies set uncompromising standards of



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About the Author

Philip D. Christian III is a business consultant based in Alpharetta, Ga. He was chief of ChemLawn Services Corp.'s maintenance division in the 1970s.

performance, and the quality is built into the performance standard. The standard may be measured in stops per day, but the stop that does not conform to requirements does not count.

- They introduce and train their people to use high-tech equipment and procedures to increase productivity and maintain high-quality output.

- They manage the business by the numbers. The performance of production people is not a matter of opinion. The system is designed to identify the winners so they can be rewarded.

The system is also designed to identify the lower performing personnel, always in the minority, so they can receive the support and training needed to become winners.

Common ingredients of successful service delivery companies may take different forms as they relate to the landscape maintenance business.

Most successful service businesses have a one-person crew delivering one basic product or service.

Our intangible product is, by nature, people intensive, and often requires a crew of two to five people to make an effective delivery.

We also perform a series of services—some being performed more than others.

Accurately tracking the performance of each activity is much more involved than counting the money or invoices that are brought in by a one-person delivery crew.

The following five steps will provide the foundation to build a high-powered production organization. Production people, production equipment and production procedures will be covered in detail over the next three months.

For example, a five-day mowing cycle would be considered a higher standard than a seven- or ten-day mowing cycle, and would, of course, cost more to deliver.

Mowing the grass at the correct height with sharp blades on a properly adjusted mower is part of the procedure of correct mowing. Only the supplier of the service can set and enforce a standard of that nature. The consumer, or property owner/manager, may select the standard to fit the need and budget for that property.

How does a contractor or property manager know when such a standard has been

reached? The visual or esthetic value of the property may be good evidence.

The real test, however, is the accurate tracking of the procedures to determine if they were properly done. In the uncontrolled outdoor environment, visual feedback can be misleading because of abrupt changes in the use of the property or weather patterns.

The schedule

In order to meet the standard set by the contractor, and expected by the customer, all activities and procedures must be performed on schedule.

The company must write a

detailed step-by-step procedure for the correct performance of each activity.

The procedure should include the order in which the work is performed, and the material, equipment and people used to perform the activity.

When high-tech or specialized equipment is used, the procedure for unloading, adjusting and operating the equipment should be included.

Management by numbers

To identify the winners in your production units, the process must be managed by the numbers.

In the case of the lawn care work units, the tickets or invoices can be totaled each day. The production manager will know how each person performs on a daily basis.

Our crews do not bring in invoices that directly relate to the amount of work completed on each trip. Production crews track their productivity by hours spent on each activity each day.

We can compare the hours spent to the projected hours required, and identify those crews—and crew members—who are on target in their production levels.

Increasing production at the crew level is a process not

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What's there to produce?

The first step in the development of a production organization is defining in specific terms what's out there to produce.

If we measure the landscape, it can be defined in square and linear feet or total acres to be maintained.

If we do not measure, the only other choice is to have an experienced landscape manager estimate the time it will take a standard crew to produce the work.

In this case we have defined the work in crew-hours and converted it to man-hours. In either case we know approximately how long it will take to do the work.

What is the standard?

The contractor sets the standards available to the customer and prices them accordingly. In some cases standards are defined by the frequency with which the activity is performed.

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necessarily requiring you to hire better people.

The "Top Gun" production unit you intend to build will help attract and retain more productive people.

But for now, you can work with the personnel you currently employ.

The implementation of the five steps described above does not involve the production people as much as upper management. The process must begin with a strong, long-term commitment from upper management. LCI

NEXT MONTH—Production people and how to motivate them.

G-Team announces keynoter

FALLS CHURCH, VA.—Dayna Waitley, Ph.D., nominated by the President's Council as Woman of the Year, will give the keynote address at the 1989 Green Team Conference and Trade Show, Nov. 9-12 in St. Louis, Mo.

The address is titled, "Gateway to the 90's."

Waitley holds a doctorate degree in psychology from the University of California at San Diego. She served as a goodwill ambassador to Mexico and was honored in the U.S. Congressional Record for an inspirational essay on the United States.

The convention will be held at the Sheraton St. Louis and the Cervantes Convention Center. It is sponsored by the Associated Landscape Contractors of America and the Professional Grounds Management Society. LCI

PLCAA filing suits over local posting

By **JAMES E. GUYETTE**
Editor

Local posting ordinances are being targeted for legal action by the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.

PLCAA has sued two communities and is considering lawsuits against several others.

"By challenging the authority of local governments to regulate the use of pesticides, PLCAA seeks to halt the proliferation of irrational and ill-conceived ordinances which have begun to appear in certain areas of the country," says a statement issued by PLCAA.

"These ordinances present the industry with vastly differing requirements from city to city, making compliance virtually impossible," the PLCAA statement maintains. A Federal Court ruled in a Maryland case two years ago that such laws are unconstitutional when enacted by municipalities, yet some towns continue to defy that decision.

"It has not stopped local communities from saying, 'Screw that—we're going to do that anyway,'" says James F. Wilkinson, Ph.D., director of regulatory and environmental affairs for PLCAA.

While such laws have been around for a while, PLCAA is just now suing under its new "issues management" program because of a previous lack of money, Wilkinson explains.

"Regulation in this area

needs to remain at the state and federal level," he says. "State governments have the resources and expertise necessary to review the relevant issues and draft any regulations deemed to be in the public's interest."

PLCAA does not oppose reasonable regulation efforts at a statewide level, adds James R. Brooks, executive vice president, but local laws are unacceptable because municipalities "do not have the expertise, resources or authority to act in these areas."

Lawsuits have been filed against Milford, Mich. and Mayfield Village, Ohio. The Mayfield ordinance, passed in 1987, calls for pre-notification of a customer's neighbors.

Village officials, in the wake of the suit, were considering dropping the ordinance if they think that the new state posting law would adequately protect the residents.

(Ohio's posting regulations do not call for pre-notification unless neighbors request it.)

Buckeye State LCOs welcome the PLCAA lawsuit, according to Lauren S. Lanphear, who is on the board of trustees of the Ohio Pesticide Applicators for Responsible Regulation.

"I think it will be helpful to have this decided in court," says Lanphear.

Mayfield is "clearly in violation of state law," but OPARR lacks the funds to launch a legal battle itself, he notes. LCI

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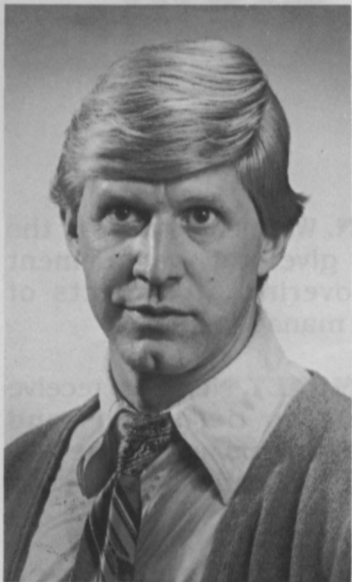
Davey halves pesticide useage, gains new market

NEW ORLEANS—The first question everyone asked when Davey Tree Expert Co. announced its pesticide reduction program last year was: Would it be profitable? (See LAWN CARE INDUSTRY, April, 1988).

The answer, now that Davey has marketed the program to its lawn and tree care customers for a full season, nationwide, is "yes."

"We have discovered an entirely new market because of our pesticide reduction program," said Roger Funk, Ph.D., the Kent, Ohio-based company's vice president of technical and human resources. He was referring to homeowners who are concerned about potential health risks associated with synthetic pesticides.

Funk spoke at the Professional Lawn Care Association of America conference in New Orleans.



Funk: No blanket applications.

Use of 2,4-D restricted in Massachusetts

BOSTON—The sale or purchase of products containing more than 20 percent active 2,4-D will be restricted to certified applicators, Massachusetts regulators have decided.

A subcommittee of the state pesticide board devised the regulations, which take effect in October.

"We're trying to take 2,4-D out of the hands of homeowners and put it into the hands of professionals," explains Debbie Karan, supervising inspector of the Massachusetts Pesticide Bureau.

"We were concerned about the homeowner."

Karan adds that the lawn care industry is unlikely to feel much impact. "We find that many of the applicators are already certified."

A number of home gardening materials containing 2,4-D will remain on store shelves for the do-it-yourselfer. "Most of the 2,4-D products are under 20 percent anyhow." LCI

Davey cut its lawn pesticide use in half with its specially-designed customizer, which allows for selective spraying with no pre-mixing. Tree pesticide use was cut 70 percent by using insecticidal soap and selective spraying.

Davey's program, titled the Plant Health Care program, was tested in selected markets in 1988.

A survey of the customer base showed customers wanted less pesticides used if quality and price wouldn't be affected.

"If we don't regulate our-

selves, if we don't stop the practice of blanket applications, then we will be regulated," Funk told his colleagues in New Orleans.

On lawns, Funk said insecticide applications were cut 40 percent; herbicides 50 percent.

"If our industry really committed itself to that goal, we would improve on the (application) equipment that is now available," he said. The Davey customizer costs a total of \$4,000 to install on a truck, he said, but the cost was made up in savings on materials in less than a year.

Davey is presently studying milky spore for insect control and sulfur for disease control, Funk said.

In tree care, insecticidal soap proved just as effective as synthetic pesticides, except for controlling mites in certain areas. Horticultural oils and *bacillus thuringensis* were also used.

Fifty percent of the reduction in tree pesticides was due to the soap, Funk said, while 20 percent was from monitoring and selective spraying.

"We're going to increase our use of horticultural oil," he

said. "We're also looking at vegetable oil. I would like to use these products from a perception standpoint."

Added benefits

One additional benefit from the program was that customers' neighbors complained less about pesticides.

The company also had its pollution insurance restored. Funk said the company's insurance carrier of 33 years had stopped providing coverage because of pesticides, even though there were no environmental problems. LCI

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Defining your role in tomorrow's market

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Some thought their market conditions would be the same forever.

If you assume the customer you have today is going to have the same needs and expectations for the next decade, you are making a mistake.

If you look at all the changes that have occurred in the lawn care industry in the last decade, it's not hard to imagine that there will be additional changes in the coming decade.

As markets become more saturated with service offerings, the customers will come to expect these different offerings. Offering just chemical lawn care will not be enough in the 1990s.

Many LCOs don't like hearing this, but the markets are demanding it.

Let's consider some of the methods of planning for the future.

1) Budgeting/Variance

The budgeting/variance system is the oldest; you put together a budget based on past experience and then monitor for any deviance from that budget. If, for example, an expenditure surpasses what the budget projects, you figure out what went wrong and correct the situation.

This type of planning assumes that the past will repeat itself. It is done periodically, usually once a year.

2) Long Range Planning

This consumes more time than the above method. Management identifies ways to use personnel and equipment to accomplish the goals.

It includes a process known as gap management, meaning that if the stated goals aren't met, management looks at the

Clarification

COLUMBUS, OHIO—Millers National Insurance Co. was purchased in 1988 by Forum Holdings U.S.A., Inc., a Delaware subsidiary of Forum Re Group, Inc., according to John P. O'Brien, Millers' vice president. O'Brien also notes that Forum has made "significant capital infusions" into the firm.

Another company spokesperson provided incomplete information during a previous interview that led to an error identifying Millers' owners in the May issue, page 13.

LAWN CARE INDUSTRY regrets any inconvenience this situation has caused either Millers or Forum Holdings U.S.A. **LCI**

various ways that are available to remove the gap.

The underlying assumption with this method is that past trends will continue, once again ignoring much of the actual input that happens to companies every working day.

The long range process, as with the budget/variance process, is usually done periodically.

3) Strategic Marketing

The above-mentioned systems fail to consider the impact of certain external market forces.

If a general fails to consider the actions likely to be taken by an enemy force before sending his troops into battle, he will most likely be defeated. Successful strategy depends on the reaction of the other forces.

Many companies in the green industries forget to listen to what the customers say they want, and thus there is no possibility of having a successful marketing strategy.

Other outside factors include government regulatory actions, the overall economic

climate, and new technologies.

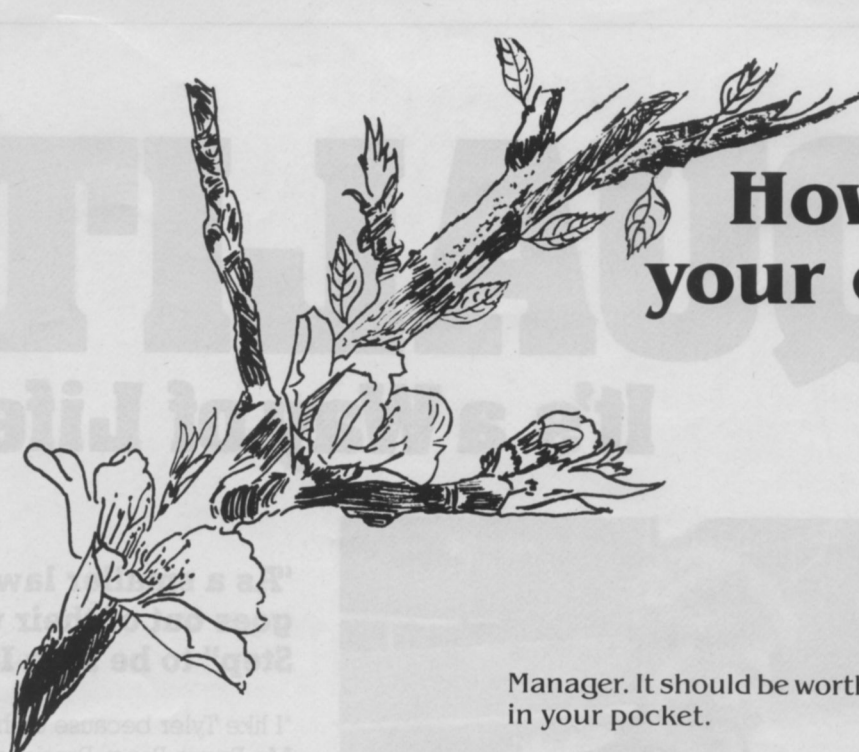
Some of the important keys to a successful strategy are knowing your strengths and weaknesses as well as your competitors', and understanding how your competitors are likely to react to your actions.

Your strengths and weaknesses can be ascertained by examining your personnel, financial capacity, operational methods, market position and information controls.

Listen to what the customer has to say and start planning for change. **LCI**



About the Author
Rudd McGary, Ph.D., is a senior partner with All Green Management Associates, Columbus, Ohio.



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NEW PRODUCTS



Larger tilt-bed trailer now has tandem axles
Ravens Metal Products, Inc., Parkersburg, W. Va., is expanding its tilt-bed trailer line with a new, larger-capacity, tandem-axle trailer. The aluminum trailers can

be custom-designed with a variety of axle, tire and floor options.

The trailers can carry loads from 3,000 pounds and above, and they can be ordered with a flat bed or aluminum or oak sides.

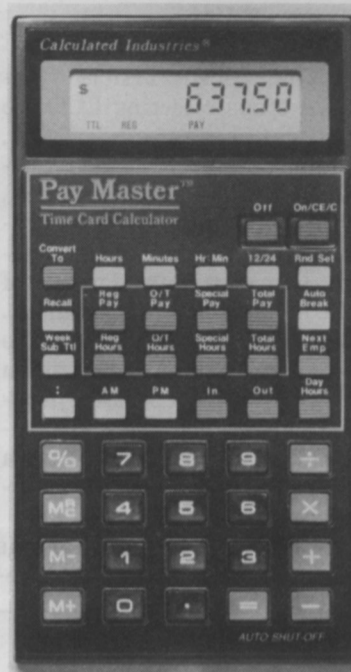
A swirled aluminum finish is standard, and there are a number of other options. LCI Circle No. 130 on service card.



inch commercial lawnmowers. The 4-cycle, air-cooled engine features a recoil starter and is syncro-balanced for smooth operation.

The 12 hp engine rounds out the selection of Briggs and Stratton engines offered by Exmark. An 8 hp engine is available on the 32-inch commercial mower, 4 hp or 5 hp. Briggs and Stratton engines are available on the 21-inch push mower, and a 4 hp Briggs and Stratton engine is standard on the 21-inch self-propelled model. The Exmark Turf Rake features a 5 hp Briggs and Stratton engine.

Exmark offers a 12.5 hp Kawasaki engine on its largest commercial mowers. LCI Circle No. 131 on service card.



Pay Master calculator figures out time cards
Calculated Industries of Yorba Linda, Calif. is introducing a calculator designed to compute payroll.

The Pay Master features special keys for figuring time card values. Different pay rates, overtime and special hours can also be accounted for with the pocket-sized calculator.

Using the Pay Master can eliminate over- and under-payments, according to the company.

The suggested retail price is \$97.95. LCI Circle No. 132 on service card.

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New electronic meter measures wind speed

Spectrum Technologies, Inc. in Plainfield, Ill. has introduced a handheld wind speed indicator that enables applicators to measure wind speed when applying pesticides.

The pocket-sized Turbo Meter features four electronic scales: MPH, knots, feet per minute and meters per second.

The measuring turbine is suspended on sapphire jewel bearings, and its rotation is sensed by an infrared light beam that adds no friction.

Powered by three AAA batteries, the Turf Meter can document and assess the impact of wind speed. LCI

Circle No. 133 on service card.

To the Editor:

Your recent article "PLCAA stops referring LCOs to insurance agency," (May, 1989) is an unfortunate misrepresentation of events, PLCAA's position and remarks made by myself in regard to your investigation of the liability insurance market. My remarks were made in the context of a general discussion of the liability insurance problems experienced by our industry, yet appear to be a direct implication of a particular provider.

I am concerned that the thrust of the article and re-

marks attributed to me give the impression that PLCAA had first-hand knowledge of what you claim in the article and initiated the investigation, neither of which is true.

Let me share a few examples of where your editorial copy does not correctly represent my remarks:

The questions you raised about the business practices of American Group Marketing and National Insurance Consultants were the basis for my remarks, not any questions or complaints made by PLCAA members. It was on the basis of these questions that PLCAA merely stopped in-

forming members of a possible source of pollution liability insurance. PLCAA has been neither the defender nor the accuser of any liability insurance company.

Specifically, "PLCAA has stopped referring LCOs to a Florida-based insurance agency because of some questions about its insurance policies. PLCAA had been directing LCOs to Orlando-based Wilson, Wheeler and Schmidt for liability insurance.

"PLCAA stopped referring the agency after learning that one carrier it was writing policies for, Stone Mountain In-

urance Co. of Marietta, Ga., was ordered to liquidate." PLCAA stopped referring National Insurance Consultants (not Wilson, Wheeler and Schmidt) only after you presented the results of your investigative research.

After several paragraphs dealing with paper trails, disconnected phone numbers and multiple company names, you follow with my remark "there are enough questions there not to recommend anybody to them until we get this straightened out," with the last sentence highlighted as a special quote elsewhere on the page. I feel this gives the im-

pression that we are raising questions about their business practices, when I was merely responding to the results of your investigation.

The trade press and PLCAA have a good working relationship and a great deal of mutual respect, especially in our dealings with *LAWN CARE INDUSTRY* magazine. I wouldn't want this single article to change this relationship, but I am obviously concerned over the implications of the article upon the reputation of PLCAA and myself. I ask that you consider a follow-up article that clarifies and amplifies your findings and PLCAA's position.

I'd like us to keep in mind that PLCAA has simply provided members with a possible source of pollution liability insurance as a service, much as we would about any of our Associate Members, making no endorsements or guarantees.

Douglas K. Moody
Professional Lawn Care
Association of America.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Moody was quoted correctly. LCI

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Tupersan is pulled from California

SACRAMENTO, CALIF.—The E.I. DuPont Co. has decided not to renew its registration for Tupersan in California because of the state's costly registration requirements. Tupersan is a crabgrass control agent.

Frank Gasperini, sales manager for DuPont's turf and ornamental division, says not enough product could be sold in California to justify the environmental impact testing the state was asking for.

"If we had done the work, I'm sure we would have retained the label," he says.

Gasperini says California asked for the same tests as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, but different protocol.

"They set themselves up like a separate EPA," he says.

The registration was also not renewed in Arizona, which Gasperini says copies California.

Gasperini says DuPont also chose not to renew registrations for certain agricultural products.

Tupersan, a trade name for siduron, is so far the only turf pesticide not to be re-registered because of the California registration requirements, says Ali Harivandi, cooperative extension advisor in Hayward, Calif.

"We are going to see more of this in California," Harivandi says, meaning that other turf pesticides currently being used will not be re-registered. LCI

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AUGUST 1989

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B. SUPPLIER

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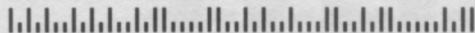
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Organization's survey sheds light on image issues

By JAMES E. GUYETTE
Editor

CLEVELAND—Many turf managers in northeastern Ohio believe that their industry suffers from a serious image problem, according to results of a survey conducted by the Ohio Landscapers Association.

A 31-page questionnaire was filled out by 87 OLA members, and the results were tabulated by computer.

It is believed to be the most detailed local survey in the industry, according to Herrick A. Mann, an OLA past president and the owner of H.A.M. Landscaping in Warrensville Heights.

"The Cleveland market is doing the best survey in the United States here tonight," an excited Mann told assembled OLA members who gathered to fill out the questionnaires.

"This should be the Super Bowl of all surveys."

This year's results echo last year's in that the membership is still troubled by an image problem.

When asked to rate the industry image to consumers on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 meaning best), the average response was only a 5.

The average consumer image rating of their own operation was an 8.

Overall industry-wide quality netted a 6 rating. Their individual company's quality rating averaged out at 8.

Mann believes that low salaries coupled with a high visibility factor are main elements of the image problem.

"We're not behind walls or in a store all day," Mann observes. "We're always in the public's eye. They always see you, they always see your employees, and when you're gone they always see the work you've done."

Noting that enrollment in Ohio State University's landscape horticulture program was down 55 percent, Mann comments that "it's hard to get students enthused about the green industry if you have an image problem."

Mann was telling assembled OLA members about media accounts that featured neighbors' comments regarding a suspect in the sensational murder of a teenaged girl: "He was such a nice guy—he was saving up money to become a landscape contractor."

"They made sure you knew he was a landscape contractor. We have to shake that image."

Low salaries remain troublesome. "It's hard to entice people into the industry when we can't pay them what we'd like," he says.

"Why do people cringe when they pay us \$20 an hour for our labor? How come we work from morning to night, and how come we don't have any money? We have to get that public image where we're worth what we're asking."

This year's survey results show that the median annual salary of a company owner is \$30,000 to \$34,999. The typical production manager earns \$22,000 to \$24,999.

A foreman makes a median of \$17,000 to \$18,999—about \$7 to \$7.49 per hour. A maintenance labor technician with no experience earns about \$8,000 to \$9,999 annually—\$5 to \$5.49 an hour. A person with a year's experience who displays leadership qualities is likely to take in \$10,000 to \$11,999—\$6 to \$6.49 an hour.

(To indicate buying power—according to a national survey of median rent prices—Clevelanders pay \$380 monthly, New Yorkers are charged \$444 and Bostonians and San Franciscans tie at a \$586 monthly rent. People in Washington, D.C. pay \$601, and the average of 25 selected U.S. cities is \$425.)

Northeastern Ohio firms that charge customers at an hourly rate report a median figure of \$25 to \$34.99.

A fertilizer application for a 5,000 square foot lawn is likely to cost \$25 to \$29.99. The average Roundup lawn renovation and reseeding will cost a client 18 cents to 20 cents per square foot.

When plowing snow in the winter, contractors aim to bring in a minimum of \$60 to \$79.99 per hour when doing residential work. Commercial accounts are expected to generate at least \$40 to \$59.99 per hour.

In the 1988 survey, 40 percent of the responding companies paid their employees "under the table" for work performed during the winter. "That's highly illegal and a good way to run into a problem," Mann points out.

This year, 34 percent report paying under-the-table wages; 59 percent say they don't do that.

About half the respondents report that they do not pay for holidays and sick time. Overtime is paid by only 48 percent, yet 76 percent do issue an annual bonus based on performance.

Most companies do not have an official employee incentive program or any type of profit-sharing/retirement plan.

A majority of firms have medical plans that include a deductible; 53 percent of the plans are company paid, while 43 percent are a shared expense between employee and employer.

The average employee worked 8.3 hours a day, 4.83 days a week. (Because of a limited response to this question, the OLA does not consider this figure statistically valid.) Supervisors worked 51 to 55 hours a week.

Mandatory company uniforms are found at 56 percent of the companies—up from 46 percent last year. "Anyone who's in a visible position has a uniform," says Mann, referring to police officers, drivers for the United Parcel Service and employees of chemical lawn care companies.

The average company composition in the survey is 44 percent maintenance, 25 percent landscape installation, 13 percent landscape construction, 8 percent snowplowing, 3 percent irrigation, and 7 percent "other" categories such as nursery or trucking operations.

The median company gross is \$150,000 to \$199,999 annually. Five respondents report grosses of more than \$1 million.

A copy of the survey for a non-OLA member costs \$28. To order, contact the Ohio

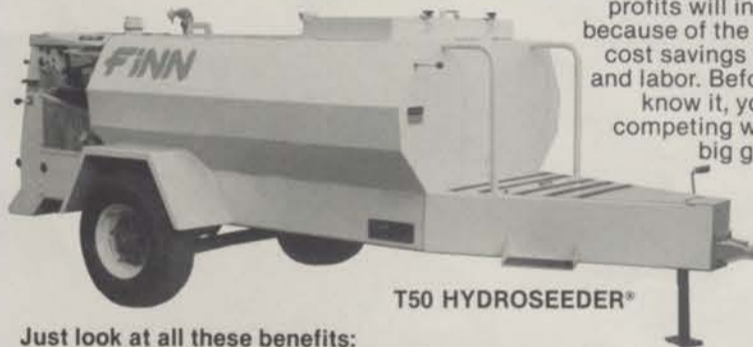
Landscapers Association, 3031 West Streetsboro Road, Richfield, Ohio, 44286.

The OLA currently has 216 members. Most are from northeastern Ohio. The organization was founded 24 years ago. The surveys have been a fixture for a decade.

Members can use the results to compare their operations with others in the industry, Mann explains. "We were really curious as to what the standards were," he notes, adding that the surveys serve "to give us a bank of information." LCI

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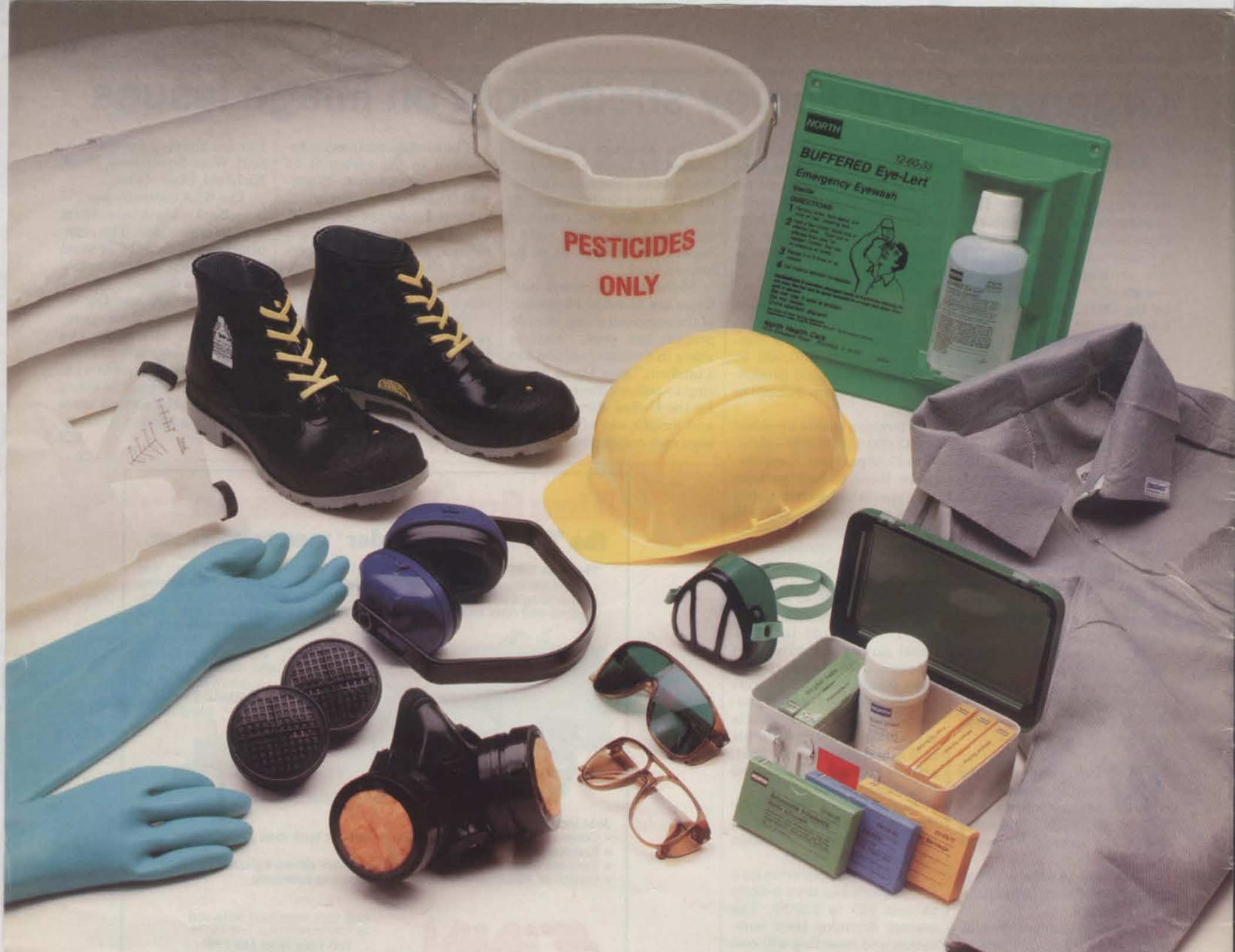
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