



THE NEWSLETTER

May - June 2020

of the **Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England, Inc.**

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Thoughts From Your Executive Director by Don Hearn

A benefit of membership in the Association is the ability to obtain a GHIN handicap. This is made possible by our friends at Mass Golf. If you are interested in acquiring a handicap with the GCSA of New England please contact me at donhearn@gcsane.org and I'll be certain to add you to our roster.

Something new that we've come up with is a way for companies enrolled in the PPP to present their story to the Membership by video. Since we haven't been able to meet where we can play golf and socialize, this is a way for commercial Members and Affiliates to spend a few minutes on a video designed to help with their visibility. As of this writing, we've had six companies participate and we are looking for more. It's an easy process, is a way to promote your company, allows the membership to learn about the company and its representatives, and it's fun! The video can last anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes. The length is flexible. It just depends on the individuals involved and how free-flowing the conversation becomes. The interviewee can be anyplace of his or her choice. The time can be any time and any day of his or her choice. Whatever works best for the interviewee will work for us. "Us" refers to Greg Cormier, the Association's Affiliate Director, and me. One of us will conduct the interview. Please know this is an easy process and you don't need any special equipment or advanced technical knowledge. All you will need is a computer or phone and the ability to download a free app that is needed to connect with the interviewer. So, give Greg or me a call, text or email and let us know when you would like to be interviewed.

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Much has been shared about the coronavirus/covid-19 pandemic, so there's no need to expound on what it is and how it has changed our lives and businesses.

We were fortunate to have the Providence Show completed before the pandemic was full bore and part of our daily lives. It is unfortunate that golf facilities have been classified as non-essential businesses. Some thought golf could be played safely and wondered why the governor didn't agree with this. Others thought golf facilities should be closed for play. Even some in our industry felt this way. Governor Baker, a non-golfer, made the decision to keep courses closed until early May. This created a lot of hard feelings and much controversy. Personally, I received several inquiries questioning the governor's wisdom to allow parks to be open, along with other allowances, when golf courses remained closed. This became more difficult to understand and accept when surrounding states were allowing golf to be played, with restrictions, and Massachusetts was not allowing play. Fortunately, we were allowed to maintain courses, but nothing else was happening. The Alliance of Massachusetts Golf Organizations (AMGO), of which the GCSA of New England is a participant, and representatives from other New England golf organizations met many times by conference call to discuss the status of the game in New England.

Thoughts *continued*

We tried our hardest to present facts to the governor that would allow courses to open with restrictions that we believed were reasonable. Especially so when considering what appeared to be the lack of enthusiasm by the governor to open courses for play. One of the difficulties we had, and still have, is the mixed message people hear and see when we explain how golfers will follow the rules established. Yes, most will. It's those who, for whatever the reason, feel they can get around the rules and do so that give golfers the reputation in some corners as being "entitled." AMGO is not done and continues to present facts and alternatives to the governor's administration that make sense and are practical. You will continue to be kept up to date by notices sent from the Association.

We all know this has been a difficult time for our Members and we understand if things have gotten a bit astray. With this in mind, we want all who have continued their support of the Association to know we appreciate your support. 92% of our income is derived from dues and sponsorships. Without your continued support we will not exist. The GCSA of New England is the second oldest Association in the country. The oldest is the Ohio Association which came into existence 2 months before us in 1924. It is our hope that we provide value to our Members and companies in a way that encourages your continued support. If you have ideas about programs or projects that you believe will enhance your membership experience, please pass them on to any member of the board of directors or to me. We are always listening.



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Public vs. Private Course Superintendent

By Colin Smethurst

In my almost 20 years working on golf courses, I have been fortunate enough to work with some tremendous people at different private and public clubs in Massachusetts and Florida. I have faced challenges at each stop and at this point I have gained my own perspective on what differences there are between being a public and private course superintendent.

At a private course, the goal is to meet and hopefully exceed member expectations everyday. Expectations are obviously higher at a private club. Beyond providing exceptional turf health, details like edging, landscape manicuring, and overall course presentation must always be on point. Green speed must be closely monitored and managed. Having a larger crew with multiple assistants often means you as superintendent are best utilized planning short and long term projects.

Above all else, it's about making sure work quality is satisfactory and coaching your team. Setting an example as a calm, confident leader in the most stressful of times is paramount to how your staff will perform. Lastly, public communication is a vital skill for a private course superintendent as the political game of keeping membership on your side by being effective in the boardroom is probably just as important as your agronomic skills.

The goal of a public course is to be sustainable and profitable and to generate as many rounds as possible while providing the golfer a memorable experience. As a superintendent, meticulous planning is essential. Chemical applications and cultural practices must be carefully planned around outings, leagues, etc which a lot of times means coming in to work when some other people in your household are

just going to bed. You must do more with less. You have to be creative with smaller staffs and aging equipment. You can't be above collecting trash and weed whacking because sometimes there just isn't anybody else to do it. The high expectations you set for yourself can be maddening, as most times, you just don't have the resources to reach your standards.

I'm sure a lot of guys out there have had different experiences than myself in these roles but a wise man once told me what I think rings true a lot of times, "It's all a game." It really doesn't matter where we're employed, superintendents are a different breed. We're resourceful and innovative. No matter what challenges are thrown at us, we figure out a way to get the job done.

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GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT: WATER MANAGEMENT IN GOLF

By Precision Laboratories

Water is a precious resource. Smart water management has the greatest impact on your turf's playability and performance. The ability to influence the behavior of water at the surface, and in the soil, helps give the Golf Course Superintendent more control over turfgrass conditions and playability. The tool that helps give you that control is called a soil surfactant.

What is a soil surfactant?

The word surfactant itself is a combination of three words that describe their performance characteristics: **SUR**Face **ACT**ive **AgeNTS**. These chemistries perform by reducing the surface tension between two liquids, or between a liquid and a solid surface.

The basic anatomy of a surfactant molecule is a head that is attracted to water and a tail that is attracted to organic matter.

How will a soil surfactant help me during dry conditions?

When surfactant-treated water penetrates the soil, the tail of the surfactant molecule seeks out organic matter coatings on the soil particles. When the tail anchors to the organic coating of the soil particle, the head of the molecule attracts and holds water in the root zone, eliminating hydrophobic conditions and local dry spots.

Which surfactant should I use?

Surfactants differ in the make up of their performance characteristics.

Penetrants: Formulated to improve water infiltration. They excel at moving water off the surface and through the soil profile. They are not designed to hold water.

Hydrators: Built to facilitate better hydration. Once rinsed into the soil, they will aggressively hold water for a determined period of time.

Combination Formulations: These are the most commonly used formulations. They combine various ratios of penetrants and hydrators to give the user more flexibility when choosing the amount of moisture, if any, to retain in the soil.

There are also quite a few options when choosing how to apply these products.

Liquids: Most soil surfactants come in a liquid form. The soil surfactant is sprayed onto the leaf surface. After the application, the product is watered into the soil to the desired depth of activity.

Injectables: Many of the liquid formulations can also be injected directly into a central irrigation system. Injecting is easier to do than many may believe. A small injector pump is installed with little effort, allowing you to easily apply surfactants wherever you have irrigation coverage.

Surfactant Tablets: These tabs are placed in a hose end applicator and can be applied while hand watering. It is a great option for small areas and newly laid sod. A single tab will usually treat somewhere between 8,000 to 16,000 square feet, depending on how they are formulated.

Granular Soil Surfactant: These products have the surfactant technology either sprayed onto or impregnated into a granule of some type. These granules can be fertilizer or inert carriers. These products need to be applied to dry turf or soil surfaces. The surfactant chemistry is washed off and activated once rain or irrigation is applied to the granule. The surfactant is dormant until moisture is introduced.

We know that balancing playability with soil moisture is always a challenge. Golf Course Superintendents have many options when choosing the right surfactant for the right set of results. Precision Laboratories has the products to help you achieve that balance.

For more information or help in choosing the surfactant right for you, connect with your local Tom Irwin Client Representative or contact Harris Schnare at harris@tomirwin.com, 508-654-2488 Or Greg Bennett at (978)-877-3772 gbennett@precisionlab.com.



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FMC to Donate \$21,000 to 71 Local Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Chapters *Donation is part of an ongoing FMC initiative that teed off at the 2020 Golf Industry Show.*

PHILADELPHIA, February 25, 2020 – More than 200 golf course superintendents from across the United States stepped up to the tee box at the FMC Professional Solutions booth during the 2020 Golf Industry Show for the chance to earn donations for their local Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) chapter. In total, FMC will donate \$21,000 to 71 local GCSAA chapters as a result of the kick-off event.

“We couldn’t have asked for a better place to emphasize the commitment FMC has to the golf industry than at the Golf Industry Show. We had really strong in-booth participation, which is a testament to the passion superintendents have for our industry,” stated Mike Sisti, golf and lawn care market manager for FMC. “As a committed partner, it is important to us to support the golf industry and those who are helping it progress each day.”

The fundraiser was an initiative driven by [FMC True Champions](#) that was launched in fall 2019. One of the key features of the loyalty program is to support industry associations such as GCSAA chapters, We Are Golf and RISE. The FMC booth featured a golf simulator for golf course superintendents to “grip it and rip it” to secure donations. For each yard driven off the “tee,” FMC donated 50 cents to that superintendent’s GCSAA chapter. Approximately 43,100 yards were driven off the virtual tee.

“The FMC golf simulator would have been a great experience all on its own, but the donations for local GCSAA chapters put it over the top,” said Doug Ware, golf course superintendent for City of Livonia and vice president of the Michigan Golf Course Superintendents Association. “FMC’s support cannot be minimized. It is immensely appreciated and will not be forgotten.”

This donation is the first step in a 2020 pledge FMC has made to the local GCSAA chapters. Through August 2020, a percentage of all Fame® SC fungicide and Rayora™ fungicide sales will be donated to local GCSAA chapters.

Rayora Fungicide Launches at the Show

FMC also launched [Rayora fungicide](#), its breakthrough demethylation inhibitor (DMI) fungicide, at the Golf



Industry Show along with the fungicide's free sampling program for the 2020 season.

"We had a very successful launch and generated a lot of interest for samples of Rayora fungicide," Sisti said. "The product really resonated with show attendees, especially characteristics like its rapid root and shoot uptake, movement within the plant to protect the newly developed turf and its proven safety with no turf regulation effect."

To learn more about Rayora™ fungicide and how to obtain free samples for the 2020 season, visit rayorafungicide.com.

FMC True Champions

The FMC True Champions program is a source for golf course superintendents and managers to access valuable Product Rewards and Product Assurances. It also has a third pillar that supports industry initiatives and associations like GCSAA, We Are Golf, and RISE. This depth of industry commitment by FMC includes increased investments in these causes and, to support those efforts, annual contributions are set aside based on annual purchases.

About FMC

FMC Corporation, an agricultural sciences company, provides innovative solutions to customers around the world with a robust product portfolio fueled by a market-driven discovery and development pipeline in crop protection, plant health and professional pest and turf management. FMC Corporation employs approximately 6,500 employees around the globe. To learn more, please visit fmc.com.

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Gazing in the Grass

Frank S. Rossi, Ph.D.

Spring conditions have rapidly become Summer-like with temperatures 8-10 degrees above normal. Soils remain in the upper 50's to mid 60s and widespread reports across the Northeast indicate an excellent year for root growth. Drying conditions are beginning to prevail in many areas, as ET levels are increasing. Dry conditions might assist with slowing the usual Spring surge of top growth, however, to date that does not appear to be the case.

Top growth of grasses is a function of mowing height and frequency, growth potential (temperature at which photosynthesis can produce energy for growth), warm moist soils, and warm moist air. Currently, these conditions are ideal for cool-season and with no limitations on potential for growth, expect to increase mowing frequency to remain close to 30% removal. Excessive clipping production reduces mowing quality, energy consumption and turfgrass injury. Clippings that remain on the turfgrass surface after mowing lead to shading and heat stress. Excess clippings deposited on pavement can lead to nutrient loading of lakes and streams. Increased growth and mowing needs leads to increases in water use, energy use, and labor needs.

Consequently, it is a good time to evaluate fertilizer N fertilizer programs from last Fall and this Spring that might lead to excessive clipping production. Turfgrass areas not receiving traffic will have little need for supplemental N beyond what is needed to keep pace with weed growth and withstand maintenance traffic. Steady, but not excessive growth at this time of year with good uniform color and density suggests fertilizer programs are sufficient. However, N fertilizer programs that produce excessive growth in Spring, often result in grasses with substantially less roots and less drought tolerance.

Get The Right Growth Rate

Cool-season turfgrass species grown in the Northeast experience an annual surge in top growth that challenges every turfgrass operation to keep pace with increasing mowing needs. During these times it is useful to consider how much growth a turfgrass stand actually needs? Often turfgrass stands from lawns and sports fields to cemeteries and golf courses are judged by uniformity and color of a sward, NOT how much it is growing. It is time to establish turfgrass growth rates that match the needs of the turfgrass stand, reduce labor needs, reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and maintain the playability and safety of the turfgrass surfaces.

The recent GCSAA-NY Golf Turf Symposium with Professor Doug Soldat discussed growth rate and the importance of measuring clipping volume to determine mowing, rolling, fertilizer needs, water management, surface firmness, etc. Any turfgrass operation should be capable of measuring an area, harvesting the clippings from that area, depositing the clippings into a container that measures volume and recording that number. Most golf courses that have adopted this strategy started with the standard form of resistance from “it takes too much time”, “no time in the AM”, “not enough labor”, etc. In short order it became clear in the case of putting green management that this simple tactic was a game changer. Ball roll distance, firmness, trueness could all be traced back to growth rate.

Growth rate can be managed by mowing programs, altering nutrients and water in most high value turf systems but ultimately it is GOVERNED by climate and soil organic matter level. Climate creates the conditions conducive for growth and soil moisture and temperature govern nutrient recycling and release. Persistently wet conditions the last several years produced long periods of active growth through summer months when normally growth would decline in unfertilized turfgrass. Only the most careful turfgrass managers have been able to “get a handle” on their growth rate by proper use of plant growth regulators.

Normally confined to use in golf course turf, PGRs have become an essential tool in sports fields and cemeteries that have specific growth requirements for safety, labor, and aesthetics. The cost of a PGR in a 400 acre cemetery that reduces one to two mowings per year easily pays for itself with no loss in turfgrass quality. Sports fields lying idle have little need for persistent growth and should be maintained on a PGR program if possible.

The key to effective PGR use is not unlike any other product use, right product, right rate, and right time. Different types of PGRs influence growth in different ways, but all reduce the production of gibberillic acid, the hormone that stimulates leaf growth. Maintaining proper application rates and intervals based on temperature (Growing Degree Days) will allow for maximum growth management with minimum reduction in turf quality.

Measuring growth has not been a standard practice, yet offers great potential to reduce labor and resource needs. Of course it will assist with automation as price and technology allow. ▲



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May - June 2020





When I got my start in the industry there was no social media. There were no cell phones. The industry news was garnered through chapter meetings, newsletters, and the vendor network. Those in sales traveled the area, shared conversations, agronomic information, and jobs open or opening soon. I saw vendors as a critical tool to remain connected. Thanks to social media, information

travels faster than an agronomic materials supplier during Pythium season. Does that make our vendors or the vendor network any less valuable? Beyond supplying materials, what is the value of our vendors in the industry now?

The entire golf industry seems more reliant on a collective approach for success. The days of the golf professionals, food and beverage, superintendents, and those who sell products and supplies to those professions operating in silos exclusive of each other are gone. No one succeeds unless we all succeed together. Same goes for the related associations, local or national. More than ever, collaboration is taking place between sectors in our industry. The successful groups have members willing to step up and volunteer their time for the benefit of the whole group with our valued vendors right there leading the charge.

I think about many of our partners giving their associations much needed financial support, but more importantly holding seats on chapter boards and serving our superintendent associations through various additional capacities. I sat down with two such valuable vendors at the NERTF Conference and Show in Providence and asked them why they undertake these additional efforts, and what value they and their companies see from such endeavors.

This topic came to me last May, as I had a conversation with Gilberto (Gil) Perez, Account Specialist for Dunning Industries, at National Golf Day (NGD) in Washington D.C. I caught up with Perez this year at the NERTF Conference and Show to ask about NGD involvement:

"As a company, we sat down and asked is this of any value to us, for us to go and be a part of National Golf Day? We said yes. Why, because we are supporting our customers, and we are supporting a great cause, which is what keeps our doors open."

Both Perez and Division Manager Neil Lajeunesse attended the community service event and legislative visits at the nation's capital.

"What a valuable experience it was and will continue to be. Not only personally, but professionally. When you leave there, you feel like you've done something for the betterment of the industry"

When asked why a focus on government affairs, Perez simply states, "it opens up eyes. It lets everybody realize that golf course superintendents aren't the devil. Everybody needs to know how responsible we are in everything that we do. I say we, I'm not a superintendent, but as an industry we do things in a responsible manner."

"It about supporting the industry that supports us."

At the local level Rhode Island government affairs guru Pat Hogan, sales manager for Sodco, is on top of his game. When asked why he is involved with government affairs, Hogan cited the availability of time.

"Superintendents really don't have the time. As a vendor, I've got a little more time to go and promote what they do, to tell legislators about the Green Certification program and being stewards of the land."

Hogan found his way into the government affairs realm first through necessity, serving in that capacity as he proceeded through the board ranks of the Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association. Those skills found purchase as he became more involved with the Rhode Island GCSA.

"There used to be a time where you had to go to the state house and into the basement to find out what bills for pesticide or other regulations like that had been submitted. Now they're online, but superintendents didn't have the time to go to the state house and search through filing cabinets to find bills that would affect them."

Sodco is a 526-acre farm that takes environmental efforts very seriously. "It's up to us to make sure that land can be passed down generation to generation. Hopefully we're passing it down to the next generation better than we went into it."

When asked if he enjoyed his volunteer efforts in government affairs, Hogan quickly replied, "Yes, I do!"

These are just two examples of the many vendors in our region that volunteer their time for the betterment of our industry. The regulatory landscape in Maine would look much different without the dogged effort of Jesse O'Brien of Down East Turf Farm. Chuck Bramhall, Harrell's, also advocates so well for our industry in a difficult regulatory area on Cape Cod.

It's no different outside of the government affairs realm. Successful association newsletters thanks to the hard work of Heather Garvin, Chas. C. Hart Seed, in Connecticut, Barrie Robertson, Foster Materials, in New Hampshire and the always entertaining content provided by Kevin Collins at Ocean Organics. Local event calendars would look so much different without the coordination assistance of Chris Cowan, Atlantic Golf & Turf in Vermont, and Brian Goudey, Syngenta, with the Northeastern GCSAA. Region wide events such as the MetGCSA Team Championship and

Nor'Easter Ski Day only happen thanks in large part to the efforts of Andy Drohen, Koch Industries. I'm leaving out so many valued industry professionals, but you get the picture.

If I had the time and opportunity to speak with every vendor working hard to make our industry better, my guess is I would hear much of the same feedback. I'm supporting the industry that supports me, and I enjoy what I do. I challenge you, the non-vendors in our industry, to take a moment to thank your partners for all that they do. Without the efforts of our valued vendors the landscape of our golf course maintenance industry would look drastically different, and not for the better.

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COVID-19 Pandemic Resources

GCSAA knows your lives and businesses are being affected by the global COVID-19 Pandemic. While there is no lack of general information about the virus and its widespread impact, we wanted to provide you with resources specific to golf and business operations to assist you in this challenging time. Plus, keep up with [GCSAA's latest updates](#) concerning the pandemic.

GCM's Most Valuable Technician Award

Cast your vote by June 26. GCM's Most Valuable Technician Award is designed to honor the best and brightest golf course

equipment technicians in the industry, the men and women who play such a key role in keeping the tools of golf course maintenance up and running. The award is presented annually in partnership with Foley Co. Nominations are narrowed to a field of three finalists by a team of industry judges. GCM readers then review the qualifications of the finalists and vote online for their favorite.

Long Island GCSA member J.R. Wilson at Noyac Golf Club in Sag Harbor, N.Y. could be the first technician in the Northeast Region to win. Please take 1 minute to vote for J.R. [here](#).

2021 Dog Days of Golf Calendar

sponsored by [LebanonTurf](#) in cooperation with GCSAA
[Submit your entry today »](#)

Submissions for the 2021 Dog Days of Golf Calendar will be accepted through Aug. 3, 2020. From the submissions, 14 dogs will be selected. Owners of the selected dogs will be notified in September, and the calendar will be distributed with the November issue of GCM magazine.

Again, if I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me.

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on his recent renewal of Certified Golf Course
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Pat Lange, Superintendent,
Oakley Country Club

To Friends and Affiliates Enrolled in the 2020 PPP (Partnership Promotion Program)

Dear Friends and Affiliates,

*Thank you to those PPP Participants who have
reached out and have been interviewed on Zoom.
To clarify, the Zoom interviews are recorded. Our
members will receive a recorded version of the
Zoom interview via email. They will not need to
join the Zoom call. If you have any interest in these
options or another way we can add value to your
commitment to the PPP, please reach out and let
me know.*

To view the interviews to date please [click this link](#).

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Back Issues!



Past issues of the NEWSLETTER are available
using this link: <http://bit.ly/GCSANEnewsletters>.

As in the past, *The Newsletter* continues to invite
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