

TurfComms



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PURPOSE: To pass on what we learn willingly and happily to others in the profession so as to improve turf conditions around the country.

CHAINSAW MURDER at the COUNTRY CLUB: Did you catch that title for Bob Labbanca's column "Golf Talk" in April, 1998 issue of **TURF**? As you might guess the column was on the difficulty of removing trees on golf courses and how one superintendent managed to get permission to remove one messy tree that had grown over one of his greens. He got the parking valet to park the greens chair's new Mercedes under the tree. In addition to giving me a good laugh it reminded me of countless other similar stories. We could probably write a book on that subject alone.

SUBSCRIBERS: At last count (6/10/98) 25 states plus two in Australia. States receiving 5 or more issues are: TX, VA, AZ, and FL. TurfComm is sent out to 97, the biggest percentage are superintendents; newsletter editors and other professionals in the industry account for all but a few copies going to friends and family.

1996 Oklahoma Golf Course Maintenance Cost Survey: It has just been released. What can we learn from it? First, we must consider whether this represents average maintenance cost for the U.S. I would definitely say no. I would consider that OK costs for golf course maintenance are somewhere below average cost; and the percentage of nine hole courses in OK is large (42%). This latter fact severely alters much of the total data. Of the 197 courses surveyed 79 returned questionnaires, the data obtained from these 79 was expanded to obtain total figures. Courses were classified as to ownership and size. Ownership was broken into three categories (private, semiprivate, and public/military). Size was also broken into three categories (nine, 18, and more

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than 18 holes).

Number of maintenance workers including superintendent averaged 10.2 full and part time; whereas non-maintenance workers/course (accountants to valets) averaged 18.0/course. I've never fully understood how management can give superintendents heck for not doing all that is desired with the help they have when there is so much help in the clubhouse that is non-productive.

18-hole golf courses spent on non-labor maintenance an average of \$122,549. This is broken down into the following categories:

Fertilizer -	\$13,235	Herbicide -	\$7,059
Fungicide -	\$5,882	Insecticide -	\$1,961
Biostimulants -	\$647	Growth Regulators -	\$647
Lime, Gypsum, Wetting agents, Growth regulators -	\$1,275		
Spray adjuvants -	\$627	multipurpose Products -	\$4,510
Fuel, Oil, Lubricants -	\$7,843	Equipment repair -	\$15,686
Irrigation repair -	\$5,294	Topsoil & sand Topdr.	\$3,971
Seed, Sod, Sprigs, etc.	\$5,392	Trees, shrubs, orn.	\$2,059
Other (water, elec. advertising, etc.) -	-----		\$46,461

The Oklahoma superintendents had an average age of 43. Only 84.6 % were certified pesticide applicators; those that were had an average of 8.7 years of experience. All had graduated from high school, 14% an Associates degree, and 42% had a Bachelors degree. 18% were certified by GCSAA, only 51.3% were GCSAA members, only 77% were members of the OK-GCSA, 89% played golf.

The benefits the superintendents were receiving included:

Club privileges -	79%	Dues in Prof. Org. -	74%
Health insurance -	67%	Education expenses -	64%
Travel expenses -	60%	Retirement -	49%
Dental insurance -	44%	Bonus -	37%
Disability insurance -	37%	Meals -	35%

How do you and your course compare?

HERITAGE: There is an excellent review of the "new generation of fungicides of microbial origin" in **Turfax** V.6, I. 1, by Dr. Dernoeden. One comment of note: "the probability for resistance to occur" is great with Heritage. Heritage actually is "a synthesized analog of a natural substance." writes Dernoeden.

Also discussed in this article is Novartis's newly registered Medallion another synthesized analog of another natural substance. It is a short lived contact which has activity against Brown Patch, Helminth. and some other minor diseases. Is any disease **minor** when it is on your turf? Interestingly "its residual activity is enhanced ...by the plant growth regulator Primo. Primo must be applied a few weeks ahead of the Medallion.

PBI Gordon also has an antifungal natural product that should be out soon.

COLORANTS: Beard notes the heavy use of colorants on dormant zoysia fairways over in Japan. He notes two differences that may make this more feasible over there. The Japanese tend not to take a divot (zoysia is difficult to take one out of anyway) and less use of golf carts.

Turfax V.6, I.1.

MACH 2 and MERIT: These are the topic of an article by Dr. Potter in **Turfax** V.6, I. 1 which stressed the need to get these two new tools for grub control on fairly early. Mach 2 near egg hatch and Merit shortly after. Both materials have high safety factors for humans and pets, but require you to apply them in an essentially preventative approach for grub control.

Well the above issue of Beard's Turfax were worth the new \$80 price tag/volume of Turfax. Hope the rest are also.

B.J. Johnson: The USGA picked a great weed control specialist for their annual award. For over 20 years he has been at the forefront when it comes to the latest in how to control weeds in turf.

Are Your Seeds Green: Seeing that I encountered this in World Press Review, June '98 I thought I'd pass it on. This researcher in the Netherlands has found that seed which still contain chlorophyll are not 'ripe'. The riper the seeds the better the germination and vigor of the seedlings. What is more exciting is he has patented a laser based machine which sorts the seed by the amount of chlorophyll content. Thus he can remove the immature seed so you obtain better germination.

FREE SPEECH and FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: We all have learned that we can't say and write everything we think. I perhaps have not learned this as well as others and feel strongly that free speech and freedom of the press are two very important rights we have in this United States. There are times government and big industry work hard to take these two rights away from us. You no doubt heard of Oprah's first Civil case involving Texas cattlemen who were suing her for "illegally bad-mouthing American beef." She won that case after spending \$1 million in lawyer fees, etc. She has go back again into Texas Court to face State or County charges by either the State or for breaking the same Veggie libel law for the same show.

I know that most of you are not worried about the fact that it cost Oprah \$1 million, or that she is being taken back into court again this time be by the State or Local government. But, did you realize that Dr. James McAfee, our Turf Extension Expert for North Texas, had been charged by a local sod grower and distributor under the same law. The Plano, TX A-1 Turf Farm had sued McAfee for a press release that said the Texturf-10 cultivar of bermudagrass should not be used in the North Texas because it did not do well in the high humidity.

This type of state law came about after the Alar uproar in Washington State in 1989 caused by a *60 Minutes* episode representing that the chemical used on apples might cause cancer. This type law is found in many states and industry is using it to intimidate anybody that dares to make a negative comment about an agricultural product. Imagine making an Extension Service Specialist

salary and having to defend yourself every time you said something that was interpreted as being harmful to their product by someone in the industry. Or a newsletter editor and consultant!

The very same day I read about McAfee's fate in *The Nation*, April 20, 1998, pg. 23, I read a editorial on freedom of the press in *World Press Review*, May 1998, pg. 4. I'll quote Larry Martz's comments in that editorial "What gets lost is what the great Justice Benjamin Cardozo knew. "There is no freedom without choice, and no choice without knowledge....At the root of all liberty is the liberty to know."

Update: The April 25th issue of the Dallas Morning News notes that the judge threw A-1 Turf Farm's case out of court on the basis that common lawn grass is not an edible crop. The paper notes that Pat Anderton, president of the farm, wanted to "muzzle some extension workers". Well this newsletter is here to help increase your knowledge. It appears the Mr. Anderton's of this world would hope I only publish positive statements. I note that Beard in 1979 wrote that Texturf 10 was "susceptible to *Helminthosporium* leaf spot in humid areas." He didn't get sued, but that was before the Veggie libel law was in affect.

What really strikes me weird about this case is that I thought Texturf 10 was a State of Texas release to begin with. According to USDA Handbook No. 270, issued 1964, it was released by TX Agric. Exp. Sta. in 1957. Doesn't hardly seem fair that the State's own extension service can't indicate where it should or shouldn't be grown.

GRASS CLIPPINGS: It is disappointing to learn that a Grounds Maintenance survey (May '98 issue, pg. 13) found that 79 % of respondents use grass catchers to a large extent. Only 39% took advantage of mulching mowers. With most of the landscapers on a weekly mowing schedule it is easy to understand the need for removing clippings.

Maybe we need a survey of the golf course superintendents to find what percentage of the golf course acreage is having the clippings removed. I would assume it is close to 100% for greens and collars. Probably 30% for tees and banks; with fairways at close to 10%. This would be great PR if golf course industry is doing a much better job or recycling clippings than the landscape maintenance industry.

MY SUMMER ITINERARY: June 20th till July 7th Eastern Trip for Turf Advisory Visits in the following states in this order: MO, MD, VA, GA, and LA. Then after nearly three weeks at home a Western Trip to: TX, NM, CA, ID, SD, and NE. This begins July 26th and ends Aug. 19th. although open ended for the Greater Sioux Falls and Omaha area.

EARTHWORMS: Finally a cultural method of reducing earthworm populations. Mr. Cook, turf researcher at Oregon State, reports (as written up by Pat Gross, USGA Agronomist) that fairway topdressing with sand appears to reduce the population and with it the problem casts. *The Perfect Lie*, May '98.

End

