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Take sensible precautions with pests

I would like to make a few points in response to last month's article entitled, 'Pesssst! Have you heard?'

Let me begin by saying that we fully recognise that golf courses have to deal with pests. That point is not in doubt. However, we should approach this sensitive issue with a degree of balance.

Firstly, it is vital that we correctly identify the pest and come up with solutions for specific pests. In drawing together those solutions, it is important to define what the parameters are for managing each pest.

For example, I was concerned that badgers were rather superficially mentioned in an article alongside rabbits, without recognising the huge differences in legislation and protection which applies to each species. Just to be clear, badgers are a protected species under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act and the 1992 Protection of Badgers Act. Under this legislation it is illegal to wilfully kill, injure or take any badger or attempt to do any of these things. It is also an offence to intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any part of a badger sett.

The article could also have put the damage caused by different pest species into context. For all the golf courses which will have badgers on or around them, how many actually experience unacceptable levels of damage in sensitive parts of the course? I appreciate they can cause damage, but it is perhaps wrong to give the impression that if there are badgers, damage is automatic, and that management requires total invertebrate control.

It was suggested that damage to turf could be controlled through the 'removal' of their food supply. This is perhaps unrealistic and could be a very expensive exercise - attempting to remove the huge range of invertebrates found on a golf course. Furthermore, badgers are true omnivores, feeding on a wide range of plants, invertebrates and other mammals. They even feed on young rabbits during the Spring. Spraying, on the scale required, would not only be costly, it would have knock on effects on other non-target species, many of which may be beneficial to turf health.

In a time when golf is attempting to demonstrate concern about the environment and undo some of the bad press it has been getting, I think we should be carefully assessing whether pesticides, and particularly insecticides, are required at any given time, and if a greenkeeper feels they are necessary, how can their use be minimised. Clearly, setting a threshold for pest damage is one way in which applications can be minimised and potentially needless expense saved. Spraying on the basis that something might happen is not a good generalisation to make.

Yes we need to control pests on golf courses, but let us make sure that management of pests is sensible. Based on sound understanding of each pest. Above all, control should be effective and efficient. If this is the case pest control can be carried out without wasting money, and without needlessly damaging the environment.

Jonathan Smith
Golf Course Wildlife Adviser

Bio research: There's a lot of it going on

In your article in the June edition on Aventis it was mentioned that Aventis is the only company in the UK conducting research into new products for sports turf.

Actually there is a thriving commercial research community combining UK companies and university and college research.

Symbio, which incidentally is celebrating its 10th anniversary in August, was the first in Europe to research, develop and launch a range of biological solutions for sports turf management. We have a link with the University of Surrey, and two full-time research staff on product development.

Symbio was the first company to introduce the concept of adding specially chosen bacteria and fungi for improved nutrient uptake. We then developed and launched biotech solutions for thatch reduction and black layer treatment. In 1997, in research sponsored by Symbio with the University of London, we identified the link which shows how increased mycorrhizal colonization can reduce the incidence of poa annua.

Our ongoing research is focused on the use of biotechnology in integrated disease and pest control.

Martin Ward, Symbio

Fungicide application rates. How much?

I am sending this message to correct a couple of passages published in the talking heads article July edition. The article read that I applied 200 litres of fungicide a month which has been reduced to 70 litres a month. The message I tried to convey was that in my first two years at Downfield we used 200 litres of fungicide based on 20 litres per application, however, over the period of the last two and a half years we have reduced this to 70 litres in total.

At Downfield we have worked very hard to reduce our chemical use through sensible cultural practices, and I feel that the decrease in our use of fungicides has highlighted our sound management.

In the case of the St. Marks fly, I mentioned that it had the characteristics of a disease at first with severe browning of the turf but this was isolated to small areas of tees and fairways. In fact, it is a insect that eats away at the roots of the grass plant, eventually leaving it discoloured. I hope these corrections will keep environmentalists and salesmen at bay.

Paul Murphy, Course Manager, Downfield GC, Dundee, Via email
Sad passing of Jimmy Coffer

Jimmy Coffer died in Stobhill Hospital in June. He was 75 years of age.

In years gone past he was a staunch member of SIGGA. After many years of service on the committee of the West Section he was elected Chairman where he had a happy and successful time.

Jimmy started his working life as a greenkeeper under his father, Bob Coffer, at Balmore Golf Club. The war intervened and Jimmy joined the Royal Navy where he rose to the rank of Petty Officer and saw service in the Far East. On return from war service he again took up his position at Balmore. After a short spell he applied and secured the Head Greenkeeper's job at Kirkhill. He had a few years there before his father retired from Balmore Golf Club and Jimmy was requested to go back as the Head Greenkeeper. This he did willingly and spent the remainder of his working life at Balmore until his retirement in 1990.

One of Jimmy's greatest loves was the study of nature. There was not a bird, flower, tree, beast or fish that he did not know. In his younger days he was a fair golfer and picked up many prizes at our golf outings at a handicap of six. He was especially fond of fishing and travelled all over Scotland fishing many of the salmon rivers and lochs.

Like most greenkeepers he enjoyed his work. Together with his duties as Head Greenkeeper he ran the Pro shop at Balmore. Often over a dram, he and I would discuss our relative courses, and, as the evening went on, we always came to the same conclusion - what lovely courses we would have without the golfers.

I will remember Jimmy either on some well stocked salmon river up to his haughs, or wandering up some Highland burn looking for deep pools where the trout were lying.

Jimmy is survived by his ever caring and loving wife, Marian, and his son Robert and family. All of us who knew Jimmy extend to all his family our sincere condolences.

Cecil George, Lenzie

Is there help at hand?

I obtained your email address through the BIGGA website and have taken the liberty of contacting you in the hope that you may be able to help me.

My name is Michael Harris and I am 23 years old. I currently live in Lesotho, Africa and would like to move to the UK to further my career. Last year I studied and passed a course in Sports Turf Management through the auspices of the Pretoria Technical College (Technikon) in South Africa and during this period I held the position of Assistant Greenkeeper at the Services Golf Club in Pretoria.

I believe it would benefit me greatly to gain more experience in the UK as either an assistant or apprentice on one of your courses or any other sports turf related facility. I would greatly appreciate it if you could give me the address of anyone who might assist me in achieving my goals.

I am a British citizen and hold a British passport.

I thank you in anticipation of your assistance in this matter.

Michael Harris
Email: terryel@ilesotho.com

Worrying: Duguid legal case

As a colleague who knows Dougal from my visits to Harrogate, I congratulate him on his success and wish him and his family happier times than they have had during this long and worrying case. We must all learn from this case and its serious implications, even though Dougal rightly won. As he said, what if...?

Alexander McCombie
Parkstone GC, Poole, Dorset
Via email
ENVIGRO is the new organic fertiliser produced by the rapid composting of nitrogen-rich manures and other organic materials. ENVIGRO can be used when seeding areas of very poor soil such as shale, and sand, so avoiding the need to bring in topsoil. A fine grade of Envigro is produced specifically for use on established turf on professional sports grounds.

A TYPICAL ANALYSIS

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Microbial Content

Very large numbers of microorganisms are present (more than 1,000,000,000 per gm of fertiliser)

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Phil Siddle, Head Greenkeeper
Rossendale Golf Club

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Laura Knights, Environmental Health and Safety Facilitator at Textron, looks at the health and safety issues in the design and manufacturing of modern turf maintenance equipment and in the great number of safety procedures involved in making safe products...

Safety in numbers

With the highly competitive markets of today, the design of new machinery and the continued improvement of established models is all important to companies vying to remain in the forefront of the turf care market. Not only do products have to provide quality and functionality, they also have to be increasingly safe in operation.

With safety now high on the agenda and European legislation on machinery safety tightening, designers and manufacturers of turf care equipment have to be ever tougher in incorporating all aspects of safety into their products.

Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products are one of the market leaders in the manufacture of turf care and grass cutting machinery with a UK manufacturing site based at Ipswich in Suffolk. As one of Textron’s seven design and manufacturing Centres of Excellence dedicated to both the golf and municipality markets, we know only too well the tough stance needed on safety. We have been designing and manufacturing grass cutting machinery for the last 160 years and have witnessed the increasing requirement for safe machinery that must now comply with tough European standards.

The team of design engineers at Textron work to the principal British Standard on safety of lawnmowers (BS EN 836 : 1997 - Garden equipment - Powered Lawnmowers - Safety) when designing new products or bringing existing products up to the high level of both performance and safety that is now required and expected.

The process begins with the ‘Product Definition’ stage derived from the marketing side of the company. This stage charts the requirement for a new product to fit a market niche or for an existing product to be improved and is the birthplace of new
ideas. At this stage there are few safety aspects taken into consideration, as the key aim at this point is to identify and conceptualise potentially new or existing product development opportunities.

The 'Product Definition' will pass from marketing to the design engineers who really begin to move the project forward. They will effectively answer marketing's proposal by looking at the viability of the project, what can realistically be achieved and delivered whilst maintaining all the aspects of performance, quality and safety. If it is agreed that the project is viable and financially attractive then the design team will progress with the project plan and begin working through the design stages. It is at this point that the safety aspects come into play.

Working with the guidelines set down in BS EN 836 the conceptual, layout and detailed design stages will incorporate all the required safety aspects into the design or re-design of the product. The British Standard addresses aspects on almost every conceivable safety issue including guarding, access to hot surfaces and power driven or cutting means (blades etc.), as well as the associated noise and vibration levels. It is fundamental that the stringent safety requirements are fully achievable in the final product and using the computer aided design (CAD) system 'Unigraphics', which is also used by the aeronautical industry, throughout the design phase means that these requirements are being realised at an earlier stage in the project. Previously, using traditional design methods, it was often at the later prototype stage that unacceptable safety issues became apparent. Now with the 'Unigraphics' system utilising 1:1 scale three-dimensional modelling, more of these issues can be identified and rectified at a much earlier, and less costly stage.

Once the product has reached the end of the design stage the scene is set to begin the prototype work. Textron have in-house manufacturing and experimental production capabilities at Ipswich allowing the new or redesigned product prototype to be built on site. With the progression into the actual manufacture of parts and the building of prototypes the safety aspect of the project takes on a different twist; that of safety during production. Obviously health and safety not only applies to the machinery itself during its use but also there are safety implications to be taken into account during the manufacture of the machine. With any new production job there is the potential for unforeseen hazards. To help minimize these the project team is multi-disciplinary, with members of the manufacturing and assembly departments taking an active role in the pre-production stages to help identify and rectify any potential hazards in the production process. This along with Textron's strong stance on unforeseen hazards, using traditional design methods, it was often at the later prototype stage that unacceptable safety issues became apparent. Now with the 'Unigraphics' system utilising 1:1 scale three-dimensional modelling, more of these issues can be identified and rectified at a much earlier, and less costly stage.

Full scale, fully functional prototypes will be built and it is at this point that the first part of testing and approval for European and other legal requirements, including vital safety requirements, begins in earnest. The machine will undergo a rigorous testing regime by the in-house test team who look at safety aspects in line with British and European safety standards. Aspects are covered including guarding, rotating blades/shafts, safety signs/labels, hot surfaces, exhaust fume protection, noise and vibration levels and OPC's (operator presence controls) that prevent the machine being operated or continuing to operate in the absence of an operator. This series of tests will highlight areas of concern and a report detailing all the areas where further action is required is passed back to the project team by the test team.

This process will continue, with adjustments and improvements in the design followed by further testing, until all involved are happy and the machine meets all the stringent safety standards required.

Once we're happy with the results of these tests, the product prototypes sent for further testing in an end-user environment to further identify any issues on all aspects of the design, including safety. Following feedback from customer trials some further changes may be made but essentially the next stage will be to enter into pre-production. Again the safety hazards of production are reduced by the strong stance on health and safety taken within Textron Turf Care combined with the involvement of manufacturing personnel in the multi-disciplinary project team.

Before full production and product launch, all safety aspects relating to the use, maintenance and servicing of the machine have to be scripted in the accompanying technical literature. This gives the end user essential information on how to use and maintain the equipment including the operator handbook, parts and maintenance books, service information, etc. In fact, everything that is required to ensure the safe use of the machine.

It is then time to launch the new product into the marketplace where the duties are handed over to the marketing department. Following the sale of the equipment the responsibility for safe operation transfers from the manufacturer to the purchaser and for readers this is the rub of this article. There has been stringent adherence to all the necessary guidelines, directives and legislation throughout the entire production process. The compilation of the operators handbook, service information and other technical literature is an integral part of that process, therefore it is essential that end-users not only read the information, but fully understand how the equipment can be used to ensure that it is operated safely. Our nationwide dealer network and our training department at Ipswich offer training courses to ensure that operators are fully conversant with all health and safety matters related to the safe operation of our equipment.

With standards relating to safety of machinery ever changing and tightening it is essential that companies pre-empt new standards or legislative amendments. Two safety aspects where the law is set to tight-
Current legislation on noise states that machinery has to comply with certain bystander and operator noise levels aimed at protecting the operator and people in the vicinity. However, stricter regulations look set to reduce these maximum noise levels further along with tightening the frequency of noise testing.

Unlike noise, the current requirement on vibration levels dictates only that these levels have to be stated in the operator manual. There are no upper or lower vibration limits with which equipment must comply, only recommendations for the length of time a person should use the equipment. Again this looks set to change with tighter regulations governing vibration in the pipeline. It is the pre-empting of this type of change that allows Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products to remain ahead in the market. We are already anticipating and working towards these changes by researching all aspects of the products to further reduce noise levels, ensuring that they will meet the proposed stricter standards and looking at improved product design that will reduce vibration levels thereby ensuring that we are on top of any changes here. Safety is the number one priority at Textron and is incorporated into all aspects of our business ensuring that our products have safety built into them every step of the way.

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BIGGA Mission Statement

"BIGGA is dedicated to the continuing professional development of its members and in serving their needs will strive through education and training for standards of excellence in golf course management throughout the greenkeeping profession."

BIGGA continues to support greenkeeper training, through its membership of the Greenkeepers Training Committee, by offering, amongst other things, training courses both in the Regions and at BIGGA House, by presenting Conferences, Workshops and Seminars and by running a lending library.

The Association does all of this to ensure that golf courses are maintained to the highest standards, to elevate the status of greenkeepers and to allow greenkeepers to be treated as true professionals.

Most professional associations have a system of continuing professional development and BIGGA is no exception.

BIGGA Continuing Professional Development

Thanks to contributors to the Education and Development Fund, BIGGA is encouraging the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of greenkeepers by the introduction of its free CPD scheme for members.

British greenkeepers have a wide range of qualifications, linked to the National Standards, from NVQ Level 2 to first degree. Research has shown that Britain leads the way in education and training provision for greenkeepers and BIGGA has been influential in developing training that is job specific, so improving the status of the profession leading to enhanced pay and greater recognition of its members.

BIGGA has provided and continues to provide a range of education and training opportunities which support professional development. Other training providers also offer a wide range of courses which can be used as evidence of Continuing Professional Development.

The BIGGA CPD Scheme has several benefits to its members and their employers. It will encourage greenkeepers:

- To accept out dated skills
- To keep in touch with changes in legislation
- To show employers that greenkeepers are true professionals
- To accumulate evidence towards further National Qualifications
- To give greenkeepers a means of showing current and prospective employers that they have continued their education and training beyond a minimum level
- To update skills and knowledge on a regular basis
- To promote greenkeeping as a profession
- To give greenkeepers the skills to cope with change

A BIGGA Certificate of Continuing Professional Development will be awarded to those BIGGA greenkeeper members who accumulate 10 CPD Credits annually from July to June.

BIGGA greenkeeper members who have been awarded five or four BIGGA Certificates of Continuing Professional Development will receive a BIGGA Diploma of Continuing Professional Development.

The scheme runs as follows:

1. Greenkeepers must be members of BIGGA
2. A minimum formal qualification of N/SVQ Level 2 (or equivalent) is required to enter the scheme
3. The scheme runs each calendar year from 1 July to 30 June
4. Courses, seminars, workshops and training days are awarded CPD Credits
5. Each greenkeeper must accumulate 10 Credits per year to reach the standard
6. All those reaching 10 Credits in a calendar year are awarded a Certificate
7. If an individual achieves the requirement for five consecutive years they receive a diploma
8. All training must be related to National Standards

The types of training that attract CPD credits are:

* Approved industry courses and workshops
* Short Courses (eg. tractor driving, chain saw, first aid, D32/33)
* Regional Courses
* BIGGA HOUSE Courses
* BTME Seminars
* The National Education Conference or Workshops
* *BIGGA HOUSE Courses

All BIGGA members can apply to join the CPD scheme, simply by contacting Ken or Sami at BIGGA House and by proving they are qualified to NVQ Level 2 or equivalent.

Each applicant will be entered into the CPD database and will be issued with their own personal record of continuation training.

All courses, seminars, workshops and conferences promoted from BIGGA House will be eligible for the award of CPD points.

All other training providers may apply for their courses, seminars, workshops and conferences to be approved by applying to BIGGA House.

Members can then ask for credits to be awarded by providing a certificate of attendance to BIGGA House.

Certiﬁcates will be entered into the CPD database and certificates will be awarded when members reach at least 10 Credits.

A full list of education and training opportunities provided by BIGGA is enclosed with this magazine, in a booklet entitled Continuing Professional Development. If you have not received your copy or need further copies then contact BIGGA House.

Epani Golf Course Management Software

The software package which includes full documentation, handbook, one year telephone support and one year of updates costs £380 plus VAT. Installation can be provided at £150 plus VAT.

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Order forms and demonstration disks are available from Ken or Sami.

Education UPDATE

BIGGA’s Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson provides information on Continuing Professional Development and BIGGA’s agreement to sell Epani’s OnCourse course management software

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From September 2000, things are changing...

...for the better.
Your Association now has a total membership of over 7,000 members. On behalf of the Association I would like to congratulate Kevin Dinsdale of Northumberland Golf Club for being the 7,000th member. Kevin wins a whole host of goodies as well as his Head Greenkeeper, who referred him for membership, also winning educational videos.

Well done to all of you who are referring your colleagues and fellow greenkeepers for membership and introducing them to the valuable benefits, which I hope you are all taking advantage of. Don't forget if you introduce 2 or more new members to the Association, your name will be placed into a draw to win one of three fabulous prizes. Keep up the good work!

**Courtesy Golf**

BIGGA is sadly aware that a minority of members (and in some cases non-members) have been abusing the system of courtesy golf offered by many golf clubs to greenkeeper members. This has led to a number of its procedures to try and prevent people who are not eligible to join from obtaining membership. All greenkeeper members are now required to have their form authorised by their golf club and the membership card itself is currently under review.

In order to minimise abuse as far as is possible at the present time and as a reminder to members, BIGGA has issued the following guidelines:

Members wishing to seek courtesy golf at a club should contact the club at least 24 hours in advance of wishing to play.

On arrival at the club, members should report to the Secretary/Pro Shop and follow normal procedures for playing golf.

Members should produce a valid membership card as proof of status to the club.

Members should make a point of thanking the club for their courtesy on completion of their round of golf.

Members should not seek courtesy golf at any one golf club more than twice per year.

Courtesy golf is always given at the discretion of the individual golf club and is not an automatic benefit of membership.

BIGGA welcomes the right to refuse golf to any member not following the above recommendations. Golf clubs wishing to verify membership or requiring further details should contact BIGGA on 01347 833800.

All suspected abuses of the card should be reported in writing to BIGGA. All such complaints will be investigated, initially, by the members' Section. Members found guilty of abuse of the card will be disciplined under Paragraph 15 of the Association's Constitution and Rules: "If any Member shall be guilty of conduct likely ... to injure or discredit the character or interests of the Association ... the Section Committee shall have power ... to suspend, suspend or expel the member."