But what do the Turf Managers think?

Introducing StressGard Formulation Technology

Bayer is proud to introduce the UK’s first turf fungicide with the company’s innovative StressGard Formulation Technology. This new optimised formulation has taken over 15 years of Research and Development and has been specifically developed to support Turf Managers in their quest to achieve the ultimate playing experience.

Tailor-made for sports turf, the formulation has been fine tuned to upgrade the performance of the product, providing superior disease control leading to visibly healthier turf.

Interface delivers unsurpassed disease control

Not only does Interface deliver unsurpassed disease control against 6 key turf diseases but the StressGard Formulation Technology helps the turf to thrive under disease stress conditions. Interface™ alleviates disease stress improving quality leading to visibly healthier turf.

But what do the Turf Managers think?

In addition to STRI trials, Bayer has conducted nearly 40 field trials with Golf Course Managers, Greenkeepers and Spraying Operators to ensure that their new fungicide will meet their needs in the real working environment. It is through close collaboration with Turf Managers that Bayer can develop products which address customer and market needs.

The trial turf recovered very well, potentially quicker than normal, which I think is evidence of the StressGard Formulation Technology doing its job.”

Dorin Popp, Bayer’s Technical Manager stated: “With preventative, curative and eradicant properties, Interface can be used at any stage of disease and at any time of the year offering Turf Managers complete flexibility.”

He continued: “Bayer’s mission is to help Greenkeepers to achieve better playability. This means controlling turf disease, managing turf stress and maintaining turf quality.”

Finally, Product Manager, Claire Matthewson commented: “Interface offers a new standard in turf protection and is an exciting addition to our turf fungicide portfolio. We anticipate that it will quickly become the mainstay fungicide in the turf professional’s armoury against turf disease.”

Two of the country’s top bunker construction companies have formed an alliance to ensure that golf clubs across the country will receive the best possible advice and service when it comes to developing bunkers on their golf courses.

Envirosports Ltd and Blinder Bunker Limiters have each developed unique bunker products which have been warmly embraced by golf clubs over the last two years and between them the two companies have solved many of the bunker problems that have bedevilled golf clubs during that time.

The two concepts are different. EnviroBunker is a bunker face and edge solution which is resistant to all forms of erosion while Blinder Bunkers provide a rubberised, flexible free draining liner which prevents contamination of sand. Both are developed from 100% recycled material, have a design life of 20+ years and together offer a completely maintenance free bunker solution.

EnviroBunker Blinder can be used jointly as seen at a recent collaborative project between the two companies at Royston Golf Club in Hertfordshire where the two products were used together to produce a fully sealed bunker solution.

There are also occasions when one or other will be the best solution to a club’s bunker issues.

“We know that our product is suitable for bunkers with faces over 45 degrees and that Blinder works best with faces that are under 45 degrees so we are more than happy to recommend Blinder if we believe that is the best option. Blinder also offers a base solution, we do not, and likewise we offer a finishing reverted edge solution which is unique to our product” said Rhidian Lewis, Envirosports Director.

“Once we’ve taken a look at the bunkers in question we will offer the best solution and should that be EnviroBunker we will be more than happy to recommend that option to the golf club,” said Murray Long, Blinder Director.
CourseTracker

A free and easy to use online system that helps golf courses manage themselves more sustainably and efficiently has been launched by The R&A.

CourseTracker was unveiled at BTME 2013 in Harrogate. It’s designed for golf course managers and club secretaries to record the income derived from the course and what is spent on its maintenance.

The secure system allows golf clubs to monitor their performance over time and identify strengths, weaknesses and areas where savings could be made in terms of energy and water, for example.

CourseTracker also enables golf clubs to anonymously benchmark their performance against that of other clubs of a similar size in their country. It produces accurate performance reports for the use of course managers and club secretaries and can be used to keep customers informed and to aid decision making.

The system has been extensively tested with course managers, club secretaries and industry bodies and their feedback has been used to develop and refine its range of functions. It has been endorsed by England Golf, the Golf Union of Ireland, the Scottish Golf Union and the Golfing Union of Wales.

Steve Isaac, Director – Golf Course Management at The R&A, said, “There is more pressure than ever on golf clubs to make the right decisions to manage golf courses sustainably, efficiently and cost effectively. CourseTracker can help them do that through recording, monitoring and reporting their activities and inputs. We know this is an area where many clubs struggle due to lack of time and resources.”

“CourseTracker is free, completely secure and can enable clubs to compare their performance on an anonymous basis with other clubs of a similar size and situation. The aim is to give clubs more information and understanding of their course maintenance activities to enable them to improve performance.”

Paul Reeling, Club Services Manager at England Golf which has supported CourseTracker, said, “CourseTracker is an excellent new resource for golf clubs which can really help them get a grip on their expenditure on course maintenance. It is so important to manage golf courses sustainably both to protect the environment and reduce costs. This is a quick, easy to use system which can deliver accurate and useful management information for golf clubs. We will certainly be recommending CourseTracker to courses we work with in England.”

CourseTracker can be accessed online at www.coursetracker.org. Golf clubs need only spend a few minutes registering before using the system. It is simple to use and there are full colour tutorials available for guidance.

JSM SWEEP N FILL BRUSHES COMPETITORS ASIDE

The latest version of the original and unique: Sweep N Fill brush – the SNF III – has built on the legacy of the original with enhancements to make it even more user friendly and convenient. These include a narrower transport width, higher & faster transport lift with more ground clearance and a fully enclosed drive mechanism which allows for adjustment without removal of the protective covers.

The ground driven brushes can be towed by a golf cart, bunker bike or any small utility vehicle. The brush action mimics a ‘pash-broom’ action – gently flicking the plant leaves upright while moving sand and topdressing into aeration holes and the crown of the plants.

Jim McKenzie MBE, Celtic Manor Resort said, “Having been told about the SNF by existing users we arranged a demonstration while visiting BTME last year. The demo immediately proved the point as to how effective this brush is. It has transformed a laborious task.’
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For further information call 01530 510060 or visit www.coursetracker.org.

GreenTek showcases TuffTek

GreenTek, the well-known mower attachment manufacturers, used BTME to showcase a wide range of security equipment from their TuffTek division. The True-Surface Select-A-Vibe rollers supplied by GreenTek are well known for their ease of use and their ability to create outstandingly smooth fast putting surfaces.

What not everyone is aware of, is that they are also uniquely effective for vibrating topdressing into the turf and down hollow coving holes. GreenTek therefore focused their 2013 BTME stand around a working demonstration display that shows how this is achieved.

Supaturf advert (130x90).indd   1
A generation devoted to turfgrass testing

Dr Andy Newell this year celebrates 25 years of unbroken work compiling independent test data for the TurfGrass Seed booklet. Jim Goodwin spoke to him

The STRI recognised that a better range of grass species was needed for golf and sport at large. “We started to look at breeding grasses for golf, and our first success was with Dawson Slender Creeping Red Fescue, bred at Bigley and eventually sold to a manufacturer. “We were also trying to find grasses from other sources, as well as developing some early commercial elements. Today, you couldn’t rightfully breed grasses for golf yourself and then test other manufacturers’ breeds. The commercial world back then wasn’t what it is now. Needless to say, it probably took us 25 years to produce a grass worth cultivating.”

When courses began to be built inland, course architects moved inland from their links environment, which worked well in some instances. But the necessity of a scientific focus to seed testing was accelerated by companies selling grasses and heightening claims for their performance without any independent trialling to back them up.

The STRI began testing more widely and invited growers to submit their grasses for trialling alongside other manufacturers. “In stark contrast, the perennial grasses differ little from the 1970s, largely unchanged. In contrast, the perennial species and red fescues are big business for breeders, so the turnover of new cultivars within these categories is frequent.”

The nature of this vitally important reference work has changed and evolved as much as the industry has in a quarter of a century. “But what does the future hold?”

“The quality of your turf has to be a long-term factor, so any differential in price should be thought of over a longer period, in which case the price difference becomes minimal.”

“Poa really needs some investment and for decent research to be done, the end game of which would be to understand the relationship between Poa and other grasses so users can exploit its weaknesses better,” he argues.

Richard Brown, amenity sales manager at British Seed Houses, said; “The BHBP Buyers guide is an invaluable guide to turf professionals as it records the results of independent and thorough trials which accurately reflect a cultivar’s performance. A variety that does well in these trials is taken seriously in the market place and gives greenkeepers added confidence. We have a reputation for quality and investment in developing cultivars and understand the real worth of the guide.”
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The STRI began testing more widely and invited growers to submit their grasses for trialling alongside other manufacturers. The first competitive trial took place in 1965 and five years later, the STRI and growers came together and decided that a publication should be assembled to collate all the results. The first booklet was launched in 1978 and has grown to become the industry bible.”

Today, “When I started the brochure in 1965, there was very little science behind the way turf was used prior to this but what they did know was that sea-washed turf – which links the sea and land – possessed finer characteristics, hence the preference for using this type of turf in a non-links setting grew.”

“When the STRI was formed in the 1920s, one of the core aims of the Institute was to create a scientific base for testing and trialling turf,” he explains. “There was very little science behind the way turf was used prior to this but what they did know was that sea-washed turf – which links the sea and land – possessed finer characteristics, hence the preference for using this type of turf in a non-links setting grew.”

“The quality of your turf has to be a long-term factor, so any differential in price should be thought of over a longer period, in which case the price difference becomes minimal. "If you use the booklet superbly, merely going by what tops the table, you won’t get any rubbish but if you’re an educated grower you can make some far more well-informed decisions based on the specifics of the course and the environment.”

“Poa annua is where we are today. "When I started the brochure in 1965, there was very little science behind the way turf was used prior to this but what they did know was that sea-washed turf – which links the sea and land – possessed finer characteristics, hence the preference for using this type of turf in a non-links setting grew.”

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“Poa annua and red fescues are the commercial growth from breeders. There used to be a purist attitude towards red fescues, for example, one or more will come to prominence depending on the weather. Nature will start to select the best cultivars for the environment and that’s where the art of greenkeeping comes in to play – working to the strengths of the desirable grasses and to the weaknesses of the undesirable.”

“The longevity of the booklet is due to the quality of the technology used. When I started the brochure in 1965, there was very little science behind the way turf was used prior to this but what they did know was that sea-washed turf – which links the sea and land – possessed finer characteristics, hence the preference for using this type of turf in a non-links setting grew.”

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Richard Brown, amenity sales manager at British Seed Houses, said: “The BHP0 Buyers guide is an invaluable guide to turf professionals as it records the results of independent and thorough trials which accurately reflect a cultivar’s performance. A variety that does well in these trials is taken seriously in the market place and gives greenkeepers added confidence. We have a reputation for quality and investment in developing cultivars and understand the real worth of the guide.”

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The sands of time

Laurence Pithie MG met up with Matthew Nutter, Course Manager at the East Berkshire Golf Club and a BIGGA Section Secretary, to find out more about the recently completed bunker renovation project.

Now celebrating its centenary, East Berkshire GC is largely tree lined, with housing and a main rail line to London around its perimeter. Although relatively short by today’s standards at just over 6,200 yards, playing the course requires accuracy with numerous ditches, bunkers and heather awaiting an errant shot. Most areas of the course are blessed with fine indigenous turf, overlying an acidic soil which although not sandy in nature, does provide reasonable natural drainage and sufficient growth.

In terms of layout, little has changed in a hundred years except for the inevitable growth of trees, loss of heather and the impact this has had on the character and playability of the course. Both shade and limited air movement are issues that constantly have to be addressed and achieving a balance between the needs of the turf and the wishes of the golfer can be a constant challenge at any club. Trees apart, turf conditions have remained relatively consistent on most playing areas of the course. However it was the 54 bunkers which were increasingly bearing the brunt of members’ concerns.

As turf conditions have generally improved at most clubs throughout the UK, it is bunkers that are often the one area of the course which fell below the standard expected. After initial consultation with the club, Howard Swan from Swan Golf Designs was appointed as Course Architect to make an assessment of the golf course and form a strategy to the membership, receiving full Board approval to complete the work on 11 bunkers over three holes with the remainder to be completed in a further two years.

The plan included the appointment of John Greasley as the external contractor to carry out the main renovation work, while all turfing and final sanding of the bunkers was to be carried out by the six greens staff. Work started in 2009 and the 11 bunkers were completed largely as planned for a total cost of just over £30,000. The basic objectives were to produce bunkers that were more in keeping with the natural character of the course, being better shaped and giving consistent playing standards throughout the year. They also had to be as maintenance friendly as possible in order to keep future costs to a minimum and that meant being well drained and free from wash-out and sand contamination.

After initial success and positive feedback from the members, full consent was given to complete the remaining 40 or so bunkers over the next two years. Completely remodelling 20 bunkers per year was no easy task and it meant that all other winter course work over those two years would be kept to a minimum. Member competitions in 2010 and 2011 would finish on 30 September, enabling work to commence in October when ground conditions were still favourable.

“We estimated the contract work would take three months with final turfing to be completed around six weeks later. This worked out at one bunker being completed every three days. Snow cover and very low temperatures throughout December and early January delayed the work for six weeks. However, work was finally completed in late March just before the start of the season. With over half the bunkers now completed and the membership pleased with the results, the third and final phase started in October 2011 and

about the author
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With continued improvements to the course, in terms of turf conditioning and presentation as well as project work on tees and paths, the bunkers were the one area of the course which fell below the standard expected. After initial consultation with the club, Howard Swan from Swan Golf Designs was appointed as Course Architect to make an assessment of the golf course and form a strategy for bunker improvement. Having received his in-depth course report and recommendations for all bunkers, the club then presented the plan to the membership, receiving full Board approval to complete the work on 11 bunkers over three phases. Work started in October 2011 and the 11 bunkers were completed largely as planned for a total cost of just over £30,000. The basic objectives were to produce bunkers that were more in keeping with the natural character of the course, being better shaped and giving consistent playing standards throughout the year. They also had to be as maintenance friendly as possible in order to keep future costs to a minimum and that meant being well drained and free from wash-out and sand contamination.

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Drainage and playability have been fully tested this year following record levels of rainfall and the work completed by Matthew and his team have served as an indication for other clubs as to what can be achieved.

This was an ambitious project to undertake but one that was well planned and completed to an excellent standard throughout. Along with fairway re-shaping to accommodate the renovated bunkers, the project has been an outstanding success and greatly appreciated by both members and guests.

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was completed on time by the end of February 2012. A much more favourable winter with low rainfall certainly helped to make life easier.*

All shaping and mound ing was carried out by the contractors with soil being retained on site. Fortunately most of the soil was used in-situ which meant very little had to be moved any great distance. As a result, any damage to the turf was restricted to small designated areas which were then re-turfed. Existing bunker drains were replaced with standard plastic perforated pipe and stone and connected to existing outlets, except for a few that either had to be replaced or had new laterals installed. This ensured each bunker would drain efficiently. The method used within the bunker was to shape the base with existing soil, sloping gently into the drain and to consolidate the entire area with a wacker plate. Fortunately the soil was of reasonable quality and free of stone which negated the use of any liner, saving time and money. A turf well formed the perimeter and gave each bunker a distinctive shape and defined edge.

The native soil was then replaced with standard plastic perforated pipe and stone and connected to existing outlets, except for a few that either had to be replaced or had new laterals installed. This ensured each bunker would drain efficiently. The method used within the bunker was to shape the base with existing soil, sloping gently into the drain and to consolidate the entire area with a wacker plate. Fortunately the soil was of reasonable quality and free of stone which negated the use of any liner, saving time and money. A turf well formed the perimeter and gave each bunker a distinctive shape and defined edge.

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Microdochium nivale is the universal plant pathogen of temperate turf. Wherever turf is sown, laid and managed, as a professional playing surface in temperate climates, then M. nivale is never far behind. M. nivale is the well-known and well-worn disease of grass stems and leaves popularly known in the UK as Fusarium Patch.

Younger greenkeepers may wonder why a disease caused by a fungus named M. nivale is called Fusarium Patch since Fusarium is a fungal genus in its own right with dozens of different species. The reason is that for many years this fungus and pathogen of turf grass plants was officially called Fusarium nivale.

Greenkeepers can blame mycologists (people who study fungi) to thank for this ‘neo-Orwellian name game’. They will have changed the name in accordance with some obscure characteristic (like ‘bumps’ on the microscopic spores) which placed the fungus closer to the Microdochium genus than the Fusarium genus. In fact the change from F. nivale to M. nivale was simply the last of many name changes ‘ordered’ by mycologists since the fungus was discovered and described in 1825 as Lannosa nivalis.

**Microdochium in a maritime climate**

M. nivale performs best and leaves turf looking its worst in maritime countries with a classic mild, moist climate maintained by the benign influences of the ‘surrounding’ ocean and its associated currents and winds. For the UK and the Republic of Ireland, where turf damage caused by M. nivale is as bad as anywhere in the world, the environmental influences on which this fungus relies are The North Atlantic Drift (Gulf Stream)

and predominant south-westerly (Prevailing) moisture-laden winds.

This geo-climatic preference closely matches the most favoured environmental conditions documented for M. nivale – namely cool to mild periods (0°C to 15°C), with leaf wetness periods greater than 10 hours a day for several days on heavily thatched and slow growing turf.

However, M. nivale as a pathogen of turf is a lot more versatile than this. The fungus is capable of growth even at temperatures between 21°C to 25°C and as low as -6°C. This means the disease can be a significant problem on turf in most temperate climates, e.g. continental type climates with very cold winters but hot dry summers (central Europe and large parts of North America) and Mediterranean type climates (large parts of Australia and New Zealand) with their classic hot dry summers and mild wet winters.

M. nivale will clearly not be a problem all year round in these climates with their winter and summer extremes, but most will have at least one season or time of the year when weather and turf condition is conducive to high pathogen activity, manifested and expressed as Fusarium patch.

For instance, M. nivale is essentially a disease of Spring and Fall (Autumn) turf in many parts of Canada and the so called ‘winter grasses’ (temperate grasses), used to sustain and maintain turf during late autumn, winter and spring in the Adelaide area of South Australia with its classic Mediterranean type climate.

More specifically and separately, the capacity for activity at sub-zero temperatures allows M. nivale to cause a completely different disease under snow cover and called ‘Pink Snow Mould’.

**The Canadian Conundrum**

Situation surrounding M. nivale on professional turf in North America, and particularly in comparison