UK's 'brain drain' to Europe said serious

Vera Putney

United Kingdom groundsmen and greenkeeper associations are aware of a "brain drain" to Europe because of increased golf interest there, but think the flow of expertise is of no great concern at the moment. While some may try to discourage exodus, many key figures in these specialized fields view the trend as more beneficial long run than harmful. The bottom line may be bigger paychecks and long-distance recognition.

What greenkeepers overseas need is a Walter Hagen, observed William H. Bengenfield, former national director of the United States Golf Association's Green Section.

The American golf professional took Europe by storm in the Roaring Twenties. He hobnobbed with kings and queens, startled the British and rocketed the pros from back door to celebrity status. The Haig's irreverent approach to society's strata set up immediate acceptance of his peers' status role.

Greenkeepers in the British Isles too long have been content to stay in the background despite their prominent part in the day-to-day success of course operations. They've lacked the dashing, glamorous image and a leading spokesman.

Perhaps that mantle can't be assumed, but they can speak fairly forcefully by taking their talents to the highest bidder. Club members, conceded to be astute businessmen, understand that economic message.

As it stands now, a rather generous annual salary for a highly regarded greenkeeper is in the neighborhood of $25,000, Bengenfield ventured.

Derek Walder, secretary for the Institute of Groundsmanship, based in Milton Keynes, continued on page 19

Send data from independent water studies at courses

To add substance and bulk to the limited amount of research data on turf chemical runoff, Golf Course News is asking superintendents nationwide to let us know if a ground water or surface water study of any kind has been or is being done at their course.

"The Cape Cod Study was a good one, but it was only one study. There is a critical need for data on the impacts of turf chemicals on our water environment," said Stuart Cohen of Environmental & Turf Services, Inc., who directed the Cape Cod Study.

Cohen said he has discovered several instances of isolated, limited golf course runoff or leaching studies. Those were usually conducted as a result of state or local requirements for special circumstances, such as gaining a zoning permit.

"When the results of studies are favorable, there is no press release from the state agency," said Cohen. "Since most studies have been held and there has not been a media cry of 'dangers of golf courses,' my guess is that these studies are favorable to the industry."

Superintendents are asked simply to write, listing:

- a contact name and phone number;
- the pesticides being monitored;
- whether it is a surface or ground water study;
- if monitoring wells were installed;
- if the study was a condition of a permit; and
- if a final report was issued.

Cohen, who will follow up on this initial information, has agreed to compile the results and summarize them in an upcoming issue of Golf Course News.

Knowing superintendents may be too busy to expand on the study, Cohen asked that they at least identify a contact person and the time period during which the study was done.

"Most studies may have just a handful of data," he said, "but taken in total, it could provide the whole picture of the multi-year impact of golf courses on the environment."

People are asked to send the information to Cohen at Environmental & Turf Services, Inc., 11141 Georgia Ave., Suite 208, Wheaton, Md. 20020.