USGA unveils research progress

New bentgrasses on horizon due to USGA-funded turfgrass breeding

Two new heat-tolerant creeping bentgrasses are expected to be released this year, and major strides have been made in selecting new seed varieties. The new varieties, BNI-131 and BNI-133, are expected to be released within the next year, according to the USGA Green Section.

Environmental projects most in initial phases of preparation

Definitive information from the 21 USGA-sponsored three-year environmental research projects that began in 1991 will not be available for the most part, until the end of the study, late 1993 or early 1994, according to the United States Golf Association.

USGA Green Section National Director Jim Snow, who last year reported on the 10-year research project, said the Green Section Advisory Committee will meet in mid-October to discuss the results of the research.

"It should also be pointed out that an ambitious quality assurance/quality control program was established for all of the pesticide and nutrient fate studies, ensuring data that can be validated under the closest scrutiny," Snow said.

The USGA donated $2.4 million to the projects to investigate the effects of golf courses on the environment. Its Executive Committee determined to focus research on:

- the fate of pesticides and fertilizers applied to golf courses;
- development of alternatives to using chemical pesticides to control certain pests; and
- impacts and benefits of golf courses on

"There was some discussion at the Advisory Committee meeting, but not much disagreement. European countries have some different ideas and different materials available, so you may want to modify some things. But I'd be disappointed if the recommendations changed greatly."

Among Hummel's other suggestions are:

- Changing the gravel layer from a uniform depth of 4 inches to one that is a minimum of 4 inches, but varies with the contour of the green.
- Allowing the top 12-inch amended soil layer to contain more than 2 millimeters in diameter and 10 percent more than 0.15 millimeter. "That tightens things up a bit. More course material is allowed in the current specs, Hummel said.

On the finer end, the new recommendations would have 80 percent of the top-layer sand falling between 0.15 and 1 millimeter, with a maximum of 10 percent between 0.25 and 1 millimeter. That leaves 10 percent that can be less than 0.15 millimeter.

"It would allow more fine sands than the current specs, but it's a way to allow the use of more local materials."

- Introducing specifications on soil selection and organic matter in the top layer.
- The final amended soil mix could have up to 3 percent clay and 5 percent silt. Organic matter in the top layer should contain at least 2 percent in the top 6 inches of the sand layer and 1 percent in the lower 6 inches, Hummel added.

"Little the USGA does, or is likely to do, will have more effect on the future of golf than funding and monitoring turf research," Snow said.

David Fay

USGA executive director