Nationwide test greens to yield results this year

By MARK LESLIE

FAR HILLS, N.J. — Inspired by the old pie greens of the 1930s and '40s, three national organizations expect to plant test putting greens at 16 golf courses and have initial data readings by the end of the year.

"We're excited by this," said Jim Snow, national director of the U.S. Golf Association (USGA) Green Section, which is sponsoring the project along with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSSA) and National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP). "One of the things superintendents have wanted is data from variety trials that was gathered under golf course conditions. For whatever reasons, even if they are cut daily, most sites are not maintained that way. They don't get the traffic you get on a green.

"There have been some prominent grasses over the years that looked great in tests but failed miserably under field conditions." With $15,000 in funding each, the participating golf courses will build practice greens, which will be used as test plots for bentgrasses or Bermudagrasses. As of mid-May, 17 bets and 12 Bermudas were expected to be included, although that number will change.

GOLEMBIEWSKI GETS MUSSER AWARD

The Musser International Turfgrass Foundation has named Ohio State University graduate student Robert C. Golembiewski the recipient of its 1997 Award of Excellence, which includes an $8,500 scholarship toward Golembiewski's doctoral studies. A graduate of Michigan State, with a master's degree in botany and plant pathology, he is working on a thesis titled "Characterization of creeping bentgrass using randomly amplified polymorphic DNA (RAPD) markers."

MSU GETS CRUMB RUBBER PATENT

DENVER, Colo. — The US Patent Office on May 1 issued a major patent to Michigan State University for using crumb rubber as a turf top dressing.

Matrix Properties Join Audubon

JAMESBURG, N.J. — Forsgate Country Club and its sister clubs Commonwealth National Golf Club of Horsham, Pa., and Ashbourne Country Club of Cheltenham, Pa., have joined the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System (ACSS). Matrix-Stafford Hospitality, a management and consulting group based in Cranbury, manages all three clubs. The program will be coordinated by superintendents Bob Ribbans at Forsgate, Larry Schlippert at Commonwealth and Mark Yates at Ashbourne.

Nicklaus cites Scott Lewis

LAS VEGAS — Scott Lewis, superintendent of golf course maintenance here at SouthShore Golf Club at Lake Las Vegas Resort, has been named the Nicklaus Superintendent of the Year. Lewis was selected from superintendents tending to 138 Nicklaus-designed courses, as well as those managed by the Nicklaus golf course maintenance company, Golf Turf. "The honor says a lot about Scott's talent and ability. It is nice to see him recognized by his peers. It also speaks volumes about the talents of his first-class staff," said Harry Turner, vice president of operations at Lake Las Vegas Resort.
Texas Turfgrass Association Executive Director Shirley Duble of College Station. "We hope we provide the seed money that generates more.”

Turfgrass in Texas is a $4.13 billion industry, covering about 3.5 million acres, according to the association. Single-family households, the largest sector in terms of annual expenditures, spend almost $2.6 billion a year on lawn care and maintenance.

Research currently includes breeding, plant pathology, urban entomology, soil science, turfgrass physiology and management, weed control and development of other leading-edge programs and technologies, according to Dr. Richard White, turfgrass researcher for the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.

The endowment also may fund scholarships and internships for student enrichment and may assist the Extension Service in the development of timely technology transfer programs for all segments of the industry.

"The economic study by Texas A&M agricultural economists pointed to the size of the industry in Texas, and we don't think people were aware of how large it is," Duble said. "We hope that with more research and education people will learn how to plant the best types of grasses, how to take care of them and how to use fewer pesticides."