Scientists: Threats of drought loom in future

**BY GARY BURCHFIELD**

OOLUMBA, Mo. — Golf course superintendents not prepared for drought may want to institute a long-range management plan that includes the possibility of extended dry weather.

Climate models developed by researchers at the University of Missouri, Columbia, indicate a good probability of extremely dry conditions in the next four or five years, especially in the country’s mid-section.


Across South Carolina, 1999 rainfall was 16 to 20 inches below normal. Farmers in several areas have suffered major crop losses. Lawns and golf courses have seen their share of stress in several regions. Now, forecasters are predicting a high probability of more dry weather ahead.

The Missouri scientists studied precipitation from 1971 through 2000 and, within the normal variability of climate variables, forecast a trend toward a higher probability of dry conditions.

Dr. Michael Kenna said: “Our commitment to scientific research, to the point where it has ‘maxed out’ its manpower resources. The USGA Green Section Research Committee has dented out another $848,763 for 17 new turfgrass and environmental research projects. Combined with some 12 other continuing projects, the donations total $1,998,241 in 2000.”

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USGA’s new financing eyes owls to turfgrasses

**BY MARK LESLIE**

FAR HILLS, N.J. — The United States Golf Association (USGA) has continued its 17-year-old financial commitment to scientific research, to the point where it has “maxed out” its manpower resources.

The USGA Green Section Research Committee has dented out another $848,763 for 17 new turfgrass and environmental research projects. Combined with some 12 other continuing projects, the donations total $1,998,241 in 2000.

In the meantime, Director of Research Dr. Michael Kenna said: “Our commitment to research is not a problem. If this research committee wanted to go after more funding, we could probably get it. But I personally have reached a point where we can’t add any projects.”


Drought-proofing a golf course

As the old saying goes, “You can’t control the weather. But you can be prepared for the possibilities.”

Here are some tips to counteract drought effects, or at least lessen their impact on a golf course.

• Long-range, consider finding an effluent water source for irrigation. According to Roch Gausson, Extension turfgrass specialist at the University of Nebraska, using wastewater to irrigate a golf course usually means the course will not have a point where we can’t add any projects.

The mostly highly funded new projects each obtained approximately $575,000. They are:

• Development of gray leaf spot-resistant perennial ryegrass through breeding and biotechnological approaches, by Mark Faman at the University of Kentucky.

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Pellrene: Canada’s best likes the old, loves the new

**BY PETER BLAIS**

VANCouver, British Columbia, Canada — He’s built new courses that went on to host Canadian championships. He’s refurbished classics that legends A.W. Tillinghast and Stanley Thompson would still be proud to call their own.

Whether it be ringing in the new or restoring the old, Canadian Superintendent of the Year Dennis Pellrene (as recognized by the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association) is the man for the job.

“New construction is always exciting because there are so many things that come up that you have to solve,” Pellrene said. “But being involved with an old course is exciting, too.”

Pellrene started his career in 1960 on a nine-hole, oilseed greens course in Camrose, Alberta. He converted the greens to turfgrass and was named greenkeeper during his four-year tenure.

He moved east with stops at St. Catharines Golf & Country Club and Erie Downs Golf Club in Fort Erie, Ontario, before Reg Acorn, general manager at Toronto’s Glen Abbey Golf Club, approached him about building the Jack Nicklaus-designed course that eventually became the home of the Canadian Open. Glen Abbey opened in 1976 and held the first of four Opens under Pellrene’s watch in 1977.

The two people Pellrene said had the greatest effect on his professional development entered his life during his Glen Abbey years — Ed Etchells and Jack Eegens.

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