Superintendents reshape state water restrictions

By ANDREW OVERBECK
HARRISBURG, Pa. — Following the drought of 1999 when sudden water restrictions forced golf courses in parts of Pennsylvania and New Jersey to cut irrigation use by as much as 90 percent, superintendents in both states teamed up with other green industry partners to retool drought emergency rules. Working closely with each state’s department of environmental protection, the industry has achieved or is close to achieving new water restrictions that will not negatively impact golf courses. The three years of hard work is already paying off, as 26 counties in Pennsylvania and all of New Jersey have declared drought emergencies.

SUCCESS IN PENNSYLVANIA

According to superintendent Bill Wall here at Dauphin Highlands Golf Club, the vague restrictions that the Pennsylvania DEP put forth in the summer of 1999 simply created confusion. “The drought regulations opened the door to the people who were going to abuse them or ignore them altogether,” said Wall. “Some guys got screwed for cutting back because their courses went brown while others who ignored it had green turf.”

Spurred on by the late Dave Raffety who was the superintendent at Chambersburg Country Club, Wall put together a group of superintendents from across the state and the DEP held meetings to discuss flaws in the regulations.

“They didn’t have any golf course experts,” Wall said. “This stuff is a different language to that.”

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Moss hits Colorado hard, more research needed

By KEVIN ROSS, CGCS
DENVER — A recent symposium here brought superintendents from across Colorado together to discuss the sudden invasion of moss on greens. The problem is clearly widespread, as more than 140 superintendents attended the meeting to learn more about how to combat the rapidly spreading bryophyte. There are still, however, more questions than answers.

The symposium featured Dr. Tony Koski from Colorado State University; Matt Nelson from the United States Golf Association’s Green Section; Matt Giese from Syngenta; and John Wynne from Bio-Safe Systems. Rusty Oetker from Soil Solutions also held a roundtable discussion. The group presented information about the spread of moss, various research efforts, and possible control options.

According to Dr. Koski, controlling moss is difficult for three central reasons. “Moss is a very resilient and tough plant and we don’t really know that much about it because there has been little hardcore research done,” said Koski. “It is also very difficult to selectively eradicate.”

In Colorado, the moss plant on greens has been identified as Silvery Thread moss or B. argentea.

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Flowtronex study quantifies water quality concerns

DALLAS — Pump station manufacturer Flowtronex recently conducted a survey of 603 randomly selected golf course superintendents to determine their attitudes toward and awareness of water quality issues and solutions. The study purposely targeted areas of the United States known for having high pH, carbonates and bicarbonates, excessive algae growth, etc. The study was overseen by Flowtronex’s director of marketing Tom Levy. The following results were collected:

• Overall, 63.3 percent use a lake or pond for irrigation water on their course and the average number of pump stations used by a facility is 2.2 (though the majority, 59 percent, have one only).
• Eighty-eight percent of all respondents had some level of familiarity with liquid fertilizers.
• Seventy-two percent use both liquid and granular fertilizers on their courses. Although most don’t feel strongly that either type is definitely better than the other, superintendents with an opinion prefer liquid fertilizers to granular (29.7 percent to 19.3 percent, respectively).

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Risk management plan can prevent accidents, litigation

By TED HORTON, CGCS
Golf can be a dangerous sport and the potential for danger from negligent design and maintenance exists on many courses. Golf course mishaps, environmental concerns, slips and falls throughout the property, maintenance equipment accidents and exposure to weather can all result in serious injury to golfers, guests and employees.

Considering our litigious society and the fact that insurance rates have escalated since Sept. 11, it has become even more important to implement a sound risk management program to help prevent injuries and property damage, as well as to protect against liability.

Coursess should first inventory areas of potential liability. These include four basic areas: premises, operations, vehicles and natural causes. By no means is the following list all-encompassing. Examine your own operations and list every possibility for exposure to accident or injury and review the checklist quarterly.

PREMISES

Risks are abundant throughout a golf course property both on and off the course.

• Examine course design for defects. Are balls entering private properties, roads or adjacent holes? Are there blind tee shots, dangerous doglegs or other places of concern? Are walking areas adjacent to tees safe? Remember that 85 percent...