

National Turfgrass Research Initiative

It is impossible to say enough good things about turfgrass. It cools the environment, cleanses the air, protects soil from erosion, filters water, reduces sports injuries, contributes to the value of residential and commercial properties and supports industries that include golf, lawn care, seed and sod production, parks, athletics and more.

More than 50 million acres in the U.S. are covered by turfgrass – a \$40 billion annual business that is growing rapidly. Meeting future needs will require research to improve turfgrasses and the way they are managed. Surprisingly, essentially no federal support has been directed for turfgrass research, even though it is recognized as a segment of U.S. agriculture.

New turfgrass research would benefit the air, water, soils, fish, wildlife and our lifestyle needs. An effort is underway to win \$5.4 million in federal funding in Fiscal Year 2005/06 to fund 12 turfgrass research positions. This is the first phase of a \$32.4 million request for dedicated turfgrass research by the National Turfgrass Research Initiative (NTRI). Created as a cooperative effort of the turfgrass industry and USDA Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS), NTRI has identified six areas in which turfgrass research is needed. With federal funding, USDA-ARS will coordinate research by government agencies, universities and private organizations. The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP), the United States Golf Association, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, the Turfgrass Producers International, the Professional Lawn Care Association of America and the Irrigation Association all support NTRI.

Individuals may contact their federal legislators to voice support for NTRI's funding request. For more information, contact Kevin Morris, executive director of NTEP at kmorris@ntep.org, or visit www.turfinitiative.org or www.turfresearch.org.

>> Research to improve water management strategies and practices

The goal is to increase the understanding of turfgrass water use, improve management of it, and evaluate the use of non-potable water sources on turfgrass and the environment.

Long-term funding requested: \$5.85 million

>> Research to collect, enhance and preserve turfgrass germplasm

Goal: Collect, evaluate and preserve valuable turfgrass germplasm to increase the understanding of turfgrass biology and genetic systems for stress tolerance, and improve turfgrass stress tolerance through genetic improvement.

Long-term funding requested: \$5.4 million

>> Research to improve pest management practices

Increase understanding of the life cycle and biology of fungal, insect, weed and vertebrate pests. Refine the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and investigate biological control methods.

Long-term funding requested: \$5.4 million

>> Research to understand and improve the role of turfgrass in the environment

Study and define the environmental impact of turfgrass and turfgrass management techniques, including the role of turf systems at the watershed and ecosystem level. Evaluate and develop management strategies and technologies to enhance the environmental quality of turfgrass systems.

Long-term funding requested: \$6.3 million

>> Research to enhance soil and soil management practices

Overcome soil limitations to turf production, establishment and use. Investigate the potential of using agricultural and industrial by-products for turf applications.

Long-term funding requested: \$4.5 million

>> Research to develop integrated turf management systems

Develop economic-based integrated turf management tools to enhance environmental quality. Develop decision tools for integrated turf management practices.

Long-term funding requested: \$4.95 million

