

TURFGRASS RESEARCH IN JEOPARDY

IF THE DIE IS CAST

The Nixon Administration's proposed budget for the 1974 fiscal year deals a heavy blow to funding for turfgrass research.

Federal agricultural officials are asking for a 20 per cent reduction in research funds primarily from the Hatch Act appropriations and two related bills that were established to support research through state agricultural experiment stations, which handle most turfgrass research.

If this proposed 20 per cent reduction is passed by Congress, it will mean a 5 per cent reduction in state agricultural experiment station research budgets, which are administered by state universities in 50 states.

A BRIEF HISTORY

University staff, responsible for doling out the funds contributed jointly (but not necessarily equally) by the state and Federal governments to support agricultural research, has historically relegated turfgrass research to a lower priority than commodity (food, feed and fiber) research. This has been partly due to a filtering down of Federal and state priorities on agricultural re-

Members of the turf industry are fearful over the proposed reduction in Federal funds for agricultural research, and with justification. The cutback can have far-reaching effects on the total turfgrass industry

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search to the universities.

The upshot has been that turfgrass research has had to rely heavily on extramural grants from state and regional turfgrass foundations, the USGA Green Section, O.J. Noer Research Foundation, the GCSAA, private industry and similar sources of sustenance. But these sources have not been sufficient to carry turfgrass research

beyond the rudimentary stage, compared to other areas of applied plant science.

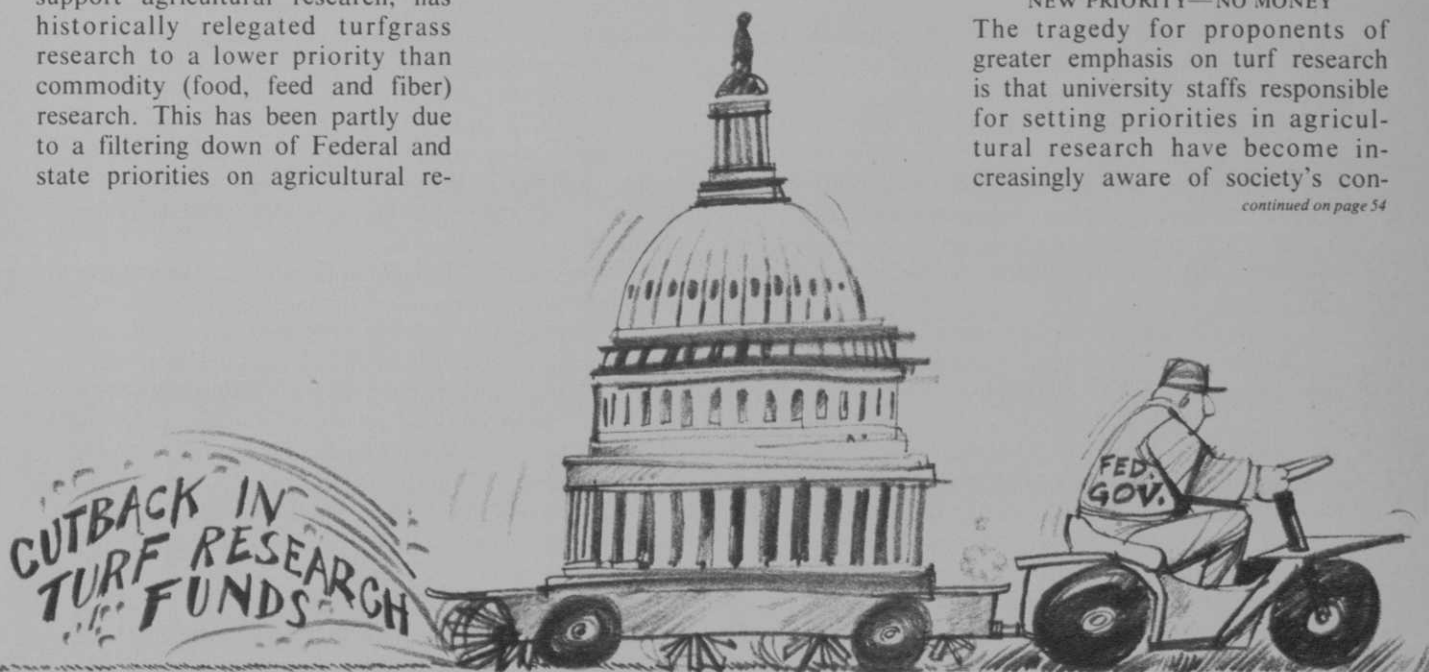
WHAT FUTURE?

The fact that many state agricultural administrators tend to concur with Federal leaders on the low priority of turfgrass research creates the possibility that state budget reductions in funds to support university agricultural experiment stations may vary, with some schools suffering more than 12 per cent cuts in available funds. (It should be noted here that most turf research in the form of new cultural practices, grass varieties and chemical materials has been done at state agricultural experiment stations rather than at the Federal level, and yet the Federal budget for agricultural research was not reduced. The Federal government employs two turf researchers compared to at least 50 at the state level.)

NEW PRIORITY—NO MONEY

The tragedy for proponents of greater emphasis on turf research is that university staffs responsible for setting priorities in agricultural research have become increasingly aware of society's con-

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ing the time of day when the temperature would otherwise be at its maximum and is quite beneficial. Excess water supplied during syringing, however, is not advantageous and represents an uneconomical use of employee time.

RESEARCH CRUCIAL

Managing turfgrasses in the transition zone is a serious, demanding, but rewarding business, and those involved should be commended for their fortitude in tackling the task. Once those of us in research and teaching can catch up with the demands for information made upon us by those in the field, quality of turfgrass areas will increase even more than in the past. The gap between where we are in research and where we should be is colossal, but it is narrowing. Financial assistance for research and graduate students from sources supported by turf managers is critical if the gap is to be further narrowed. Much of the work that has been done was the result of assistance from organizations supported by turf managers. Those of us in turfgrass research acknowledge your efforts and hope that they continue. □

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cern for environmental quality and the vital ecological role played by turf in the areas of soil erosion control, dust control, heat dissipation, noise abatement and control of visual pollution. They have ceased to discount the contribution of turf to over-all societal health by providing recreational surfaces and ornamental plant covers that surround most individuals in their daily activities at home, at work and at play.

Yet just when their priorities are beginning to reflect the importance of turf research (as evidenced by a U.S. Department of Agriculture study showing that universities were increasing four-fold their staffs in turf research), Congress is asked to cut the funds that would support proposed turf research positions, the result of which will be an overburdening of an insufficient turf research staff and an inevitable decrease in productivity.

Added to this is a continuing inflationary rise of 6 to 7 per cent per year in research costs, which, when combined with the proposed budget reduction, would amount to a 12 per cent bite into available funds for agricultural research on the state level.

The proposed cut is now before Congress for action. It may be a year before the final outcome is known, but unfortunately, experiment stations, through their respective university administrations, must initiate these cuts in anticipation of the actual event because it will be retroactive to July 1, 1973.

Golf turf, as a key segment of the over-all turfgrass industry, will be significantly affected if these cuts are enacted by Congress. Superintendents would increasingly have to rely on regional door-to-door salesmen for information, which could affect their jobs, because of insufficient support for important research centers to test and evaluate turf chemicals.

GOLFDOM readers who wish to express their concern regarding this issue should write their congressmen, and it is especially important to contact those congressmen who are members of the House and Senate Appropriations and Agricultural Committees. □

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ciana Club at Naples. The labor situation was beating him as it has many other superintendents in Florida and elsewhere. When a man could be trained for the job often he wasn't dependable. In desperation a year ago Grant hired and trained young women. He now has 30 on his labor crew and is looking for more.

Grant's experience shows that they can be trained to carefully operate the expensive and sophisticated equipment and use to utmost advantage the labor-saving hydraulic features.

Training of women in the careful use of the new equipment is a field in which equipment manufacturers too are very much interested. Adjustment, repairs and efficient use of the newer equipment are causing headaches to superintendents, dealers and manufacturers. The trouble is not in the equipment, but in difficulty of getting intelligent operators. Some equipment dealers believe a new educational program for course workers will be necessary. Maybe the carefulness that Grant has observed in women operating machines at Innisbrook will be part of the answer.

"Uncle Joe" Friendman's 87th birthday was celebrated April 15 at New York. Uncle Joe of the Softouch Company has been selling professionals golf hosiery and other knitted items for a long time. He was one of the liveliest salesmen at the PGA, and ante-dated the USGA by eight years.

Robert C. Rosenthal now general manager at Knollwood Club, Lake Forest, Ill. He was at St. Charles (Ill.) for the previous seven years . . . Stanley Horvatin, after 20 years as manager, Illinois Athletic Club, Chicago, moves to Onwentsia Club, Lake Forest, Ill., as general manager, succeeding Joseph J. Stephens who retired.

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