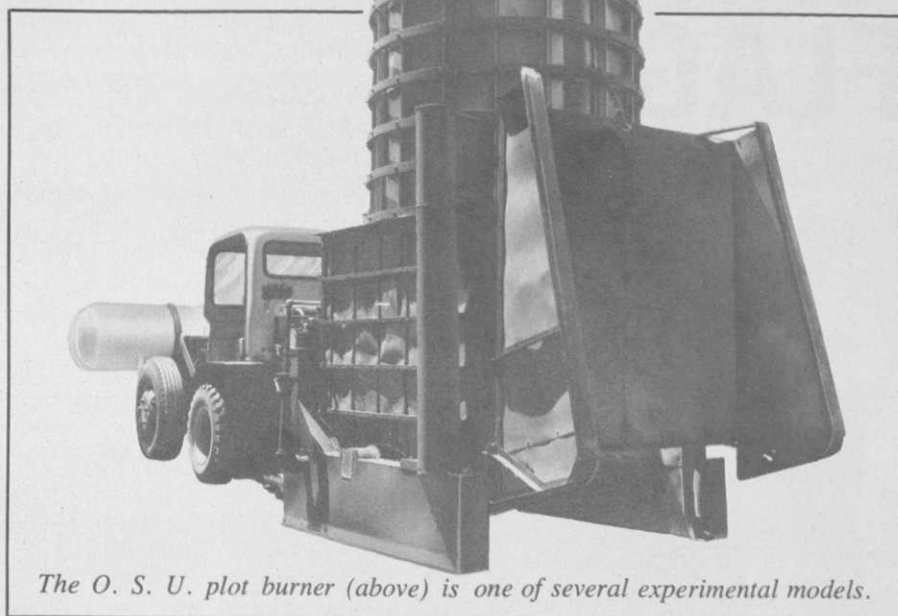


# SEED SUPPLIES: WHAT'S AHEAD?

Seed growers fear shortages of fuel, fertilizer and petroleum-based chemicals will limit future expansion and present yields of seed production

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*The O. S. U. plot burner (above) is one of several experimental models.*

**T**here is no doubt that the energy crisis will affect the production of grass seed in 1974, here in the heart of the grass seed growing region of the United States.

Oregon produces annually some 280,000 acres of grass seed; two-thirds of that production is turf seed; two-thirds of that production is turf seed. The majority of the turf seed is produced in western Oregon's Willamette Valley, although it shares bluegrass production with eastern Washington and fine fescue and bluegrass production with eastern Oregon.

An opinion sampling of growers and seed dealers in this area of the country indicates there is at the least a problem in the production of grass seed and at worst a continued shortage. The dry weather of last summer throughout the grass seed production area reduced

carryover of most varieties far below previous years. The unanswerable question of 1974 and beyond is whether or not fuel and fertilizer will be available to expand production or to maintain yields on present crops.

Grower Jesse Owre of Hubbard, Ore., expresses this ambiguity: "My supplier of both fertilizer and fuel has indicated we will get both, but he isn't sure of the quantity. Frankly, they are nervous about the availability of both fuel and fertilizer for this year's crop." Owre believes the price of wheat will also have an effect on the new plantings of grass seed. Present wheat prices would indicate a \$400 per acre yield for western Oregon, he says. The price of most turf varieties would have to be increased to equal this profit factor, he believes.

John Wise, Woodburn grower,

planted 160 acres of turfgrass last fall, but he hasn't received assurance that fertilizer will be available for the extra acres. His supplier thinks growers will get about 85 per cent of the previous year's fertilizer supply.

Carl Jensen, Silverton, Ore., seed grower is concerned about the availability of petroleum-based chemicals, such as 2, 4-D and others used in the production of grass seed. Jensen said this is another problem growers may have to face.

E. R. Townsend of Whitney-Dickinson Seeds, Inc., Buffalo, N. Y., handles several popular private varieties of grass seed. He thinks grass seed will be available to commercial users, such as golf courses. Townsend handles both Galaxie bluegrass and Manhattan perennial ryegrass and believes both varieties will be in ample supply, but suggests that superintendents planning to plant this spring or summer get their orders firmed up. Seaside bentgrass, he thinks, will be in short supply and priced higher this year. Most grass seeds will have moderate price increases for this year.

Buck Melton, president of Tee-2-Green Corp., marketers of Penncross bentgrass, said there is a short supply of Penncross bentgrass, but the price will not be increased this spring. "We are making every effort to see that the available supply is equitably spread on the market and we will hold the price on the 1973 crop at present levels," Melton said.

## WHAT PRICE FIELD BURNING?

Beginning with the 1975 crop year, western Oregon growers will be faced with a crisis of their own. An Oregon law, expected to go into effect in January, will put an end to field burning. Growers feel that most grass seed fields must be burned, if high quality seed production is to be maintained. They are contributing one dollar per acre toward a research fund aimed at the invention of a field incinerator that can burn fields while keeping emissions within the limits set by the Department of Environmental Quality. So far, experimental models have been unsuccessful. With only one year left for experimentation, most growers think there is little hope for success before the 1975 deadline. They also feel that the state legislature will extend the open field burning deadline

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cial charges was down by 8.7 per cent. During the last 20 years, country clubs, on a per member basis (all classes), have had an increase of 99 per cent in total revenue and dues, which was insufficient to offset the effects of a rise of 113 per cent in total operating costs and expenses. Therefore, in the period under review, the balance available for debt service, capital improvements and other financial charges was lower by 43 per cent than it was 20 years ago.

The group of 100 country clubs retained 4.4 per cent of its current year's total sales and income (exclusive of dues) for application against capital charges. Food and beverage departmental net income equaled 3.2 per cent of food and beverage sales. Net operating costs per country club regular member averaged \$816 in the current year.

There was an increase of .2 of 1 per cent over a year ago in the total membership of the country club sample and a rise of 5.2 per cent in the average annual dues rate per regular member, which was \$876 in 1973.

Payroll and related costs absorbed 88.0 per cent of the current sales and income (exclusive of dues) of the 100 country clubs.

The average expenditure per country club member (all classes) in the current year was \$883, exclusive of dues. Of that amount, \$445 was for food, \$198 for beverages, \$123 for sports activities and \$117 for all other charges.

Golf course maintenance costs for 100 clubs with a total of 2,151 holes were 4.9 per cent greater than a year ago, and net golf expenses showed an over-all advance of 7.8 per cent. Since 1954, course maintenance costs for the 100 country clubs (adjusted to reflect the trend disclosed by the latest sample) have advanced at an annual rate of 8.6 per cent.

### MGA OUTLINES INCREASING ROLE IN "COMMUNITY SERVICES"

NEW YORK—The Metropolitan Golf Assn. officials voiced what they hope to be a new trend toward "better service to the community" at their annual meeting held here this winter.

Some of the organization's objectives will be to see that course conditions are improved, insurance rates possibly reduced, golf courses uniformly measured for par and efforts made to diminish the effects of the fuel

shortage.

Edward Sulzberger, chairman of the steering committee, said that in World War II, horses and wagons brought members to his Quaker Ridge Club at Scarsdale from the Larchmont railroad station to play golf. Sulzberger did not anticipate such drastic measures now, but he warned that car pools might become necessary.

One of the speakers at the meeting, P. J. Boatright, executive director of the United States Golf Assn., assured everyone at the meeting that there would be no rule changes for golf in 1974 and possibly for 1975. The USGA and the Royal & Ancient of St. Andrews, Scotland, are the co-makers of the rules of the game.

### WM. NORTON TO SELL MAJORITY INTEREST IN TORO FRANCHISE

PHOENIX, ARIZ.—William S. Norton, president of the Norton Corp., franchised distributor for Toro power mowers, irrigation systems and related turf maintenance equipment in Arizona and Nevada's Clark County, has announced his agreement to sell controlling interest in his company to Roy W. Simpson, director of distributor relations for The Toro Company. Terms of the sale, which became effective January 2, were not disclosed.

Simpson plans to leave his present post in Minneapolis and take over as president and chief executive officer to The Norton Corp. here. He has been on the Norton board of directors for the past two years.

In 1972, he was named Mr. Toro, the highest honor that the Toro Company can bestow on any of its 66 United States distributors.

### RYAN AWARDS PRESENTED AT TURFGRASS CONFERENCE

LOS ANGELES—Watson Distributing Company, Inc., of Houston, has been named the 1973 Outstanding Dealer for Ryan turf equipment.

John R. Watson, president of Watson, accepted the award from Vern Worrel, Ryan's general manager, at the Busch Gardens here during the run of 45th Annual Golf Course Superintendents Assn. of America turfgrass conference, held in Anaheim in February. Ryan hosted more than 50 dealers throughout the nation at the Busch Gardens.

rather than see a drastic and crippling reduction in the state's \$40 million a year grass seed industry.

Fields are burned after harvest to destroy weed seeds and diseases that would quickly reduce yields in most of the grass seed production. If open field burning is terminated, the addition of this problem to the present energy and fertilizer crisis would precipitate a tremendous seed shortage, resulting in even higher seed prices.

Joe Jacobs, manager of Normac, Inc., Tangent, Ore., told ryegrass growers at a meeting in Albany, Ore., that both growers and seed dealers would like to see a reasonable balance in supply and demand if nature would just cooperate. He said that the price of annual and perennial ryegrass is high compared to past years, but it is also the first time in recent years that growers have made a reasonable profit. He didn't feel that high prices were restricting the sale of ryegrass, because alternative seeds for overseeding were also high. He looked for little carryover of the 1973 ryegrass crop. The 1974 crop predictions must bow to the weather and the availability of fertilizers and fuel for validation, he said. He anticipates continuing higher prices for most grass seeds, if acreage is kept at the present level.

H. J. Ostland, district manager of the fertilizer division of Chevron Chemical Company, Portland, Ore., told the same meeting that the fertilizer shortage was caused by a Federal law, which placed fertilizer under price controls in 1972 at a level that discouraged the building of new plants. In 1973, he said, fertilizer was exported at higher prices and resulted in a low carry-over at the end of the year. The Government removed the controls in 1973 and prices went up by as much as 50 per cent, but carry-over at the end of that year was minimal. He said several new ammonia plants for manufacturing nitrogen fertilizer were under construction, but it will take three years to get into production.

Over-all, the supply of grass seed should be reasonably good, but prices will no doubt be above last year's. There will be shortages in some specialty grasses, although a bumper crop in 1974 could reverse the trend. It's doubtful that grass seed prices will drop below those of the 1973 crop year. □