



DR. FRED V. GRAU

ANSWERS TO TURF QUESTIONS

SHORTAGES IN PEACE TIME

The last declared war ended about 30 years ago. The people of the United States suffered through shortages and rationing then, and, when this article is published, we may be going through similar antics—but in peace time. Our peace-keeping efforts around the world seem to have ended with severe shortages of energy, materials, fertilizers, plastics and who knows what else!

Each golf course must assess its own position in this topsy-turvy world in which we find ourselves. It wasn't so very long ago that fairways were mowed with horse-drawn equipment. Many of us can still remember this era. Could it return? Before I try to answer, let me remind everyone that, when tractor fuel is scarce, gas and oil will be allocated first to food producers (farmers).

Fairways have been kept playable with horse-drawn mowers and with grazing sheep. I've played on woolly-cropped turf; it isn't so bad. Putting greens and tees have been magnificent when mowed with hand-pushed mowers. Most every superintendent, I hope, has kept his hand mower. With our expanding population and a high rate of unemployment, we should be able to find plenty of strong willing backs to push these mowers.

Automatic irrigation systems consume energy. When energy is in short supply, we may be irrigating less. With less water, we can expect fewer weeds. There will be less mowing during short rainfall periods. Turf-grass quality generally should not suffer.

Fertilizer is essential to the production of food. This is the first order of priority. Recreational turf will be far down the line when fertilizer

needs are subjected to allocation. Each golf course will be obliged to consider very carefully its fertilizer needs in its own order of priorities. The old concept of compost may be high on the list to keep putting greens puttable. (I've had a compost pile going since 1946.)

Chances are good that the total energy situation will get worse before it gets better. We can indulge in wishful thinking and hope and pray that alternative forms of energy will become available. Some people run their cars on gas produced from garbage and manures. In the Southwest there is solar energy going to waste. Why haven't we tapped that source before now? Hydrogen is the least polluting of all fuels. Why aren't we geared to using it?

I have to wonder how much energy is required to make artificial turf to cover a football field. Natural grass uses the sun's energy to produce playing turf. I think that football players will be glad when the playing turf gets back to nature.

I have a good hand mower. All I have to do is find a willing boy or man to push it (wish I could). I'll set it high, use very little fertilizer and not irrigate at all. Each of us will find a way to reduce our dependence on petroleum-based energy, I'm sure.

Q—*We have several spring and stream fed lakes on our golf course. Could you suggest a way that we could use these bodies of water more fully during this period of shortages?*

(Indiana)

A—A letter just received from Bill Lyons of Canal Fulton in Ohio gives us a clue. Consult your state fish and game commission, stock the lakes with fish and grow food for the members and for sale. We must

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