



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Where Does the Insanity End?

By Paul Diegnau, CGCS

As my Presidential term winds down, I am inclined to jump up on the soapbox and attempt to wake up some people regarding the realities of "movements" within our nation. What got me riled up AGAIN? It was a recent conversation I had with Dr. Brian Horgan about INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL (ICC) activity that will eventually be coming to a city near you under the umbrella of "sustainability." As you may or may not know, Dr. Horgan has taken on the responsibility of giving a voice to the environmental and economical positives of turfgrass and the turfgrass industry at the national and international levels. Earlier this year, Dr. Horgan attended the INTERNATIONAL GREEN CONSTRUCTION CODE (a sub-branch of the ICC) meetings held in Dallas, Texas. The following is from the ICC website:

"The ICC association is dedicated to building safety, fire prevention and energy efficiency, develops the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. Most U.S. cities, counties and states choose the International Codes, building safety codes developed by the International Code Council. The International Codes also serve as the basis for construction of federal properties around the world, and as a reference for many nations outside the United States."

The meetings were attended by all the heavy hitters in construction, architecture and regulatory agencies at all levels including the U.S. EPA. Currently there exists within the new "GREEN" code provision to limit the amount of turfgrass used on residential and commercial new construction sites. In the infinite wisdom of these "GREEN" regulators, they have arbitrarily chosen 40% as the maximum allowed area planted to turfgrass on any given new construction site. From the IGCC proposal: "402.3.5.7 Turfgrass. Not more than 40% of the area of the vegetated area of the building site shall be planted with turfgrass."

This provision was obviously gleaned straight from the 2009 EPA WaterSense Program to bolster site sustainability goals. Dr. Horgan recently responded to this proposed stipulation during the public comment period that ended August 12. He references approximately 25 scientific studies that back the environmentally beneficial attributes of turfgrasses that we are all keenly aware of. His response can be viewed on Page 20.

So why should you be concerned? Think about it. A turfgrass scientist quotes 25 science-based studies supporting all the wonderful things that turfgrass does to benefit the environment and the silence from the response will be deafening. It appears that science is playing less and less of a role in the increasing flurry of regulations raining down upon us and the business world. More importantly...where does it end?

On a lighter note, if you haven't heard, PCNB is back on the market! My golf course budget just let out a sigh of relief. Some of you may have moved on to other product combinations but I welcome the redeployment of this old standby. I think it is hard to beat the price/efficacy of PCNB but that is just one turf warrior's opinion.

This fall is a very busy time for the MGCSA. I hope you are able to break away from your work and relax a bit at one or two of our upcoming events. After a season like this one you know you deserve it. Registration information for all events can be found on the MGCSA website: U of MN Field Day, TROE Center, September 15; Stodola Research Scramble, Forest Hills Golf Club, September 19; Wee One Scramble, North Oaks Golf Club, October 3; Fall Sporting Clays Shoot, Minnesota Horse and Hunt Club, Prior Lake, October 17, and the MNLA/MTGF Pesticide Recertification Seminar, U of Minnesota, November 18.

Thank you to Superintendent Joe Wollner, his staff and Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge for hosting the 2011 MGCSA Championship. I was unable to attend but heard the course was excellent and everyone had a great time. As you may or may not have noticed or heard, attendance at our MGCSA events has been on the decline. I remember the days not so long ago when some of these events sold out and had waiting lists. The 2011 Championship attracted only 40 participants. We all realize that this golf season was not "normal" by any stretch of the imagination. Combine these Mother Nature variables with a weak economy and you have a recipe for Golf Supers unable or reluctant to leave their courses. Hopefully this is just a short-lived trend. This fall, the MGCSA BOD will be addressing declining member participation and exploring options to reverse the trend. If you have thoughts or ideas on how to increase attendance, please share with the board.

Remember to order your MGCSA logo golf shirts with the MGCSA office. New orders are placed the first of each month. Order forms can be found on our website.

I don't know about you, but I may actually tear up when I see my first snowflake this fall. Amen!

*Until Next Time,
Paul Diegnau, CGCS*

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