PERENNIAL REPORT TO THE MICHIGAN TURFGRASS CONFERENCE GENERAL SESSION

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During my presentation today, I will update you concerning the following three topics: the two-year program in Sports and Commercial Turf Management, the Hancock Turfgrass Research Center (HTRC), and my research.

Sports and Commercial Turf Management Program

I conducted several surveys that tested possible new names against the former names of the two-year program that I coordinate. The following four groups were polled: turf professionals, turf students, soils students, and food science students. The former names were Lawn Care/ Athletic Field Maintenance and Lawn Care/ Athletic Turf Management, both of which fared poorly in the survey. The new name is Sports and Commercial Turf Management, which appealed particularly well to those with no turf affiliation.

Fall enrollment in the Sports and Commercial Turf Management Program is at an all-time high. Currently, we have 19 second-year students and 15 first-year students. Figure 1 shows this enrollment compared to the three previous years. Note that first-year numbers are less than last year, and this will probably result in a decrease in program enrollment in 1998. Mass mailings to the industry and high school counselors failed to attract acceptable numbers. This year I will advertise in newspapers as I did in 94 and 95. The Sports and Commercial Turf Management Program will not flourish if I rely on word-of-mouth referrals alone.

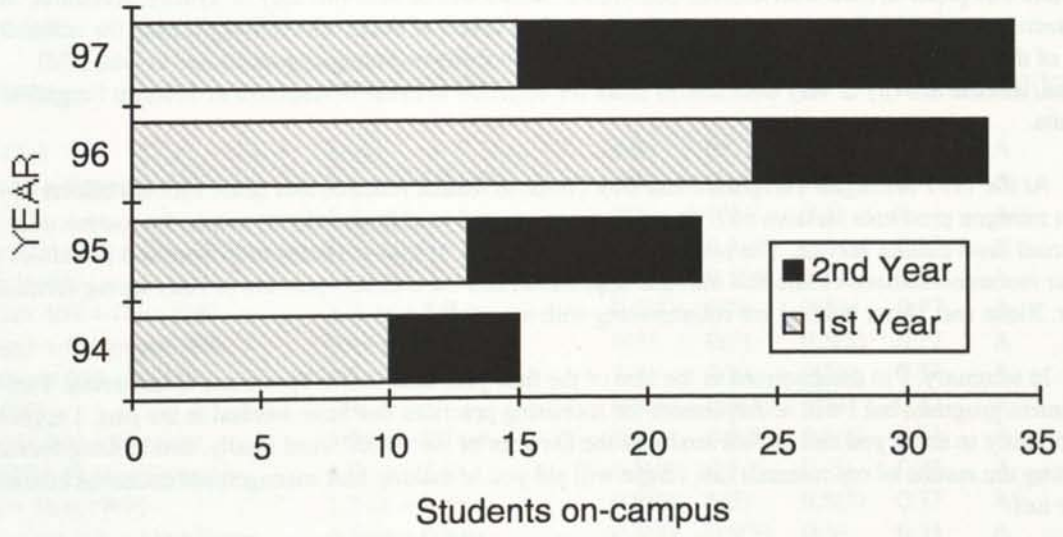

Fig 1. Enrollment levels for first- and second-year Sports and Commercial Turf Management students.

HTRC

We have built a 6,000 square feet clear-span, steel structure used primarily for equipment storage. At last year's field day, we dedicated this new builiding to Ernest Fuller, long-time and very generous supporter of our research program. This facility also allows us a weather-tight option for teaching and extension activities. Farm manager Mark Collins and research specialist Ron Calhoun proved to be tremendous assets during this project. We are still looking ahead to the next two building projects at the center. These are the construction of soil-storage bins and the renovation of our main building. These endeavors are funded by the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation, and the fantastic support is greatly appreciated.

We had a very active research year at the HTRC. Overall, fifty-seven studies took place on site with multiple experiments occurring with most of them. The types of activities performed are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Studies performed in 1996 at the HTRC classified according to the primary emphasis of each study.

Fertility	10	PGRs	5
Weeds	10	Establishment	4
Diseases	9	Herbaceous perennials	3
Cultivar Trials	9	Nematodes	1
Cultural Practices	8	Environmental	1

Research

My research continues with Dr. Joe Vargas concerning demethylation inhibitor (DMI) fungicides and dollar spot. We have collected our last set of samples at Lochmoor Country Club in Grosse Pointe Woods. This is where, in 1991, former graduate student Rob Golembieski documented one of the first instances of DMI resistance to dollar spot. I and several contributors including Vargas and Golembieski have submitted a paper concerning the Lochmoor project to the Research Journal of the International Turfgrass Society. Dr. Vargas or I will present this paper to their international conference, which will be held this July in Sydney, Australia. My DMI research at the HTRC did not progress well due to low levels of dollar spot activity during the summer and fall of this past year. Since this study deals with possible shifts in pathogen populations toward DMI-resistance, disease activity is very desirable in order for selection to occur in response to different fungicide treatments.

At the 1997 Michigan Turfgrass Field Day I hope to feature research that deals with the effects of different nitrogen protocols on lawn turf. These plots are mowed weekly in order to mimic the routine of a professional lawn cutting service. The purpose of this research is to look at fertilization rates and schedules that blend our recommendations of late-fall nitrogen application and the industry practice of early spring fertilization. Dr. Rieke and Thom Nikolai are collaborating with me on this study.

In summary, I'm disappointed in the size of the first-year class in the Sports and Commercial Turf Management program, but I will re-implement the recruiting practices that have worked in the past. I appreciate the opportunity to serve you and the university as the Director of the HTRC. And finally, I'm looking forward to reporting the results of my research that I hope will aid you in making best-management decisions concerning your turf.