Writing & Developing Specifications

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Now that we understand the meaning of a specification - how do you write them?

Most suppliers will supply a specification sheet for their products. Some bidding procedures do not allow you to write specifications that eliminate competition for that type of product. That is actually a good situation as you can get more information on products to fit a given scenario. It is important that you can justify the cost of the product you want and the specification can prove that.

Other examples of specification:

1. Field covers - Understand the language needed to define the specifications. Know that the product that works is the one you have specified.

Example:

Material Properties: warp 9 weft 7 (Threads running from side to side and across)

1000 denier (A unit of weight used to express the fineness of the fiber, nylon, rayon based on the number of .05 grams (of weight) in 450 meters of length. (The higher the number the coarser)

Unit weight 3.3-oz./sq. yd.

2. Finish Grading: A quote from a major league project. ? The words "finished grading", as used herein, mean the establishment of the required final grade elevations indicated on the drawings.

A second Quote from a major league project. " Final grade means that the grade is within 1/4 inch each 25 ft."

What does this mean? Are tolerances implied? Put yourself in the contractors' position.

My father always told me, "Mean what you say and say what you mean." Specifications are the same.

How Do You Do...?

The Question: How Do You Handle "Heat Stress" on Your Field(s)?

Answered by Greg Garber, City of Cambridge, MA

Although Cambridge is a fiscally healthy city, we certainly don't have the resources of a top-tier university or a professional franchise. Thus, to avoid the problems that are typical during high heat conditions, we strive to maintain a consistent annual program and stick to the basics: efficient irrigation, compaction relief, and mowing height.

When I came aboard here in 1998, two of our soccer fields and two of our softball diamonds, all heavily used, had no irrigation at all. The results were easily predictable- - higher soil temperatures and banner crops of knotweed and nutsedge during the summer months, compared to some of the other fields. As I write this, we are in the midst of a capital investment program to bring irrigation to all these fields, as well as modify existing systems that were inefficient.

Although the soils of most of our fields are classified as sandy loam, use is so heavy that they become compacted rather easily. During my first year here, we convinced our leadership to use capital funds to purchase a Vertidrain attachment for our turf tractor. We try to get on each field, in two directions, twice a year. On those fields where we have done this consistently over three years, we have not had to do anything extraordinary to combat the heat.

We mow all of our fields at two-and-a-half inches throughout the year, and if we get a break in activity on any field during the summer, bump up to three inches for that period. Introducing this practice required a considerable public relations effort, as league administrators initially could not understand why we weren't mowing at the

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How Do You Do...?

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customary height. However, they observed that turf resistance to drought conditions, as well as the usual agronomic suspects, is much better now.

Clearly, we don't employ any magic in Cambridge. My advice is to develop a balanced program, articulate a convincing rationale, and cultivate a relationship with those who can help, particularly those who determine budgets.

Answered by Steve Wightman, Qualcomm Stadium, San Diego, CA

Since we grow both cool-season and warm-season grasses most of the year here in San Diego, we are concerned with summer heat stress on the cool-season perennial ryegrass during the mid to late baseball season and the first half of the football season. Although the hybrid bermuda enjoys the 90 to 100 degree temperatures, it can take its toll on our perennial rye if our rootzone is not properly managed.

Probably the most important practice that is directly related to the success of overcoming heat stress for us is prudent irrigation. We try to provide adequate soil moisture at all times. This can be very challenging with the busy activity schedule that we have. We all know that good agronomics call for irrigating deep, then allowing the soil to dry to slight wilt before irrigating again in order to establish a deep root system. This may hold true for ornamental turfgrass but, for us, it's not possible to heavily irrigate most of the time because of all of our scheduled activities. So, we irrigate a relatively small amount more frequently to maintain soil strength while still providing adequate soil moisture. With this irrigation regime we have found that it's very important to have the soil adequately aerified (porous) so that the small amounts of applied water will quickly and effectively reach as deep into the rootzone as possible. This has helped us promote, as much as possible, a fairly deep and massive root structure giving the plant an opportunity to pick up soil moisture that lies farther down into the rootzone while still providing firm footing for the players.

In addition to our "normal" irrigation regime, we also syringe the turf during the heat of the day to cool the canopy. We accomplish this by manually running our sprinkler heads 5 minutes or so just to cool the turf surface. We also lightly hand water, with a 1-inch hose, certain areas that may require slightly more water.

So, in summary, what we try to do to combat summer heat stress on our cool-season grass here at Qualcomm Stadium is to aerify in the spring so that the soil more readily accepts the water we apply, irrigate more frequently with lesser amounts during our heavy use periods to maintain soil stability, and syringe the field on those hot days to cool the turfgrass canopy.

Call for Nominations

Your nominating committee is seeking individuals willing to serve STMA as Board Members in the following categories: Category II - Four-year Colleges & Universities Facilities Sports Turf Manager; Category IV - Parks & Recreational Facilities Sports Turf Manager; and Category VIII - Research, Teaching & Cooperative Extension Personnel.

If you feel a strong commitment to STMA and would like to get involved , or if you know of someone you'd like to recommend, contact STMA Headquarters.

STMA has a WORKING Board. The Board meets four times a year: once in conjunction with the Annual Conference, then once in March, July and November. The 1-1/2-day meetings are usually held on Friday afternoons and all day Saturday.

In addition, Board Members are asked to serve on one or more committees, provide input to other committees, review and vote on key issues affecting the direction of the STMA and be responsive to the needs of the membership.

All nominations, questions or requests for further information may be directed to STMA Headquarters, 1375 Rolling Hills Loop, Council Bluffs, IA 51503; phone: 800/323-3875; fax: 800/366-0391 or e-mail: SportsTMgr@aol.com. ***Nominations must be received by September 15th.***