

JB VISITATIONS:

October - Japan

Conducted a technical assistance advisory visitation in Japan involving turfgrass research and educational programs for golf courses, horse race tracks and sports fields.

At one research facility there is an interesting field simulation model of a sports stadium with the perimeter heights varying in relative scale, plus positioning relative to sun that is consistent with the planned stadium. Turfgrasses are being grown inside, along with monitoring instrumentation in multiple locations to assess the total daily levels of radiant energy in the photosynthetically active range. It will be interesting to follow the findings of this innovative new study.

In terms of turfgrass cultivar assessments, El Toro zoysiagrass (*Zoysia japonica*) has now been introduced into Japan. Its performance in research plots has been very good compared to the existing grass selections used in Japan, none of which are formally named and maintained as pure cultivars. El Toro has superior low temperature color retention, root development, and turfgrass quality.

In the creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera* var. *stolonifera*) cultivar studies for putting greens, Penn A-2 is showing superior performance after two years of assessments.

Also visited turfgrass research plots where the herbicide selectivities of three *Zoysia japonica* cultivars were being studied. Each exhibited different phytotoxicities ranging from none to significant injury. These results emphasize the need and responsibility for the developer of a cultivar to evaluate the pesticide selectivity characteristics by the time of release, rather than just assuming all cultivars within a species are similar in their tolerance to pesticides. Otherwise, the end-user may suffer the consequences.

November - Indianapolis, Indiana

Participated in the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Agronomy. Among the eight divisions of the Crop Science Society of America,

only the C-5 Turfgrass Division is growing in number of members. The other seven agricultural crops divisions are declining in membership.

This same trend is occurring in terms of undergraduate enrollments at university Agronomy-Crops-Soils Departments around the United States. In an effort to cushion this decline in enrollment, most of these departments are placing great emphasis on developing a turfgrass science undergraduate education program. Some universities are putting significant amounts of money toward this goal, while others are only using promotional techniques without any significant investment in a sound undergraduate turfgrass science education program. In the case of certain universities, they are actually hiring a new faculty member whose primary responsibility is to develop or expand an undergraduate turfgrass teaching program. This is occurring even at universities which have exhibited minimal to no interest in turfgrass science in the past.

There are obvious questions resulting from this increased emphasis on turfgrass science education at universities. What are the actual employment needs in terms of the number of graduates trained in the turfgrass science area? Are we headed toward a saturated job market for formally trained BSc turfgrass graduates, especially in the golf course superintendent sector?

There also is the question of how an aspiring turfgrass student can sort through all the promotional hype from the various universities? How do they determine which universities actually are investing in a significant, comprehensive set of specific turfgrass courses, plus the needed laboratory instructional equipment, turfgrass library acquisitions, and summer work-study training programs that are needed? In view of the potential problems in this developing situation, strong arguments could be made for the development of an **undergraduate turfgrass accreditation assessment program** sponsored by a national turfgrass organization. It has been accomplished very effectively in such areas as forestry and veterinary science. Why not a similar program in the turfgrass area to avoid some of the potential problems?