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**Question and Answer with Rutgers University**

(continued from page 8)

Q: I am having a problem with annual bluegrasses on my main football field. We have always had it in a few spots but this year it just took over the field and it died off about a month ago. Naturally everyone is in a tizzy over it because our field always looks good. I’ve heard you speak on the subject a few times so that is why I am reaching out to you. If there is any advice or literature you have and can send to me I would really appreciate it. I really need some help.

A: Currently there are no practical chemical options to address annual bluegrass on football fields, particularly given the need to continually apply seed to the heavily trafficked sections of the field (i.e. between the hash marks). Keep an eye out for the registration of Terbacil Herbicide for sports fields. It’s currently available for sod farms and golf courses and will provide preemergence control of annual bluegrass and allow some seeding flexibility.

In the meantime, I suggest seeding the sections of the annual bluegrass-collapsed sections of the field with perennial ryegrass. A gray leaf spot resistant blend of three to five varieties would be appropriate. Don’t simply buy a ‘Sports Turf Mix’ - buy a blend of 100% perennial ryegrass. It’s resistant blend of three to five varieties would be appropriate. Don’t even want to seed at the conclusion of the season. Any suggestions on where to start?

A: Although not as aesthetically pleasing as a turfgrass infill, dirt infills are generally easier to maintain and, in most cases, are the most appropriate for municipal/parks and recreation facilities. Turfgrass infills, while appropriate for higher-maintenance facilities, often develop lips rather quickly due to mismanagement, a lack of management, or both.

Generally, neglected skin surfaces most benefit from lip removal/removal and a management program that involves the elimination of high and low spots through routine grooming (without moving infill mix into nearby turf areas), attention to the pitcher’s mound and home plate areas, and the avoidance of adding infill mix on an annual basis - which gradually raises the infill elevation relative to the surrounding areas.

Dr. James Murphy & Extension Specialist in Turfgrass Management, Rutgers University, and SFMANJ Advisor. Brad Park is Sports Turf Res. & Ed Coor., Rutgers University and Editor, SFMANJ Update.

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**Annual KAFMO Cup Golf Outing**

Members of the SFMANJ Board of Directors traveled to Pennsylvania in October 2009 to play in the Keystone Athletic Field Managers’ (KAFMO) annual KAFMO Cup golf outing. KAFMO is the Pennsylvania Chapter of Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA). (See Scott Bills, Northern Nurseries, SFMANJ Secretary; Brad Park, Rutgers University, Editor, SFMANJ Update Newsletter; Sean Connell, Georgia Golf Construction; Craig Tolley, County College of Morris, SFMANJ Past-President.

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**Welcome New & Renewed SFMANJ Members**

Currently we have 287 new & renewed members. In December 2008, SFMANJ mailed invoices for 2009 membership dues to all current members. If you did not receive an invoice, please contact us at 856-514-3179 or download the membership form available at www.sfmanj.org. Mail membership dues direct to SFMANJ, PO Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070.

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**Mission Statement:**

Committed to enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers by improving the safety, playability and appearance of athletic fields at all levels through seminars, field day publications and networking with those in the sports turf industry.

Contact us at:

P.O. Box 205  •  Pennsville, NJ 08070

Web site: www.sfmanj.org

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Phone/Fax: 856-514-3179

National Organization

Sports Turf Managers Association

www.stma.org

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This newsletter is the official quarterly publication of the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey.

For information regarding this newsletter, contact: SFMANJ at (856) 514-3179 or Brad Park at (732) 932-9711 x127.

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SFMANJ does not necessarily support the opinions of those reflected in the following articles.

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Rutgers undergraduate student and SFMANJ Student Member, Will Reardon (left) is presented with a SFMANJ-sponsored student scholarship by SFMANJ President Don Savard, CSFM, CGM (right) at the Rutgers Turfgrass Awards banquet on November 7, 2009.

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**SFMANJ Annual Membership Registration Form**

*receive update information by email

Name __________________________
Title __________________________
Employer _________________________
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Please make a note!

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Our new Phone/Fax is
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**The Sports Turf Manager as a Crisis Communicator**

Continued from page 6

**Crisis Example and Response**

**Situation:** You have a major event that is being hosted in your stadium the next day. As a set of temporary bleachers is being installed, they collapse and your assistant has been critically injured. A reporter is at the stadium asking what happened and why, and if the event is taking place.

Your first response must show concern for the worker and his family. “Our first concern is for Joe Smith and his family. Joe’s safety and the safety of all of our workers is always our top priority. What we do know is that a temporary set of bleachers being installed here at King Stadium collapsed about an hour ago. Joe has been taken to Mercy Hospital.”

So far, we have cordoned off the area to protect the public. A crisis example and Response

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**UPDATE Winter 2009**

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Looking for success? Look no further than … YOUR STAFF!
By, Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Editorial Staff

Your staff has a significant impact on your success. The work that they do is a direct reflection on you, your ability to train, to motivate and to lead. Reaching the goals of your facility is only possible through good management of your people and their continued development. To make sure you are fully embracing the talents of your staff, use these simple techniques.

Top 10 Strategies to Engage Your Staff

1. Seek input and listen.
   Your staff is a great resource for ideas and improvements. Asking for their opinions and solutions to problems, truly listening to them, and implementing as appropriate, strengthens their commitment to you and to their job. Involving your staff in decision making builds loyalty and improves retention.

2. Set expectations.
   Clearly and consistently set expectations for each employee through jointly written performance objectives. Good expectations make the job done.

3. Provide continuous feedback.
   Don’t expect employees to use outdated or faulty equipment. With anxieties at all time high regarding increased terrorist activity, make sure you have emergency procedures in place to protect the workforce in the event of an attack, and ensure that every employee is aware of these procedures.

4. Show appreciation.
   Just say “thank you!” When you reward and acknowledge good work they do. When you help them succeed, you succeed.

5. Empower your staff.
   Respect and accept each person as an important member of the team.

6. Train, Train, Train
   The continuous upgrading of skills also provides employees with the opportunity to use their talents and skills; and recognition and much more. The pesticide talk peaked the interest of all who attended as many follow-up questions were asked stimulating further discussion.

7. Empower your staff.
   Give them as much information as possible about what and why, and allow them to make decisions appropriate to their work.

8. Provide a safe and comfortable working environment.
   Don’t expect employees to use outdated or faulty equipment.

9. Treat with respect.
   Clearly and consistently set expectations for each employee and allow them to make decisions appropriate to their work.

10. Inspire your staff.
    Your staff is a great resource for ideas and improvements. Asking your staff for ideas and improvements.

A Recap of SFMANJ Fall Field Day 2009
Continued from page 1

Top 10 Strategies to Engage Your Staff

5. Be accessible
   By being visible and available, you send the message that you are present.

6. Train, Train, Train
   Training in the correct procedures and equipment use is critical to getting the job done right, but also for health and safety reasons. The continuous upgrading of skills also provides employees with the means for promotion. Consider training opportunities in areas outside of their core responsibilities, such as in writing skills, public speaking, customer service, business management, etc. You and your facility will reap many benefits from improving their “softer” skills.

7. Empower your staff.
   Give them as much information as possible about what and why, and allow them to make decisions appropriate to their work.

8. Provide a safe and comfortable working environment.
   Don’t expect employees to use outdated or faulty equipment.

9. Treat with respect.
   Clearly and consistently set expectations for each employee and allow them to make decisions appropriate to their work.

10. Inspire your staff.
    Your staff is a great resource for ideas and improvements. Asking your staff for ideas and improvements.
Perhaps you will never be faced with responding to a crisis. But, if you ever have an athlete get injured during play, an employee who gets hurt on the job, a disgruntled employee, a weather related disaster, or an environmental incident, you just might find yourself in the spotlight and under scrutiny.

As a manager of people, you may have to deal with an employee's death or illness, a sudden change in top management, or employee issues of sexual harassment. Each one of these can constitute a crisis. You must be prepared for that decisive moment when your response can lead the crisis to better or to worse. An initial negative perception is nearly impossible to reverse.

**Crisis Communication Response Tips**

- Respond within 24 hours.
- Don't point fingers.
- Always be available to the media.
- Be visible and on-site.
- Tell the absolute truth.
- Never say “no comment.”

You are judged within the first 30 seconds of speaking if you and the information you are providing is trusted. Appearing empathetic and caring are the most important characteristics you can exhibit to show “trustworthiness.” Your audience will also assess your competence, your honesty and your commitment. Your goal as a communicator is to demonstrate these attributes.

It is important to recognize that the media is usually more interested in covering opposing viewpoints and that bad news and conflict are more newsworthy. Most reporters are working under a tight deadline, have limited scientific and technical knowledge and can be a bit cynical. When preparing to talk with the media, address the principal underlying concern of the audience/questioner/listener keeping your responses short and concise.

In many crisis situations it is important to bring in a third party and to tell the media who you have contacted.

**Remember these phrases.**

You want to give a sense of more to come, which will help to establish your trustworthiness.

- “What I can tell you is …”
- “So far, what we know is …”
- “So far, what we have done is …”
- “What we are planning to do next is …”
- “We will be able to tell you more when …”
- “I’ll be glad to talk with you again after we conduct …”

Source: Susan Santos, Ph.D., FOCUS GROUP, Medford, MA

Continued on page 17
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Q: In the spring I manage fields used for baseball and lacrosse; field hockey and soccer in the fall. I have been under the impression that "quick dry" is an agent that should only be used on clay surfaces. I've been told that it is not good to use this product on turf because it renders the soil difficult to germinate new grass. The field hockey program practices and plays games in the outfield of the varsity baseball field. After a week of practices, the grass in front of the goal areas is reduced to dirt. I am reluctant to put "quick dry" in those areas when it rains for the aforementioned reason. Is my information on the use of "quick dry" products wrong?

A: You are correct to be cautious about applying "quick dry" products on turf areas. Extensive use of some quick dry products will eventually "seal" the soil in these areas ultimately making the problem worse. Moreover, you should include seed in any topdressing of these areas with drying agents, otherwise the bare areas will not fill-in (recover) with grass. I recommend that you apply (broadcast) 2 pounds of perennial ryegrass seed per goalmouth per week through the remainder of the season. You should observe some emergence within 10-14 days (possibly earlier) after a good rain or irrigation. Emerging plants will get trampled but it is a numbers issue - the more seed you apply the greater the chance some plants will survive and ultimately fill-in the worn out areas. We see a number of facilities that are highly successful with this type of regular overseeding.

There are 2 types of granular materials that would be acceptable to apply to these goalmouths and function to "dry" these areas without adversely affecting soil properties: (1) sand or (2) high-temperature, kiln-fired, clay or diatomaceous earth products. Sand will be the least expensive option but will not "soak-up" as much water as the kiln-fired products. If you choose to use sand, order a medium-coarse or medium sand (size); do not use concrete or mason sands.

The kiln-fired products need to be fired at very high temperatures so that the granules will not slake (breakdown) and form a sticky, clayey mess over time. These granular products are very hard and are roughly sand sized (depending on product and size grade); thus, these materials will behave much like sand except that these materials will soak up more water than sand. The hardness of the granules prevents slaking (breakdown) allowing these materials to work into the soil much like sand and provide similar benefits over time - a coarser and less muddy surface.

If cost is problem, you could consider blending sand with kiln-fired granular product.

Continued on page 18
As many of you know, the turfgrass industry lost a dear friend and colleague in September 2005. We will all miss Henry very much and would like to insure that his legacy lives on. The Indyk family would like to establish a memorial fellowship to support graduate students interested in applied turfgrass science. This fellowship is being created to help assure that tomorrow’s graduate students have the financial resources to get an advanced degree in turfgrass science at Rutgers University. To fund a full graduate assistantship each year in Henry’s name, we will need to raise a total of $400,000. Your generous support at this time will bring us closer to reaching this goal.

To make a tax-deductible contribution today, please send a check payable to the Rutgers University Foundation, 7 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901. Be sure to indicate “Indyk Fellowship, Turfgrass” in the memo portion of your check. If you desire, you may provide a donation in the form of a pledge payable over several years.

For information on other ways to support this fellowship, please contact
Dr. Bruce B. Clarke, Director – Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science
(732) 932-9400, ext. 331; or clarke@aesop.rutgers.edu or
John Pearson, Director of Leadership Gifts at the Foundation, by calling
(732) 932-7899 or email pearson@winants.rutgers.edu

Dr. Henry W. Indyk
Graduate Fellowship in Turfgrass Science
SFMANJ’s Fall Field Day
September 23, 2009, Monroe Township, NJ
By Brad Park