

## Three Considerations For Your Upcoming Budget Submissions

By S. Addison Barden, agronomist, Northeast Region | September 1, 2017



*Investing in more productive equipment – like this wide, pull-behind rough mower – is increasingly popular as facilities manage ongoing labor challenges.*

**B**udget submissions are right around the corner for many golf facilities. As superintendents and decision-makers work through this process, think about these three considerations:

1. Agronomic programs and maintenance costs are different at every facility. Comparing one facility's budget to another may be human nature, but it is similar to comparing apples and oranges. Numerous factors such as turf species, soil conditions, course design, equipment fleet and labor force can play a significant role when determining a maintenance budget. A great way to determine if a maintenance budget addresses a particular course's needs is to [track labor](#) and material costs so that the precise cost of a task or area of a golf course is known. Additionally, review current programs to determine if any changes are needed to achieve the desired playing conditions.
2. At nearly every golf facility labor is the largest expense in the maintenance budget. A qualified staff is an extremely important factor in maintaining excellent playing conditions. However, golf course superintendents report that the current labor shortage remains the greatest challenge facing their day-to-day operation. Productivity can be improved by [maintaining fewer acres](#), purchasing more [efficient equipment](#) and [eliminating golf course accessories](#); but ultimately, offering a competitive wage is arguably the most successful

strategy to recruit and retain a qualified workforce. Begin planning for this now to minimize future pay increases that are driven by wage competition or regulation.

3. Don't be hesitant to contract important services that are traditionally performed Internally. Deferring certain cultural and infrastructure projects [negatively affects playing conditions and turf health](#) and will also result in higher maintenance costs when the time comes to address those needs. Sometimes it is best to contract a specialist for practices such as fairway cultivation, drainage installation, tree pruning and sod installation to avoid overwhelming current maintenance staff. Contracting [temporary labor services](#) for large projects or important events is becoming an increasingly popular strategy to provide the best possible playing conditions.

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