

# EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF THE SPORTS TURF RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 1973.

## GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH

During 1973 there were several satisfactory developments from the campaign mounted in 1972 to obtain Government support for turfgrass research. In July 1973 the Department of the Environment commissioned the Natural Environment Research Council to form an Amenity Grass Committee to undertake a review of all research needs for turfgrass for sport and amenity use. The Chairman of the Committee is Professor A. D. Bradshaw of Liverpool University and the Director is one of the members. The Committee is being served by a Scientific Officer to assemble information and draft the report. The work is likely to take two years, but at its first meeting the Committee recognized the specially urgent need for extension trials of cultivars and mixtures. As a result of its recommendations, the Institute was informed, at the end of 1973, that funds would be available from the N.E.R.C.—for a period of two years initially—to appoint technical officers and make arrangements for such trials. At the time of preparing this report (March 1974), appointments are being made and arrangements are in hand for the first extension cultivar trials to be sown in 1974.

## ACTIVITIES

### (i) Research

A high proportion of the Experiment Ground was given to cultivar testing and mixture trials. A report on ryegrass and timothy trials was prepared for the 1973 Journal, although a great deal of data from recent cultivar and mixture trials still remains to be written up. Extensive new trials of bent, covering 40 cultivars, were sown in 1973 in a range of trials giving four levels of treatment—from the closest mowing to uncut row plots. A trial of crested dogstail was also sown. For two main areas of sowing, the soil was sterilized to eliminate annual meadow-grass, and this gave such an improvement in the cleanliness of plots that it seems important to make it a regular treatment in future, in spite of the cost.

Three trials with a slow release nitrogen fertilizer were undertaken by the Biologist, with some student help, and these are reported in the 1973 Journal. The manufacturer has asked for the trials to continue for another year and has given a substantial grant to help with this work.

Testing of fungicides has continued and has been reported in the Journal. This routine testing depends on the weather and other uncontrollable factors providing sufficient natural infection on the Experiment Ground for trials to be made.

Herbicide work has been limited to a practical field test, supported by a small trade grant, of the use of dazomet for preparing seedbeds free of annual meadow-grass, and a trial to assess the long-term effect of bensulide on fine turf when applied to prevent germination of seeds of annual meadow-grass.

The trial of permeable soil mixes, mentioned in the previous Report has continued and results have been written up by a member of the Soil Science Unit of the University of Wales at Aberystwyth for the 1973 Journal.

(ii) **Advisory**

The outstanding problem on the maintenance side was undoubtedly that associated with excess of fibre (mat or thatch) at the surface of fine turf areas such as golf greens and bowling greens. An associated problem was the rather frequent occurrence of a fungal condition in which certain basidiomycetes attacked the fibre in patches and caused uneven surfaces.

(iii) **Education and Publications**

We have held six one-week courses of instruction for groundsmen and greenkeepers (three in the spring and three in the autumn) and in addition, in co-operation with the Institute of Corn and Agricultural Merchants, we held in November a special 2½ day course for seedsmen connected with the amenity grass seed trade.

Outside engagements included a number of evening lectures for branches of the Institute of Groundsmanship and sections of the British and Scottish Golf Greenkeepers' Association, and also the annual short lecture.

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