On course for cutting your carbon footprint

Reducing carbon emissions is vital and greenkeepers and grass have a pivotal role to play.

Climate change is a big debate and people ask 'is it occurring, yes or no'?

Over the years, travelling around the world, Director of Seed Research at Rigby Taylor, Brian Robinson, reports more and more evidence that it is happening.

So how do clubs maintain their facilities in the best way possible while having regard to the amount of carbon dioxide they are producing?

Brian Robinson said: "For the industry, BIGGA and individual clubs dramatic changes in weather patterns are putting increased pressure on everyone.

"We need to produce good conditions 365 days of the year and presentation demands are increasing in all sports, whether it is golf or soccer."

And it is here the small grass seed has a vital role to play, offering considerable benefits in relation to reducing the carbon footprint.

GETTING TO THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

A dedicated programme of field trials by leading grass seed breeder Top Green has revealed that increased root mass is a key to CO^2 capture and sequestration.

Grasses contribute to carbon sequestration through the development and decomposition of leaves but the root system is also vital.

Grasses have fibrous root systems with an average dry root mass of 1,5 kg per m^2, which represents about 70 percent of the total plant mass*.

*Effect of management intensity on sward productivity of a permanent meadow Stypinski P. Mastalerczuk G. 2002

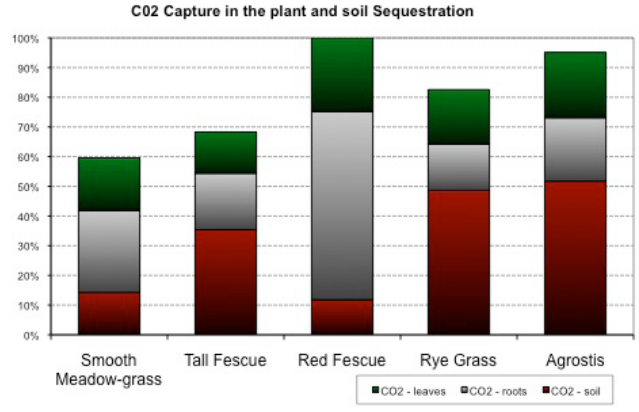
TOPICAL TRIALS

A current seed breeding programme at Les Alleuds in France by Top Green, in liaison with UK seed agent and supplier Rigby Taylor, is taking into account the amount of carbon each grass plant species can capture.

Brian Robinson said: "This will help clubs and councils to select seed which is most beneficial to the environment."

By increasing the capacity of grass to take in CO^2 emissions through the use of ecologically important grass mixes Rigby Taylor is now looking at the formulation of new mixes. These have been specifically designed to actually improve the take-up of CO^2 emissions, Brian added: "And we will be putting markers on a new Top Green range of grass seed mixtures clearly identifying each species' ability to capture carbon."

This will considerably aid managers in adapting sustainable landscape methods in order to reduce their carbon footprint.



DEMONSTRATING AMOUNT OF CARBON LOCKED IN BY VARIOUS GRASS SPECIES.