

Trade Show Resolution

Many people will be aware of the formal discussions that have been taking place between representatives of BIGGA, The Institute of Groundsmanship and The Agricultural Engineers Association over the last couple of years with reference to the future of trade shows in the grounds and turf care sector. Below is a statement from the group on the outcome of those discussions.

Statement From The Grounds And Turf Care Industry Forum (GTCIF)

The Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG), The British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA), and the Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) under the independent Chairmanship of David Gwyther of the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) have conducted an extensive review of trade events for the sector. We have considered carefully the location, frequency and composition of the trade events available to manufacturers and retailers of grounds and turf care products.

The HTA has independently analysed the details of both SALTEX and BTME and the demographics of both exhibitors and visitors who have attended these events in the past few years. This indicated that there are significant differences between the events, that they are not directly comparable. Clearly there exists an overlap in both exhibitors and visitors but in all cases this is a small minority. They also concluded that market forces will continue to dictate the demand and make up of these types of events.

The opportunity for the aforementioned stakeholders in the grounds and turf care industry to review their activity and discuss wider issues has been extremely positive and productive. The talks have highlighted a number of areas of mutual concern outside the trade event discussions and it has been heartening to find that in many areas there are potential opportunities to collaborate, share resources and expertise and to generally have a positive impact on the industry.

Consequently, the IOG, BIGGA, HTA and the AEA have agreed that:

1. They will continue to keep the future of Grounds and Turf Care Events under active review



2. They will work in collaboration through a new Grounds and Turf Care Industry Forum

3. This Forum will provide a platform for these Trade Associations to work together to pursue areas of interest where a common voice will have a better opportunity to be heard.

4. They will actively look to engage with some other Associations in the Grounds and Turf Care Industry.

5. The Forum agenda will encompass areas such as:

Careers and personal development, Communication, Events, Health & Safety, Market research, Recruitment and Training, Better Regulation, Relationships with the companies in the industry sector, Providing a common voice to government in both the EU and UK.

The independent Chairman, David Gwyther of the HTA said:

“HTA’s independent and objective analysis of the industry’s two main shows has made it clear that there is, in fact, little real overlap in target markets and each has a distinct sectoral focus. Merging them in somewhere like central England would only increase the costs. There is no market appetite for further, new shows. Working together on this issue has led to the recognition that all parties have much to gain from developing such collaboration

into other areas. I am very pleased with these positive outcomes from our joint meetings this year, which demonstrate that this industry can and does work sensibly together.”

The Grounds and Turf Care Industry Forum will draft Terms of Reference in the next few months and issue general information about the Forum’s work.

The Chairman of BIGGA, Andrew Mellon, who attended the discussions said:

“It is very important that all businesses take an objective look at their activities on an ongoing basis, the formal discussions presented an excellent opportunity for BIGGA to assess all aspects of BTME. Careful study showed that the Exhibition is an important showcase for the sports turf industry and particularly for the golf course maintenance sector as well as providing a valuable platform for BIGGA’s Continue to Learn programme and a hugely important networking opportunity for all those involved in the maintenance and management of golf courses.

“We are delighted that this process has validated the relevance of BTME in today’s market however we are mindful that we need to continually strive to ensure that visitors and exhibitors achieve maximum value from the event. We will continue to listen to all the key stakeholders to ensure the event evolves to meet the needs of all.”