HOW TO CALIBRATE A SPREADER

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To use any applicator (whether it is a sprinkler, a sprayer or a spreader) that has not been calibrated is to invite trouble, either in the form of too much or too little material being applied. Not only do shortages and excesses waste time, material and money, they can also result in turf injury. Furthermore, since the job of calibrating an applicator is relatively simple and one that may be done in the off season, this kind of trouble can and should be avoided. It is hoped that the following article on the calibration of a spreader will be helpful in this connection.

Regardless of whether the spreader is a hand pushed or power drawn model of either the band or spinner type, the basic principles involved in the calibration procedure are the same. However, it should be pointed out in this regard that the spinner type spreader is far less likely to result in streaking (from either overlapping or skipping) and is, therefore, preferred for most jobs. Furthermore, of the two types, the spinner gets the job done faster. The steps involved in calibrating a spreader are as follows:

1. Select a site for the actual calibration that is off the area to be treated, for example, a driveway or the grounds around the shop.
2. Set the opening of the spreader for the desired rate according to the operator's manual or, in the case of the small hand pushed model, this information is also given on the bag of many materials which are sold for turfgrass use. Note: To insure a more uniform application, it is a good practice to set the spreader at half the desired rate and go over the area twice (either from different directions or by overlapping each pass by 50%).
3. Add a weighed amount of material to the hopper—at least 20 pounds to the small spreader and 80 pounds to the larger ones.
4. Mark off a distance of 25 feet for the hand pushed type and 100 feet for the power drawn models. Remember: if at step 2 the setting was made at half the rate these distances must be doubled.
5. Now make a run with the spreader and observe the lateral distance the material is thrown (in the lase of the band type spreader this measurement can be taken directly from the spreader). Be sure when calibrating the spreader to travel at the same speed that will be used under normal operating conditions and to turn the spreader off after each pass or include the turning distance in step 4.
6. Next weigh back the material left in the hopper and subtract this from the total amount added. The difference represents the amount of material applied. From the following formula calculate the rate of application **in pounds per 1,00 square feet.**

Lbs./1000 sq. ft. (equals) pounds material applied (step 6)x1,000 (divided by) distance traveled x lateral spread in feet (step 4) in feet (step 5).

(Continued on next page)

Example

Suppose 4.4 pounds of material were applied (step 6) to an area 25 feet (step 4) by 7 feet (step 5). The rate of application is calculated as follows:

4.4 pounds x 1,00 (divided by) 25 feet x 7 feet (equals) 25.1 lbs/1,000 sq. ft.

7. Now then, if the calculated rate is not within 10 per cent of the desired one, adjust the setting accordingly and make another run. Usually no more than two or three reruns are needed in order to calibrate the spreader to the desired rate for any material. However, in this connection is should be emphasized that owing to differences in density and particle size, different materials may require different settings and hence a separate calibration.
8. Lastly, it might be well to note that once a spreader has been calibrated it will perform as such only if properly cared for, that is, cleaned and oiled regularly and inspected for worn or loose parts periodically. Attention to these details always pay, they never cost.

ORDER LEAD TIMES GROWING

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Suppliers of equipment for use on the golf courses are finding it more difficult to purchase component parts that make up their product. Forecast requirements are much greater today than they were just one year ago and raw materials, such as iron and copper, are in big demand at this time. Components made up from these raw materials are causing manufacturers to forecast their needs anywhere from six to nine months in advance of delivery.

In our own situation, within the next thirty days some items must be ordered for next August delivery; we have the problem of not knowing how much to order. We do not want to carry excessive inventories, nor do we want to run our of products when the customers require them. Computers forecast product requirements based on past experience. There is such a variety of products along with new items that have not had a previous performance record, that shortages could appear this coming season.

There is a partial solution to this problem in that Golf Course Superintendents are the major buyers of turf equipment. As the various distributors' men call on the golf courses this fall, it would be most helpful if the Superintendent could give them some idea of his product requirements for spring or summer delivery. These do not have to be firm orders, but of course, this would help. By collecting this information, the distibutor can get a better idea of what his total requirements will be and thereby help the manufacturer to plan his schedule. Planning along these lines by the superintendents can help stem off some of the rising costs and may actually result in an over all savings to them. I am sure all manufacturers are trying to prepare themselves for shortages and will try to have adequate quantities of products **when** the Superintendents need them, but I know our company needs evidence that our forecasts are somewhere on a level with the needs of the Superintendents.

DINNER DANCE

WHEN — November 12, 1966, 6:30 P.M.
PLACE — Riverwoods Country Club.

Gerald Rearie, your chairman for our Annual Fall Dance has again engaged Benny Dougall and his Casino Boys to play all of your favorite tunes. You will be sent a map with directions on how to get there. Since this is our only dance of the year and everyone else is coming, why don't you.