

of *Poa annua*, although it was frequent in seed of other types of bent grown in the valley.

So it looks as though Highland bentgrass, from its main producing area, the Silverton Hills of Oregon, for all practical purposes comes to market free of *Poa annua*.



## HOLMES' CORNER

by James L. Holmes

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Lee Record and I had the privilege of attending the 7th Annual Nebraska Turfgrass Conference earlier this month. A solid ice sheet has formed over all of eastern Nebraska, to a depth of 4 to 8 inches. Golf course superintendents were curious to know what could or should be done about it. As a result of our experience in the Chicago-Detroit-Cleveland local the winter of 1963-1964, we informed the Nebraska superintendents that the complete, clear ice sheet present, should not be allowed to remain in place for longer than 25 days. After 25 days every effort must be made to remove said ice. A number of practices have been successful, such as applying a topdressing material, at rates of 100 to 200 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft., applying a natural organic fertilizer at a rate of approximately 50 lbs. per 100 sq. ft, breaking ice with machines such as front-end loaders or heavy duty vertical mowers and by punching holes through the ice with iron bars. In any event, past experience dictates that if ice is left in place for longer than the 25 days, turf damage will result. This is especially true on greens which tend to become "over wet" and have a history of turf problems. Water soluble, inorganic fertilizers must not be applied over ice as, resulting salt concentration will be toxic to grass. When grass begins growth in spring it should be allowed to grow for a few days before fertilizers are applied or do not force turf until a vigorous growth has been initiated.

It looks like this spring will be a far cry from the desiccation damage so prevalent last spring. However, a word of caution. If snow should melt and the same 3 or 4 warm days, temperatures in the 80's and hard dry winds prevail in late February or early March, it is probable that desiccation will occur. After

all is said and done, regardless of ice sheet damage which has and does occur, it is my opinion that more turf is lost to desiccation in late winter and early spring than from ice sheet damage.

An important point, repeatedly brought out during the Nebraska conference, was that of rapid surface and internal soil-water drainage. Unless rapid drainage is assured it is practically impossible to correct other problems. It seems that everyone involved in turf, is becoming more aware that rapid surface drainage is absolutely vital and one hears comments regarding the necessity of improving or building-in adequate drainage from simply everyone in the turf field.

A number of questions have come into our office regarding the use of snowmobiles on golf courses. For the past 3 or 4 springs I have observed considerable damage, especially to putting surface, where snowmobiles have been used. Most severe damage results in areas of heavy traffic or "trails." Even if snow is deep, repeated snowmobile traffic over a given area, encourages formation of ice, and turf suffers. Even though severe damage is done to putting green turf, all types of turf will suffer in heavy traffic locations. Even though it has not been definitely established, it would seem to me, that at least 8 to 10 inches of snow must be present before snowmobiles are allowed. Further, all putting surfaces should be fenced-off; (it would be advisable to isolate tees, also). Care should be taken that "regular runs" do not develop and snowmobile traffic is dispersed as much as possible. As soon as snow begins to melt in the spring all such traffic must be eliminated. Obviously, the golf course belongs to the members and if they wish to use snowmobiles throughout, it is their prerogative. Nonetheless, they should be made aware that serious problems can result, through the use of these machines, and the necessity of certain restrictions explained to them.

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