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HOW'S YOUR TURF IQ? *ANSWERS*

1. Overall nutrient availability is highest at pH of 6.5.
2. Phosphorus highest availability is at pH of 6 to 7.
3. A pH of 6 is ten times as acidic as a pH of 7 since pH values are expressed as logarithms. Thus a soil pH of 5 is ten times as acid as one at pH of 6 and 100 times as acid as the one at pH 7.
4. The most common peats are: peat humus, sphagnum moss peat, reed-sedge peat and hypnum peat.
5. The sixteen elements are as follows: Carbon, Hydrogen, Oxygen, Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium, Calcium, Magnesium, Sulfur, Iron, Manganese, Zinc, Copper, Molybdenum, Boron and Chlorine.

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Users of restricted chemicals will need to have a permit by October 1977.

Private Golf Course Operators and farmers can receive the necessary training and take the self evaluation for the permit at a program sponsored by the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service in DuPage County.

The program will be held Friday, March 4 from 12:00 to 5:00 P.M. at the DuPage County Auditorium (421 N. County Farm Road, Wheaton).

Please advance register by calling the Cooperative Extension Service at 682-7486. A registration fee of \$2.00 is payable at the door.

W. E. Schmidt
Extension Advisor, Agriculture
421 North County Farm Road
Wheaton, Illinois 60187
Telephone: 682-7486

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MOTHERHOOD, APPLE-PIE AND THE GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Most Superintendents would support both "Motherhood and Apple-Pie" as long-time pillars of our heritage, but what of the benefits of the G.C.S.A.A.? Every organization, whether it be political, economic or social in origin, must stand the final "cost-benefit" evaluation if its existence is to be continued. In this article I will attempt to establish two points: first that the G.C.S.A.A. does not yield a positive "cost-benefit" ratio for the individual member superintendent; and, secondly, to suggest an alternative program that will fulfill the original objectives of furthering both the educational and financial position of the golf course superintendent.

First we must establish the ground rules of measuring the "cost-benefit" ratio. I am suggesting that the Annual Report of the G.C.S.A.A. be used to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of management. This approach is similar to the Management By Objective system (M.B.O.) employed by private industry to measure and compare business operations as to their effectiveness in obtaining stated goals. The costs and benefit figures will come from Exhibit B, or the Statement of Income and Expenses in the 1976 Annual Report. Under the division "Expenses", we find the categories "Member's Insurance Premiums" and "Membership Activities and Services" which include direct benefits to the member superintendents. (I might interject that the Life Insurance has been \$1,000 for many years and this benefit might bury "Chicken George" back in 1865, but today it would place us one foot below ground in a broken plastic box). A secondary benefit, but one I consider indirect, would be the category "Directory and Newsletter".

My Exhibits A and B illustrate the dollar amounts of these expense categories as presented by the G.C.S.A.A. Exhibit B also illustrates the percentage of these member benefits in relationship to total income (dollars available for benefits) for the years 1976 and 1975. During 1975, \$110,032.63 or 14.7% of total G.C.S.A.A. income was returned to the member superintendents whereas during 1976 \$105,812.43 or 14% of income was returned in the form of direct benefits. Not only is the dollar amount declining, but

also the relative percentage of total available funds by .7%. If we enlarge the benefit category and add item three of Exhibit A to our analysis we find the 1976 benefits to be \$120,590.45 or 15.98% of total income compared to \$126,412.59 or 16.93% during 1976. Thus, the direct benefits for a member superintendent seem to be declining both absolutely (dollar, cent) and relatively (percentage of available income). Remember also that while benefits are reduced, dues were increased by "fifty percent" or \$30.00 per year.

Let us now attempt to measure the efficiency of management or more simply, the salaries and related payroll taxes as shown under Exhibit B of the Annual Report. During the year 1976, total salaries and payroll taxes were \$205,060.09 as compared to \$189,562.97 during 1975. Thus, the percentage of salaries to total available income increased from 25.4% in 1975 to 27.2% in 1976, while the members direct benefits were declining from 16.93% to 15.98%. Even the Federal Government returns more than 16 cents on the tax dollar to the taxpayer.

EXHIBIT A

	1976	1975
INCOME	\$754,260.38	\$ 746,601.14
EXPENSES:		
1) Members Insurance Premiums	55,251.76	51,688.65
2) Membership Activities & Services	50,560.67	58,343.98
3) Directory & Newsletter	14,778.02	16,379.96
4) Salaries	118,710.17	173,088.29
5) Employee Payroll Taxes & Expenses	16,349.92	16,474.68

EXHIBIT B

	1976	1975
INCOME:	\$ 754,260.35 (100%)	\$746,601.14 (100%)
EXPENSES:		
1 & 2 of Exhibit A	14% (105,812.43)	14.7% (110,032.63)
1, 2 & 3 of Exhibit A	15.98% (120,590.48)	16.93% (126,412.59)
4 & 5 of Exhibit A	27.2% (205,000.09)	25.4% (189,562.97)

Even as it has become evident that the Federal Government cannot solve all the country's ills from Washington, so too the G.C.S.A.A. cannot achieve the two major goals of "education" and "financial improvement" with a national approach. We can continue to pour money into Lawrence, Kansas as we have into Washington, yet the return from Kansas is declining. The question is not one of dues being \$50.00, \$90.00 or even \$200.00, but one of evaluating the return on each dollar invested. I believe that currently we are attempting to solve "regional problems" with a "national approach" through the G.C.S.A.A. which can only fail.

One of the major problems facing each superintendent is how to increase his financial position and provide for his retirement years. Unfortunately, there is no simple chemical on the market to solve these problems; it is only by "public relations" and "communications" with our employers through our Midwest Association that we will be able to affect the market and obtain high salaries and better benefits. I am not suggesting "unionization" which tries to arm-lock the labor force, but that of establishing a strong professional organization that can influence the regional market similar to engineers, lawyers, airline pilots, and doctors. Remember, if your employer looks upon you as a "grass cutter", you will be paid as a "grass cutter".

The long-term objective of a regional market (Green Industry) would be to establish a turfgrass conference

to include members of the Green Industry. Regional suppliers would also be obtaining an advantage since their travel expenses would be lower and their customer or sales appeal increased. All conference personnel would be within the supplier's market region and potential customers; currently this is not the case at the national show.

My alternative to using the G.C.S.A.A. is a strong regional organization comprised of not just superintendents, but also other professional associations within the "Green Industry". The objective is to concentrate all efforts within a regional market where our salaries, benefits, education and suppliers operate. By moving our national dues to the Midwest Superintendents Association, we would add \$25,000 per year to the available funds to achieve our objectives. These monies would then be available to support regional research, public relations and communication, and establishing a long-range planning function to best benefit the financial situation of each member superintendent.

We now come to the task of organizing the machinery to accomplish our objective; the following could be used as a guideline or starting point:

1) Establish the following committees within the Midwest Association. (It is important that the committee members not be board members but that a board member be on each committee to facilitate communications).

- a) Planning Committee
- b) Public Relations and Communications
- c) Superintendents Welfare Committee

2) Consolidate all superintendents within the Midwest Group since without a unified position there would be a loss of efficiency.

3) Cease membership in G.C.S.A.A. and increase dues at the regional level to generate funds to accomplish goals established by committees - Funds would then be available for insurance, retirement programs, and research projects.

4) Contact other regional groups, suppliers, educational institutions, to establish a planning committee.

5) Contact other regional groups already sponsoring conferences to compare feasibility studies and estimated costs.

Such a vast proposal cannot be obtained overnight or without financial support and hard work, but isn't it degrading to realize that only 16 cents on the dollar (whether it is our dollar or our employer's dollar) is being returned directly to the member superintendent through the G.C.S.A.A. and that this percentage is declining. This article has attempted to illustrate that our problems of education, financial welfare and employment are regionally orientated and can be influenced only through a regional market. A national approach to regional problems can only create confusion and inefficiency. It is time that our employers realize that we are truly a progressive, professional organization that can establish goals but, more important, we are capable of attaining these goals.

Robert E. Siebert
Golf Course Superintendent
Naperville Country Club
Naperville, Illinois

Editor's Note: I am sure not everyone will agree or disagree with all the statements in the above article. No doubt "Bob Siebert" did considerable research work before the final draft. He brings out some very interesting points. If you agree or disagree, letters to the editor are always welcome.