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Answers to the Fairway Mowing Questionnaire

by the Editor

In the October issue I asked 22 questions on the use of light weight mowing equipment for fairways. I got 19 responses. I'm sure there are more than 19 golf courses using light weight mowers, but you have to work with what you get. Here are the responses to the questions:

1. What machines are you using? Toro PGM III - 6; Jac HF-5 - 5; Lesco 500 - 4; Toro 84 - 2; Toro 350 - 2; Jac Greens King - 2; Toro 450 - 1; Jac TF60 - 1.
2. How many machines are you using to mow fairways? 1 machine - 3 courses; 2 machines - 7 courses; 3 machines - 3 courses; 4 machines - 1 course; 5 machines - 2 courses; 6 machines - 3 courses.
3. Diesel or Gas Units? Diesel units = 7 Gas Units = 12
4. Number of cutting units the machine has? 3 units = 10; 5 units = 10 (some courses had a 3 gang unit and a 5 gang unit, thus at times the numbers do not always add up to 19)
5. Type of cutting unit: Floating Head = 16 Fixed Head = 4
6. Number of blades in the reel? 5 blades = 4; 6 blades = 2; 7 blades = 6; 8 blades = 3; 9 blades = 4; 10 blades = 2
7. Roller Type? Wiehle = 8; Full roller = 4; Swedged = 1
8. Do you weigh the cutting units? Yes = 6 courses No = 13 courses
9. Number of manhours to cut one acre of fairway? 15 min. = 4 courses; 30 min. = 4 courses; 45 min. = 2 courses; 1 hr. = 6 courses; 1 1/4 hr. = 1 course; 2 hrs. = 1 course (This question doesn't answer much since we don't know the machine or how many machines were used)
10. Number of acres of fairways you mow? 5 acres +/- = 1 course; 10 acres + = 2 courses; 15 acres + = 1 course; 20 acres + = 4 courses; 25 acres + = 4 courses; 30 acres + = 6 courses
11. How often does a fairway get cut per week? 2x = 2 courses; 3x = 8 courses; 4x = 4 courses; 5x = 1 course; daily = 1 course; every other day = 1 course
12. How many machines do you use when mowing fairways? This answer is almost the same as question 2 with the exception of two responses.
13. Are these machines used to also mow other areas? Yes at 9 courses, and No at 10 courses
14. What height of cut do you mow your fairways? 7/16 = 2 courses; 1/2 = 6 courses; 5/8 = 1 course; 9/16 = 6 courses; 3/4 = 1 course; 7/8 = 1 course; 1+ = 2 courses
15. Do you collect clippings? Yes at 11 courses, and No at 5 courses (who knows what the other 3 courses do????)
If yes, do you do it all the time? Yes at 6 courses and No at 5 courses
If no, when do you not? After fertilizing, when there are no seed heads, late September, October & November, when there is no dew
16. If you collect clippings — How do you dispose of them? Spread in roughs = 4; Haul to dumpster = 8 courses; haul to dump = 2
17. If you collect clippings, what equipment do you use to dispose of them? Cushman trucksters = 2; Trailers = 3; Vacuums = 3; Bags = 1

18. What is your cost of disposal? Weekly = NA Monthly = \$120 to \$1500.00. Average comes to \$641.00 per month

19. About how many hours per week does your mechanic need to service these units? 2+ hrs = 5 courses; 4+ hrs. = 5 courses; 8+ hrs. = 3 courses; 12+ hrs. = 3 courses; 15+ hrs. = 2 courses; 20+ hrs. = 1 course

20. How many extra cutting units/reels do you have as spares? 0 = 9 courses; 1 = course; 3 = 3 courses; 5 = 2 courses; 9 = 1 course

21. What were your start up costs to go to light weight mowing? The costs ranged from a low of \$4,000 to \$100,000.00! The average being \$45,357.00.

22. What machine would you change to today for mowing fairways if budget was no object? Lesco 500 = 6 courses; Toro PGM III = 4 courses; Toro 216 = 1 course; Jac HF5 = 1 course; Jac Greens King = 2 courses; 4 courses stated that they would not change from what they had; 2 courses said the ideal machine has not been made yet!

21.A. Asked why would you change. The answers are too long to enter all of them. What they pointed out are the following desires and wants in a light weight fairway mower: Diesel engine, lightweight, good traction, fixed heads, having verticuts units, power backlapping, better cut, mechanic friendly, manufactures don't listen to the superintendents — but they listen to Jack Nicklaus, quick height adjustment, heavy duty rollers, hydrostatic drive, low cost.

Well there you have it. I hope there are some answers for you and I'm sure there are still a lot of unanswered questions. My thanks to the 19 courses who responded and helped make this report.

“GCS Christian Prayer Breakfast”

Mr Mike Adkins will be the guest speaker for the 9th Annual GCSAA Prayer Breakfast in Houston. The Prayer Breakfast will be held in the George Brown Convention Center at 8:00 A.M. on Sunday, February 7th, 1988. Coffee and rolls will be served at 7:30 P.M. Please note that the Prayer Breakfast has a new day and time this year. We hope that this schedule will make it easier for all to attend. Mike Adkins brings a new flavor to the Prayer Breakfast. He is a real down home person who has dedicated his life to the teaching of God's love. His personal humorous life story of “A Man Called Norman” is one of the most popular programs ever aired on Dr. James Dobson's “Focus on the Family” radio program, and has now been made into a video presentation. Mike is an accomplished recording artist as well as a world-wide speaker.

If you are one who thinks that a Prayer Breakfast might be boring or dull, you will be in for a surprise. Come and hear Mike and you will agree that God does have a sense of humor. Remember, everyone is welcome! Mike is especially good with young people, so bring them along. There is no charge for admission.

Golf Course Maintenance Industry Exceeds \$3 Billion

(JUPITER, Fla.) — According to the new 1987 edition of the *Golf Course Maintenance Report*, the estimated worth of the golf course maintenance industry in the U.S. today is \$3.54 billion. This figure includes the cost of labor, equipment and supplies needed to maintain the 1.2 million acres of land occupied by the nation's 12,384 golf facilities.

The 80-page report was co-produced by the National Golf Foundation (NGF) and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA).

“The golf course superintendent is a vital element in the golf industry and plays a crucial role in maintaining the nation's golf courses so they are enjoyable for the 20.2 million U.S. golfers,” says NGF President and CEO David B. Hueber. “And the NGF is proud to have been part of this all-important study.”

The new report supercedes a much less comprehensive 25-page joint study report done in 1985. “We feel that this year's expanded report provides valuable information not available through any other source in the golf course and turf-grass industries,” says Donald E. Hearn, GCSAA President.

The 1987 report is broken out into nine geographic regions, and, by the public private facilities within those regions. It covers irrigation sources, expenses, labor hours and wages, golf car fleet size and maintenance costs, environmental conditions and professional responsibilities for each region.

The data was collected through a 10-page survey sent to more than 2,000 golf course superintendents throughout the U.S. in November 1986. The data is presented in a manner that allows the superintendents to make a comparative analysis of their operation to others within their region.

“To collect and analyze the differing operations of the superintendents throughout the country and then segment them by facility type is a service that not only directly benefits every superintendent but also, impacts everyone who enjoys the game,” Hueber says.

“Golf course superintendents and others involved in the maintenance of the nation's golf courses will find the information contained in this report to be useful in determining the factors that make their golf courses unique from others in their region,” says Hearn.

“Golf course superintendents were responsible for the purchase of over \$214 million in new equipment in 1986,” adds Hueber. “This report is an outstanding indication of the professionalism and dedication of the GCSAA and its members.”

A two-page summary of the *Golf Course Maintenance Report* is available from both the NGF and GCSAA at no charge. The complete report sells for \$90.

The NGF is golf's research and promotional organization. Founded in 1936, its membership includes more than 500 golf companies, national, state and local golf associations; golf course architects and builders; golf publications; and more than 3,000 golf courses across the United States.