

PR & Chemical Usage

by Joel Purpur, Superintendent

In January 1993, the GCSAA Regional Seminar at Oak Brook Hills featured the topic "Environmental Concerns in Golf Course Management". This seminar was well attended and stressed many important issues relating to our business and what we can and should do to be responsible, professional, and make every effort to be in compliance with the regulations of our business. The instructors also talked about using every opportunity to enhance our public relations skills and to promote golf courses as useful areas for our environment because if we don't we stand a good chance of becoming over-regulated by extremists who would like decisions made based on emotion rather than science.



After coming home from the seminar I composed a letter for our membership to promote golf and the environment. Although the letter is being reviewed by the Board of Directors at River Forest Country Club and has not been mailed to the membership yet, I would encourage every Superintendent to make an effort to promote our relationship with the environment at their own golf course. My rough draft is as follows:

Communications From the Grounds Department

Are golf courses bad for the environment? Are we poisoning our courses and ourselves as well?

The media has done a good job in panicking the public to attract T.V. audiences and sell newspapers. Danger and risks from chemicals are also a concern of mine because I am out on the course every day, directly involved with treatments of "plant protectants". I have attended many seminars and meetings to find out more on these subjects and it has become evident that most of the negativity is based on emotion rather

I leave these seminars feeling good about the golf course but worried about the vocal groups insisting on banning everything. than science. I leave these seminars feeling good about the golf course but worried about the vocal groups insisting on banning everything. These zero tolerance groups have a good chance of over-regulating the industry, tying the hands of turfgrass managers, and ruining golf as we know it today.

Golf courses are good for the environment in many ways. In this day and age of concrete, blacktop, and steel which absorbs and holds heat, golf courses have a natural cooling effect on the environment. The billions of living plants on our golf courses also produce vast amounts of oxygen from the carbon dioxide exchange for the air we breathe. Even in the inner-city, wildlife can thrive on a golf course. At River Forest Country Club I have seen Blue Herons, Kingfishers, Fox, Coyote, Deer, Hawks, Squirrels, and many other birds and animals.

The land also absorbs water helping in flood control as well as filtering out pollutants in rain water as they move into the ground. Aquifers are also recharged from rains for our water supply. Turfgrass areas have thatch which ties up pollutants and pesticides where they are broken down by microorganisms before they can move through the ground. Farming and other bare ground areas are at much more risk for compounds mov-

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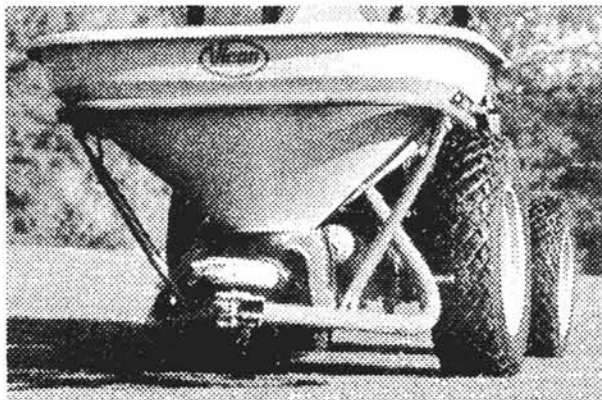
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ing through the soil into ground water than golf courses. Grass buffer strips are recommended around farm fields to prevent the run off of pesticides. This reinforces to us how important turfgrass areas can be.

Without the chemicals we use on our golf course, we would not be able to have the quality of turf we enjoy today. These chemicals are safe when used properly, and we have been instructed and licensed to use these materials which are all E.P.A. approved. We must all use common sense. If you come across an area you know has just been sprayed, use care when handling your golf ball. Perfume or bug sprays may be safe on your skin, but you wouldn't want to eat or lick them. Don't lick your golf ball and wash your hands after golfing as a precaution.

The environment has become a hot political topic these days and we are in danger of losing helpful tools because of misinformation and fear based on emotion rather than science. All of the attention on this issue is forcing the users of these products to think about safety and the environment which is good for all of us. It is up to us to promote golf courses as useful areas in the environment for wildlife and clean air. I am concerned about our environment as you

I am concerned about our environment as you are,

are, but the facts confirm that you should feel good about what the golf course means for the environment and in the community. So enjoy the land even more and help promote golf courses as useful areas for our environment, because others may perceive our courses much differently.



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January 27, 1993

To: Penn State Turfgrass Alumni
Dear Fellow Graduate,

On February 16, 1992 the Musser Board awarded \$4,000 scholarships to Doctoral candidates Jeffrey Klingenberg, University of Nebraska, Richard Davis, Purdue University and Zachary Reicher, University of Illinois. These Ph.D. candidates along with previous winners of Musser Scholarships are already making important contributions to turfgrass research and education.

In 1992, Penn State graduates donated \$2,434 by direct donations, Blue Tags, and the Ciba-Geigy rebate program.

The Ciba-Geigy program allows you to donate your rebate to the Musser Foundation. To donate, mark your rebate payable to The Musser Foundation.

A Blue Tag rebate is offered by Turf-Seed Inc. Ask your local seed distributor to give you the certified blue tags that he takes off the bags when he makes a seed blend. They are worth \$5.50 each to the Musser Foundation.

If you are willing to host a Musser Foundation Benefit golf tournament at your club please call Mike or me for details.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Dobie

Frank Dobie, President

Mike Bavier

Mike Bavier, Fund Raising Chairman

Send Blue Tags to: Mike Bavier
102 N. Roselle Rd.
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