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2. Do you know that a complete consulting program is available to all turf-related industries in Florida?

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3. Do you know that independent consultants can plan a program geared for optimum economic return on your golf course?

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BUDGET SAVING IDEAS

By BRAD G. KOCHER

During the last couple of years prices of goods and services have increased annually at the rate of 10-15% according to government surveys. Somehow, according to some of my personal surveys, we are paying 20-33% more in as short as a 12 month period for some goods.

Gas and oil prices are probably the biggest culprit directly or indirectly because of the compounding effect that fuel increases play in the U.S. economy. For example, a manufacturer buys an item for \$3.00 and lets say he does no further processing and tacks on 20% to the next distributor, who then adds 20% to the retailer, who adds 20% to the consumer. A \$3.00 item now costs \$5.18. Now, if the manufacturer at the beginning is charged an additional \$0.10 for higher shipping costs on that item, his base becomes \$3.10. We then add 20% to distributor and the cost becomes \$3.72. This continues from distributor to retailer to consumer each adding \$0.10 because of their shipping increases. The final price is now \$5.61. The price has now increased from \$5.18 to \$5.61. The compounding is realized because if \$0.30 (actual fuel increase is \$0.10 for manufacturer, distributor and retailer) were added to \$5.18 the price would be \$5.48. Instead \$0.30 worth of additional shipping costs due to fuel increases has been transformed into \$0.43 in increases to the ultimate consumer. What was a 3.3% increase to the manufacturer is now an 8% increase to the consumer.

I do not profess to be an economist. However, I do believe that some figures are misleading and that in making comparisons whether it be fertilizer, chemicals, new equipment or parts, I have seen 20-33% increases in the last 16 months. Gasoline has increased 56% from July 79 to July 80.

Many superintendents are finding themselves with budgets prepared last year expecting 8-12% price increases, and are saddled with the problem of trying to keep figures in line for the remainder of the year, when actual increases are in the 20%-33% range.

I have talked with many superintendents on how they are coping with this problem and what methods are being used to reduce costs. Hopefully, by sharing this information all of us can benefit by the ingenuity of some of our fellow superintendents.

Almost everyone is using better methods of determining gas usage. Gas sheets are being used to monitor consumption and in some instances each department in the club has a key or card that unlocks the pump and registers exactly how much gas is used per department. Close monitoring can show what piece of equipment or what department is getting out of line.

(Continued from Page 12)

More extensive use of non-selective herbicides such as round-up or paraquat to edge traps or edge around trees. If traps are chemically edged four or five times a year it reduces the vast amounts of labor it takes to edge a trap manually three or four times a year. Roundup around trees, if done neatly, can cut back on the use of rotary mowers or weedeater use.

The use of Sencor/MSMA combinations for goosegrass control is a big savings in both labor and pesticide cost. Prior to the now very popular use of Sencor, we would average six applications of MSMA at 3 lbs. ai/A. We now use two applications of Sencor/MSMA combination (1/8 lb. ai of Sencor plus 2 lbs. ai of MSMA per acre). Comparing herbicide costs: approximately \$35.00 per acre for six MSMA applications, \$12.00 per acre for 2 Sencor/MSMA applications. This does not take into account the labor and machine time for four extra applications and the fuel savings.

If a 70/30 or 80/20 topdressing mix is used, mix it with equal parts sand. Sand is far cheaper per ton than topdressing and when the two are mixed 50/50 it substantially reduces topdressing cost. Another method of saving when topdressing is using straight sand.

Ken Nicholson at the Woodlands has reduced his waste removal expense with the purchase of a chipper. He feels the \$3,200 expense for the chipper will pay for itself in a year's reduced waste removal expense. He has presently

reduced from six to four the number of 30 yard dumpsters used per month.

At Tamarac Country Club, Charlie Petzoldt has converted his power metering from seven meters to one meter for the whole club. He states the club is realizing substantial savings in power bills.

Mowing practices are another method of cost savings. Some superintendents are mowing areas less frequently, others have changed mowing heights. At Inverrary, we have raised the rough height from 1¼ to 1½ and have reduced mowing frequency from five times monthly to four in the summer months. This alone is a 20% reduction in labor and machine time with no reduction in quality.

One superintendent is reducing his overseeding rates by 20%. On an average 18-hole course with 130,000 square feet of greens, and assuming previous seeding rates of 30lb/1000 square feet, this will amount to approximately \$650.00 in savings in seed alone.

By sharing ideas and exchanging suggestions among superintendents, we can all benefit by reducing cost without sacrificing quality. We should all be aware that members or owners have to be able to afford the maintenance methods and the standards to which we maintain golf courses. The more efficient we become in times of rapidly rising costs the longer our country clubs and golf oriented facilities will survive and be able to serve the needs and desires of our nation's golfers.



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