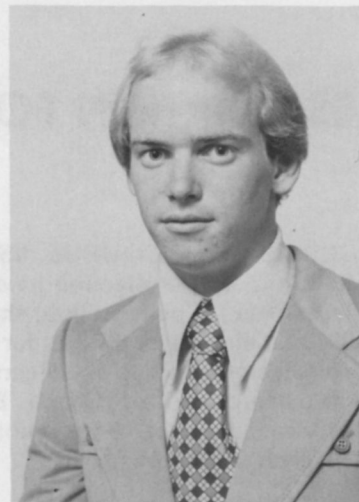


HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

By WALTER J. McMAHON



Being an on the Job Training Student from Lake City Community College, I feel very fortunate that I was sent to Country Club Aventura for my summer's OJT. It is a quality golf course, run by quality people. My summer OJT experience started on April 23, with my becoming familiar with the course and my job duties. I was hired primarily as spray technician. My main objective was to eradicate goosegrass from fairways and roughs. I was introduced to a product new to me for this task, Sencor, a relatively untested chemical. This product had not been used at Aventura and my first applications were to be experimental.

Mike Perham, Assistant Superintendent, told me we would be going at a rate of 1/2 lb./A, Sencor being 50w. This rate is 1/4 lb./A active ingredient. Along with the Sencor we used MSMA @ 2 lb./A. This rate discolored the Bermuda grass and showed up within 30 hours after spraying. First applications were made May 3, Hi T° for the day was 84°, Lo 74°. On May 4, every place I had turned the booms of my spray rig on showed up as a yellowed square of turf. I spent the next few days wondering how severe or permanent this discoloration would be. I covered the back nine of the north course fairways and roughs May 3 and 4. Monday, May 7, was rainy and we did not spray.

Superintendent, Dan Jones, after observing the effects of the first applications, changed the rate of the Sencor to 1/4 lb/A which is 1/8 lb/A active ingredient. This is the rate we used for all further applications. This rate discolored the Bermuda grass less and seemed to have the same effect on the goosegrass as the stronger rate. Everyone who attended the July 10 meeting of the South Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association is familiar with Sencor. I can not relay any formal data in the manner Dr. Johnson did. I have no percentage of injury, or damage, no plots measured. I can only relate my observations as an applicator. I covered 36 holes with two applications. In 17 days of spraying, from May 3 to June 5, the average Hi T° for that period was 86.8°, Lo 75.9°. We did not spray any days it rained. One day, May 9, we got a shower right after I had sprayed. The rain had no effect on the action of the chemical. The discoloration of the Bermuda still occurred as did damage to leaf tips and leaf margins of goosegrass plants. These applications did an outstanding job on the goosegrass population and also eradicated many broadleaf weeds, some in just one application.

The only weed not controlled by Sencor/MSMA was Nutsedge. Mike Perham told me that last summer they had to have two people spraying well into September to reach the point of control we had by mid June. They used MSMA & 2,4-D last summer. I know from past experience using MSMA & 2,4-D, the traditional herbicide combination in this area for weed control, that Sencor can save a lot of money for a superintendent. Why spray five or six times with MSMA & 2,4-D when you can achieve better results in two applications of Sencor & MSMA? Care must be taken not to spray any areas under stress from heat or lack of moisture. If your irrigation does not come on one night after a day of spraying Sencor, you will become aware of this fact very soon. You have to get water on that Bermuda grass after it has been sprayed, not immediately — just don't miss any normal irrigation or you run the risk of damaging the turf.

We were fortunate not to have killed anything. Those first few days of discoloration keep you wondering though. Recovery time is about 10 days. Some areas took longer to recover than others, but the fact remains all areas sprayed recovered; areas around sand traps took longer to recover and discolored greater than others. This could be related to soil texture; the relative proportions of sand silt and clay in a soil — sandy soils exhibit good aeration and infiltration of water. These characteristics of sand would put the Sencor to the root zone of the plant quicker around sand traps than other areas of the course that have a finer textured soil. Care must be taken spraying turf on sandy soils with Sencor. Around traps were areas I was particularly selective in spraying. Also, I stayed away from greens and trees, only fairways and roughs were sprayed.

I had a great learning experience at Aventura this summer. The use of Sencor is the most significant thing I have seen and to be the person to apply it gave me a knowledge of the chemical and its potential to kill goosegrass and broadleaf weeds, also its potential to injure Bermuda Grass. In conclusion, I would say that Sencor has a place in South Florida and I am sure more and more superintendents will be using it once they try it and gain confidence in the material. It is an excellent herbicide for controlling goosegrass. I will try to implement its use wherever I go to work next summer and hopefully will have as good results as achieved at Aventura.