Research Grants Awarded

Three research grants totaling $6,892.00 were awarded during the Annual Meeting of the Florida Turf-Grass Association Conference and Show held October 19 — 22 here.

These research grants were bestowed with the understanding that a research outline would be submitted to the Association publication, the *FLORIDA TURF*, at least annual progress reports and a final report, including conclusions gained from the research projects.

Dr. A. C. Tarjan, Professor of Nematology, University of Florida (Gainesville) was awarded a $1,000.00 grant to investigate the effectiveness of certain emulsifiers, wetting agents, and surface active agents in the suppression of populations of nematodes attacking turfgrass roots.

The efficiency of such materials has been reported in the past. These materials are not harmful to humans and it is improbable that they will be restricted by regulatory agencies.

Turf plots will be established on nematode-infected areas, treatments initiated and nematode counts taken at various time intervals. Dr. Tarjan will be supervising student help throughout the course of this eight-month study.

Drs. Philip Busey and Bruce Augustin, Turfgrass Breeder and Turfgrass Extension Specialist respectively, University of Florida Agricultural Research Center (Fort Lauderdale), were awarded a $3,892.00 grant which will enable the two scientists to conduct a survey of the turf species and varieties grown in established urban areas of Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa and southeast Florida. The main emphasis will be on the identification of St. Augustine varieties grown in residential lawns.

The information gathered will allow the analysis of market penetration of new varieties and will further allow scientists to tailor their pest control research to the grasses actually grown in the field. Additionally, St. Augustine sod from nurseries and other retail outlets will be collected and identified. This information will hopefully be used to reduce the confusion about St. Augustine sod varieties being sold and to provide consumer protection information.

This project could produce more efficient and reliable methods of vegetative identification and comparisons which could then be enlisted by agencies involved in enforcing certification and standard guidelines. The research will have an additional spin-off benefit in that it will increase the germplasm pool for future St. Augustine variety breeding programs.

The final project sponsored was to Dr. James A. Reinert, Professor of Entomology, University of Florida Agricultural Research Center (Fort Lauderdale). A $2,000.00 grant was made which will help support research being conducted on the two species of mole crickets which are serious pests of turfgrass in Florida and throughout the southeast United States. In the two year period from 1976 to 1978, it is estimated that mole crickets caused in excess of $100 million of damaga in Florida alone.

Funds will be used to establish two additional mole cricket trapping stations, one in Jacksonville and the other in the Naples area. These additional traps will complete a trap line across the state which has already been implemented by Dr. Reinert in cooperation with Dr. Tom Walker, Department of Entomology, University of Florida (Gainesville). Other traps are currently located in Gainesville, Bradenton, Orlando and Fort Lauderdale.

This study will provide information on the flight behavior and dispersion of mole crickets throughout Florida. Information gained should be useful in predicting when mole crickets might become damaging in a region of the state. Knowledge of their flight and dispersion will also help in developing and timing control strategies for these destructive turf pests.

With questionable chemical availability and efficiency, such a study could prove useful in determining points in the life cycle where mole crickets would be increasingly susceptible to chemical control. ■