

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Greens care precision and grooming

BY MARK LESLIE

Golf course mower manufacturers are continuing to take their greens-cutting precision and turf care to the fairways.

The two major trends in the fairway mower marketplace, experts say, are use of lightweight mowers and adding turf groomers, which have had so much success on greens.

In fact, superintendents are taking their riding triplex greens mowers and moving them right out onto the fairways.

As United States Golf Association Green Section ex-National Director Bill Bengueyfield said: "Some of these fairways nowadays are

better than the greens we used to put on in the old days."

Mowing

"Everybody's going toward lightweight mowing," said Dave Buchanan at Jacobsen Division of Textron. "The superintendents are more intuned to what the benefits are: less compaction and the ability to add striping, which is a big deal in fairways now. Once a superintendent sees that striping effect on the fairway, he wants it on his own course; and once the golfer sees it, he wants it, too.

"Also it's better for their turf because they don't have to aerate as much because the turf is

less compacted."

Pat Lewis and Chuck Ravis, superintendents at the private Portland (Maine) and Augusta (Maine) country clubs, agree that lightweight mowing on the fairways is making major inroads across the country.

Lewis said that is especially true on Northern courses. He said lighter equipment encourages growth of bentgrass, and many superintendents in the North are overseeding poa annua with bentgrass.

"The actual cutting units on the (fairway) mowers are the same as on greens mowers," Ravis said, "but they've got more reels."

Below is a chart listing the results of a survey of the major manufacturers of fairway mowers. Although most of the companies make more mowers for fairways, we asked them to choose two models for this questionnaire.

We have placed the chart in the centerspread so that readers can conveniently pull it out.

Company	No. models	Chosen model	Year Intro.	Reel type	Front or pull	Engine type	Price	Service centers	No. reels	Blades/reel
Brouwer Turf Equipment Woodbine Ave. Keswick, Ont., Can. L4P 3E9 Ian True 416-476-4311 Circle No. 201	2	720	1983	Belt	Pull	N/A	N/A	110	7	7-8
		M19	1983	Belt	Pull	N/A	N/A	110	5	7,8
Deere & Company John Deere Road Moline, Ill. 61265 Jeff Gredvig 309-765-8000 Circle No. 203	2	3325 Prof1 Turf Mower	1988	Hydraulic	Front	Diesel/liquid	N/A	80	5	6,8,10
		305 Hydraulic	1987	Hydraulic	Pull	N/A	N/A	80	5	4,6,8,10
Jacobsen Div. of Textron 1721 Packard Ave. Racine, Wis. 53403 Dave Buchanan 414-637-6711 Circle No. 204	14	LF-100	1987	Hydraulic	Front	Diesel/liquid	\$21,500 (2WD)	78	5	7
		HF-15 Turf Tractor	1980	Hydraulic	Front	Liquid or air	\$52,000	78	7	6,10
Kubota Tractor Corp. 550 W. Artesia Blvd. Compton, Calif. 90220 Doug Fencl 213-537-2531 Circle No. 205	13	VR5701	1989	Hydraulic	Pull	40	N/A	N/A	5,7	6,8
		VR5709	1989	Hydraulic	Pull	N/A	N/A	40	5	N/A
Lesco, Inc. 20005 Lake Rd. Rocky River, Ohio 44116 Ned Beach 800-825-3726 Circle No. 206	5	500D	1988	Hydraulic	Front	Diesel	N/A	N/A	5	6,8,9
		Lift 7-gang	1984	Ground	Pull	N/A	N/A	N/A	7	5,6,10
National Mower 700 Raymond Ave. St. Paul, Minn. 55114 John Kincaid 612-646-4079 Circle No. 207	N/A	Power Quint		PTO	Pull	Tractor	\$8,000	30	5	6
		84" Triplex	1954	Belt	Front	Gas	\$7,000	30	3	6
Ransomes Inc. One Bobcat Lane Johnson Creek, Wis. 53038 Maria E. Large 414-699-2000 Circle No. 208	5	Fairway 5000	1989	Hydraulic	Front	Diesel/liquid	\$22,000	45	5	6,7,9
		Motor 350D	1988	Hydraulic	Front	Diesel/liquid	\$37,000	45	5	6,8,11
Roseman Manufacturing Box 158, Rt. 29 Collegeville, Pa. 19335 Bill Rahling 800-752-7673 Circle No. 209	6	HGPF-7	1978	Hydraulic	Pull	N/A	\$24,760	28	7	8
		GMHR-7	1940	Ground	Pull	N/A	\$8,930	28	7	5
The Toro Company 8111 Lyndale Ave. S. Bloomington, Minn. 55420 Dennis Brown 612-887-8805 Circle No. 211	N/A	Reelmaster 223-D	1989	Hydraulic	Front	Diesel/liquid	N/A	54	5	5,8
		Reelmaster 450-D	1986	Hydraulic	Front	Diesel/liquid	N/A	54	5	5,7

move onto fairways at U.S. golf courses

Ravis said that while triplex mowers are being moved off the greens and onto the fairways, newer and lighter five-gang mowers are also providing "superb results."

Maria Large of Ransomes, Inc. said she has also found a strong desire from superintendents for lightweight systems "and ones that are more versatile, that can mow the roughs and tees as well as the fairways."

She added that the feature of easily (hydraulically) converting a mower from three to four or five cutting units—as offered by Ransomes' Fairway 5000—is a strong selling point.

Buchanan said the lighter units are "not

necessarily cutting lower but cutting a better pattern... And instead of 15 pounds per square inch, they have less than 10 psi. That adds up when you go over it every day or two."

Still, many superintendents in the South and at public and nine-hole courses nationwide won't buy into the lightweight market. Superintendents at many courses can't afford the \$20,000 it takes to buy these new units. Plus, more manpower is needed because it takes longer to mow the course.

"We're talking about a 100-inch cut as opposed to a 15- or 25-foot cut on a gang mower," Buchanan said. "It's just not economical for

that smaller course owner to go with the lightweight mower. It takes more time out on the course and in some cases it would take two machines."

Turf grooming

Meanwhile, the more manicured look is also moving onto the fairways.

The newest case in point is the use of turf groomers on fairways, removing thatch, controlling ground growth and upgrading the "feel" of the turf.

The idea is to "manicure the fairways a little bit more and make the grass stand up, in order to have healthier grass plants and give the

golfer a better lie," said Buchanan. "You don't have to have a lower height cut to make the ball sit up on the grass."

The turf groomers coming onto the market for fairways will be heavier duty because of twigs, tees and other damaging objects.

"We'll probably get to the point where everyone is going to manufacture a turf groomer for the fairway mowers, or they'll lose out on that part of the market," Buchanan said.

What's ahead in technology? Here's a hint. "We're even cutting the rough lower," said an assistant superintendent at Portland Country Club.

Width of cut	Weight	Ground pressure	Acres cut per hour	Height of cut	Traction drive	Reel drive	2,3 or 4 WD	Transport width	Transport speed	Mowing speed	Turning radius	Cab?	Grass catcher?	Turf conditioner?
199"	1,920	9 psi	7	1/2-3-1/4	N/A	Belt	N/A	93"	30	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
145"	1,400	9 psi	5	1/2-3-1/4	N/A	Belt	N/A	93"	30	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
138"	3,570	9.7 psi	N/A	3/8-3	Hydrostatic	N/A	2	89"	12	7.2	6"	No	Yes	No
142"	1,830	N/A	N/A	3/8-2-3/8	N/A	Hydraulic	N/A	91"	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	No
100"	2,100	<10 psi	5	1/4-1-3/16	Hydraulic	Hydraulic	2,4	86"	10	6	20"	N/A	Yes	Yes
180"	4,448	15.5 psi	9.9	3/8-3	Mechanical	Hydraulic	2	96"	20	5.5	108"	No	No	No
134-186"	N/A	N/A	11.3	3/8-3	N/A	Hydraulic	N/A	93"	N/A	4-7	N/A	N/A	No	Yes
134"	N/A	N/A	8.1	0-3	N/A	N/A	N/A	93"	N/A	4-7	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes
100"	1,950	N/A	4.5	1/8-1-3/8	Hydraulic	Hydraulic	3	72"	10	0-4.5	19"	No	Yes	Yes
171"	3,500	N/A	8.6	3/8-3-9/16	N/A	Ground	2	96"	20	0-5	96"	N/A	No	No
138"	1,200	N/A	6	3/4-2-1/2	PTO	Belt	N/A	96"	10	5	N/A	No	Yes	Yes
84"	900	N/A	3.5	3/4-2-1/2	Gear	Belt	2	60"	7	5	N/A	No	No	No
106"	1,860	N/A	6.4	5/16-1-3/16	Hydrostatic	Hydraulic	N/A	71"	9	6	17"	No	Yes	No
138"	3,571	N/A	7.9	1/2-2-9/16	Hydrostatic	Hydraulic	3	98"	15.5	7.5	N/A	Yes	Yes	No
186"	1,910	5.7 psi	7	1/2-3	N/A	Direct	N/A	98"	N/A	4-7	N/A	N/A	No	No
186"	8,100	N/A	7	1/2-3	N/A	Chain & sprocket	N/A	186"	N/A	4-7	N/A	N/A	No	No
95"	2,200	N/A	5.4	1/4-3/4	Hydrostatic	Hydraulic	2	87"	10	6	N/A	ROPS	Yes	Yes
137"	3,786	N/A	10.5	1/2-4	Hydrostatic	Hydraulic	2	92"	12.5	6	N/A	ROPS	No	Yes