

# Green Section deciding \$3M in research funds

BY PETER BLAIS

The United States Golf Association Turfgrass and Environmental Research Committee has begun meetings to discuss how \$3 million in research money on the environmental impact of golf courses will be spent.

The Research Committee began meeting in July to evaluate the 83 proposals received from land grant universities throughout the United States. The proposals deal with the effects of pesticides and fertilizers on the environment, alternative methods of pest control and the influence of golf courses on people and wildlife.

The committee will make its final funding decisions by December, according to USGA Green Section National Director Jim Snow.

Some successful proposals, especially those in the North, where experimental plantings need to be made before the onset of winter, could be notified earlier, he added.

The 10 to 12 proposals chosen begin receiving money by next February, the USGA official said.

The proposals have ranged from a \$10,000, three-year University of Maryland study on valuation of cultivation techniques for white grub control to a \$395,000, three-year University of California at River-

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side study of the fate of pesticides and nitrogen in a turfgrass environment.

The \$3 million funding package is part of the USGA's overall three-year, \$5.4 million research effort, more than double any previous spending on research.

"Right now the game is threatened by the lack of knowledge about the environmental impact of fertilizers and pesticides," said USGA President C. Grant Spaeth. "I can

think of nothing more urgent to golf than to answer this environmental question and to propose responsible solutions."

The Research Committee plans to expand its current 13 members to include officials from a government agency like the Environmental Protection Agency, an environmental organization like the Audubon Society and a technical turf expert, according to Snow.

The committee currently consists

of Chairman Snow; Green Section Committee Chairman Raymond Anderson; Sea Island (Ga.) Golf Club superintendent Tom Burton; Iowa State University Professor Nick Christians; USGA Executive Director David Fay; University of California at Riverside Professor Vic Gibeault; Peter Hayes, director of the Sports Turf Research Institute in Bingley, England.

Also Howard Kaerwer, a retired turfgrass breeder with Northrup-King, Inc.; USGA Director of Green Section Research Mike Kenna; Director of Green Section Administration Dean Knuth; Michigan State University Professor Paul Rieke; Golf Course Superintendents Association of America secretary/treasurer Bill Roberts; and Jim Watson, vice president of Toro Co.

The project will be the responsibility of the Green Section Committee chaired by Anderson. The GCSAA is cooperating with the USGA on this enterprise.

Spaeth promised the USGA will enter the program with no preconceived position.

"We must maintain a position as the honest and independent broker," he said.

The studies will examine whether fertilizers and pesticides contaminate ground water and, if they do, the duration of their impact.

The USGA plans to appoint a wildlife ecologist to help golf courses develop and preserve wildlife habitat.

"Golf courses are often ideally suited for the preservation of wildlife species and we want to assist our members in improving their habitat," Spaeth said.

## Field days

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tralia, New Zealand and other countries.

Stanley said field days are "a very important marketing tool because people can see, first-hand, our research effort and how legitimate it is, talk to our staff, and see that we do things one way — the right way. And they appreciate that.

"It's also a good chance to communicate important information to our customers."

A tour took attendees to Turf Seed's 110-acre research site.

Steve Tubbs said Turf Merchants limits its field day to distributors and the media. This year's, attended by 125, was "a time to look at what's new, to learn, and to have a barbecue and socialize as well as educate," he said.

Tubbs said Turf Merchants unveiled new varieties and explained how and why certain varieties were chosen over others to develop — "all things that help them sell the seed."

Turf Merchants also conducted a tour of its 130-acre research site which includes 5,000 turf plots and breeder blocks.

The future of field days? They will keep growing. "We've already got next year's planned," said Jacklin with a laugh. "Next June 18 and 19."

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