

Walk-behind greens mowers more popular

Continued from page 34

With golfers demanding lower cuts to get ever faster putting speeds, "having some type of grooming unit is becoming very important in allowing a slightly higher cut while maintaining speed," said Pat Lewis, superintendent at Portland (Maine) Country Club.

Basically, groomers grab hold of horizontally growing turfgrass, like creeping bentgrass, and straighten it up before cutting it, said Jacobsen's Buchanan, whose company introduced its Turf Groomer™ in 1986. Most manufacturers offer some type of grooming unit.

Grooming units allow superintendents to cut grass higher, resulting in healthier turf, while often yielding even faster speeds. Jacobsen, for instance, claims regular use of its groomer attachment increases green speed by 25 percent. It also helps eliminate graining and control thatch.

Grooming units can also be used every time a green is mowed, as opposed to verti-cutting units that perform some of the same functions, but can be used only occasionally because they are "too aggressive to the grass," Muser said. Consequently, grooming units keep putting speeds uniform year-

"Grooming units are probably the biggest advance in the past five to 10 years."

— Dave Buchanan, Jacobsen

round.

"Grooming units are probably the biggest advance in the past five to 10 years," Buchanan said.

Groomers have helped overcome some of the problems presented by the other major innovation, thinner bed knives. The seemingly paper-thin bed knives on the market today allow cuts as low as 5/64-inch. While

that increases green speed, it puts tremendous stress on turf and makes it more susceptible to disease.

The only way to maintain green turf at that height is to apply more chemicals, a practice that puts the golf industry at odds with environmentalists.

"Twenty years ago you didn't

even think about the 1/8-inch cuts that are so common today. People laughed at you if you went below 3/16-inch. With the new bed knives you can go well below 1/8-inch," Fearis said.

"The older bed knives were much thicker," Muser added. "They lasted longer, but you were limited to how close you could cut by the blade's lip height. Now everyone has these tournament knives with virtually no lip. They cut lower, but they don't last as long. You sacrifice blade life for a low cut."

While the life of a bed knife may be short, the walk-behind mower itself is likely to live to a ripe old age.

"If you've got a good mechanic, you can run these things for years," Latham said. "When they get too old to use on greens, they can be used on tees and the approaches to greens. Chicago Golf Club just removed some 20-year-old units from service."

A handful of companies sell walk-behind greens mowers including Bunton Co., Deere & Co., The Toro Co., Jacobsen and Ransomes. How does a superintendent choose the right unit for his course?

"Get a demo of each type," Fearis recommended. "Let the people who cut your greens try them all. Then survey each one. Usually there is overwhelming support for one particular model."

Turf 2nd only to tobacco in N. Carolina

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Turfgrass ranks second to tobacco in economic impact in North Carolina, according to the state's Department of Agriculture.

This body estimates that impact to exceed \$1 billion in the 1990s. An economic impact study in 1986 valued annual turfgrass expenditures at \$734 million.

Turf industry news was discussed at the annual North Carolina Turfgrass Convention and Trade Show.

"The work we have begun this year," said Ray Avery, president of the Turfgrass Council of North Carolina, "shows the importance of turfgrass to our state. We have made real progress in setting up the North Carolina Turfgrass Foundation, which will help support the continuing research efforts of North Carolina State University's Agricultural Extension Service and the Turf Work Group and help all of us provide the best quality turf."

Avery is golf course superintendent at Quail Hollow Country Club in Monroe.

"As the turf industry continues to grow, so will our need to reach all segments of the turfgrass industry — everyone from homeowners to commercial developers, from municipal maintenance to sod producers will benefit from our efforts with the Turfgrass Council," said Sam Linker, immediate past president of the Turfgrass Council and superintendent at Mallard Head Country Club in Mooresville.

**This publication gives
you good reading,
good writing
and good arithmetic.**

We present the information in our articles clearly, accurately and objectively. That's good writing. Which means good reading.

We present the information in our circulation statement clearly, accurately and objectively. That's good arithmetic.

BPA (Business Publications Audit of Circulation, Inc.) helps us provide precise and reliable information to both advertisers and readers.

An independent, not-for-profit organization, BPA audits our circulation list once a year to make sure it's correct and up to date. The audit makes sure you are who we say you are.

This information enables our advertisers to determine if they are reaching the right people in the right place with the right message.

The audit also benefits you. Because the more a publication and its advertisers know about you, the better they can provide you with articles and advertisements that meet your information needs.

BPA. For readers it stands for meaningful information. For advertisers it stands for meaningful readers. Business Publications Audit of Circulation, Inc.
360 Park Ave. So., New York, NY 10010.

