

Multiple seed company field days reveal many new developments

From STAFF REPORTS

Following is an overview of a week's worth of turfgrass field days held in mid-June throughout Oregon and Washington.

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Turf Merchants Inc. will add several test sites around the country in the next few years, according to new Research Director Dr. Mike Richardson.

The company predicts a new perennial ryegrass, Laredo, will be a major performer with its high endophyte count, fine texture and dark-

green color.

Cobalt is TMI's newest variety of Kentucky bluegrass. The Tangent, Ore.-based firm has also signed a cooperative marketing agreement with O.M. Scotts Co. to market Viva, a bluegrass well-suited to blends.

TMI has become a major player in the poa trivialis overseeding market, particularly with its Cypress brand. The company controls about 20 percent of the golf course overseeding market, Tubbs estimated. "Poa triv comes up as quick [as ryegrass], can be mowed closer

and transitions out better," he said.

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With increased dependence on effluent for irrigation, **International Seeds Inc.** is testing several varieties for salt tolerance. Marker slender creeping fescue and Eureka fescue have performed well with salt concentrations as high as 3 tons per acre, according to researcher Steve Johnson. Quatro, a new sheep fescue well-suited to fairways and roughs, will be tested later this year.

ISI unveiled two perennial ryes that will be available commercially

this fall. Top Hat is an endophyte-enhanced joint release with Rutgers University the company says is particularly resistant to billbugs, sod webworm, chinch bug and selected nematodes. Essence+, also enhanced with the endophyte A. lolli, will be available in smaller quantities.

Other new ISI releases include Viper creeping bentgrass, Houndog V tall fescue, Fortuna Kentucky bluegrass and Mirage Bermudagrass.

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Turf-Seed Inc. highlighted 11 new turfgrasses during its 12th annual field day including Brightstar perennial ryegrass; Tomahawk tall fescue; Unique, Livingston and Blacksburg Kentucky bluegrasses; Winterplay poa trivialis; Seabreeze Slender Creeping, Discovery Hard, Tiffany Chewings and Shademaster II Creeping Red Fine fescues.

Turf-Seed Inc. is evaluating a half dozen creeping bentgrasses developed by former Pennsylvania State University researcher Dr. Joe Duich at its North Carolina test farm.

The PSU entries are outperforming other varieties and "could be the biggest quality jump in the history of putting surfaces," according to Dr. William Meyer, president of Turf-Seed subsidiary Pure Seed Testing Inc.

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Among **Jacklin Seed Co.**'s new releases this year are three new perennial ryegrasses, J-1703, J-1704 and J-1705; Jackpot, a fine-leaved, seeded Bermudagrass; J-36, a dark-green zoysiagrass and W-3-2, a seed-propagated zoysia with improved rust resistance; Ecostar hard fescue, MX-86 sheep fescue and Pixie semi-dwarf tall fescue.

Research Director Dr. Doug Brede said his seven-year effort to develop an elite Kentucky bluegrass that stays green all year is bearing fruit. "There is nothing presently like these varieties on the market today," he said of the 1992 and 1993 series.

Laboratory Researcher Suichang Sun is trying to introduce endophytes — a naturally occurring insect repellent within certain varieties — into bentgrass and Kentucky bluegrass. "That should be exciting news for superintendents trying to minimize pesticide use," said Jacklin researcher and former USGA Green Section agronomist Jim Connolly.

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Shade trials were the focus of **Pickseed West's** field day. The company's fine fescues, particularly the dwarf types, performed best followed by Kentucky bluegrasses and perennial ryes, according to researcher Dr. Jerry Pepin.

Superintendents should be especially interested in Cutter perennial rye, Cato creeping bentgrass and Indigo Kentucky bluegrass, Marketing Manager David Friesen said. "All scored exceptionally well at the turf trials," he added.

Construction and renovation of Pickseed's headquarters, which began in November, is nearly complete.

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Seed Research of Oregon is working extensively with Colonial bentgrass, according to Research Director Leah Brilman. SR 7100 uses smaller amounts of fertilizer, generates less thatch and shows greater resistance to dollar spot and brown patch than typical fairway bentgrasses, she said. It should be available in a blend with fine fescue in the near future, she added.

Seed Research is also working
Continued on page 26

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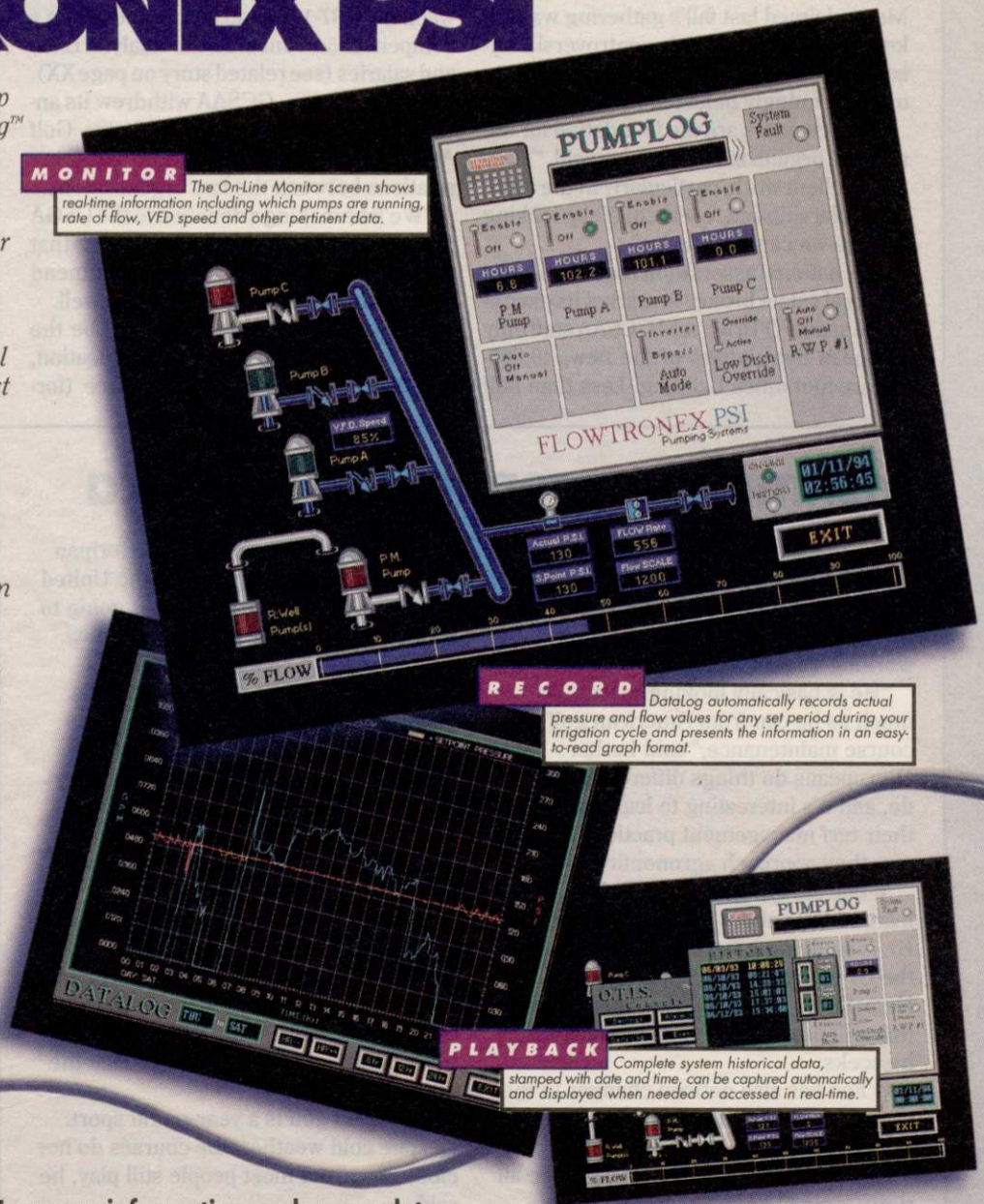
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CAMPAIGN TARGETS GOLFERS

Stuntz: Initial returns in Kansas research fundraiser disappointing

By MARK LESLIE

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The early returns in the Kansas green industry's attempt to tap golfers for research funds are disappointing, according to the idea's main proponent.

Contributions have been given by only six of the 31 golf clubs, or 20 percent, that have returned their payments to the United States Golf Association's Golfing Handicap and Information Net-

work (GHIN), said Dick Stuntz, superintendent at Alvamar Country Club here. Clubs are being asked in their billing document to make a \$2 donation above their \$9 payment to the Kansas Golf Association (KGA).

The state has 19,000 golfers with GHIN handicaps, and if 20 percent of them donate the requested \$2, the total contribution will be \$7,600.

"If that is the amount, I'll be

disappointed," said Stuntz, who coordinated the fund-raising effort through the Kansas Turfgrass Foundation and KGA.

The organizations were hoping to raise \$15,000 to \$18,000 this initial year of the effort. "I was hoping 50 percent of the clubs would participate," Stuntz said, "and that we could build on that."

He said he believes many clubs had already set member dues for the year and couldn't manage the

extra donation under their budgets. Next year, they will be approached earlier, he said.

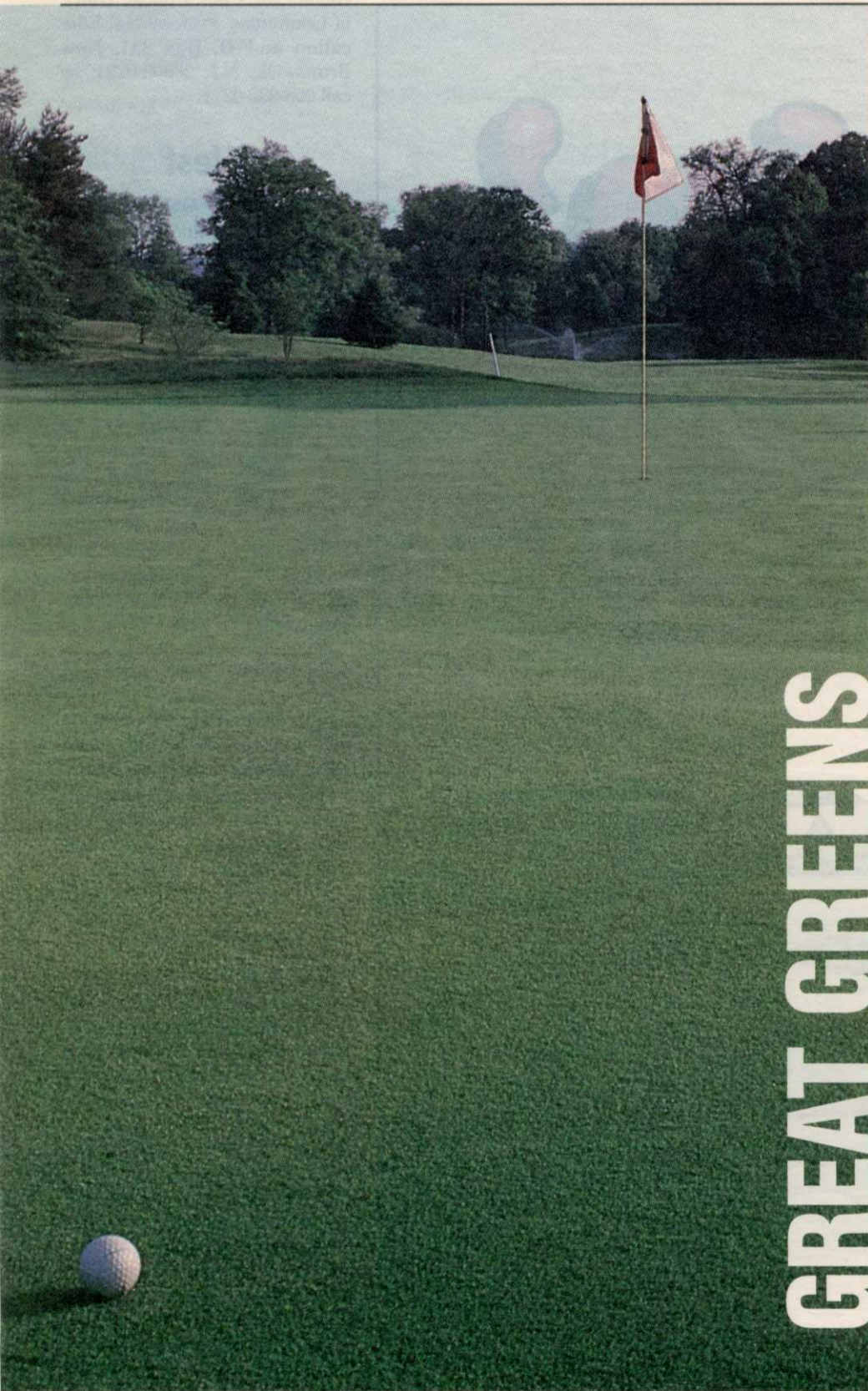
"It's difficult to reach the people with any of these types of programs," Stuntz said. "It's probably going to take some years to build it up."

Pointing out that most of the first 31 clubs who paid are small, he said: "I think bigger clubs are more likely to participate. The percentage [of participation]

should go up."

This year, the KGA will have another round of promotion, writing and telephoning clubs that did not pay and asking them if they are aware of the solicitation.

The potential around the country of tapping into handicap users is enormous, say supporters of this Kansas campaign. In Kansas' case, funds will support research at Kansas State University



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Engelke: Greens fans misperceived

The idea that greens fans are installed to cool the turfgrass plant is "one of the greatest misperceptions of the industry," according to a Texas A&M professor.

"The only reason to use a fan is to dry — not to cool — the plant," said Dr. Milt Engelke. "Fans do cool, but their primary function is removing the moisture from the plant, so more moisture can actually pass up from the root system through the plant. That does the cooling, reduces the algae and helps with all the disease."

"Bentgrasses, and especially these new ones, have the capability to cool themselves. They have a persistent root system that allows them to draw water from below, and they transpire."

Many people install fans for cooling purposes, he said. "But, in fact, you end up with an algae build-up if the weather stays high humid. Algae will cause degradation of your greens."

In areas where humidity is too high, Engelke said, "If a superintendent can cut back on irrigation, they will have a lot fewer problems with algae."

— M.L.

Seed field days

Continued from page 22 with velvet bentgrass, generally considered the smoothest-rolling putting surface available, Brilman reported. The company says SR 7200 velvet bentgrass (available this fall) is the first new seeded velvet on the market in the last 20 years and has better disease resistance than older varieties.

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Advanta Seeds West will soon begin marketing two new tall fescues, experimental trial numbers 006 and 007. The company has also started shipments of Hector, a new creeping fescue.

Guest speaker Dr. Ronny Duncan of the University of Georgia discussed his research on stress-induced crops.

Georgia's high temperatures and humidity help researchers identify the potentially best performers in the South and the rest of the country, he said.

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