

Experts from other universities assist Clemson in move to upgrade turf program

CLEMSON, S.C. — Drawing from the experiences of experts from other college turfgrass programs, Clemson University is "jump-starting" its turfgrass studies, according to the chairman of its Horticulture Department. At the same time, it is starting a new off-campus turfgrass program and is asking the state Legislature to more than double its turfgrass research funds.

"They all just happen to be coming together at the same time," said Dr. John Kelly, who is also a co-founder of the South Carolina Turfgrass Foundation, which raises money for the Clemson research.

"We, as a land grant institution, have the responsibility to stay abreast of cash products and turfgrass issues related to tourism in the state," said Jeff Martin of the university administration.

Colleagues from five turfgrass programs around the country — especially Gordon LaFontaine and Joe Vargas from Michigan State University — consulted Clemson on its turfgrass plans.

"They explained the dynamics of their programs and the types of things they did. We jump-started our program by using their information," Kelly said. "We were able to jump a number of years ahead."

Clemson's four-year turfgrass program now has 35 undergraduates.

Meanwhile, Clemson is developing what Kelly termed "a distance-delivery degree program" to the Myrtle Beach area. It will be taught by faculty from Clemson research centers and via satellite in partnership with Horey Georgetown Tech. Students receiving two-year degrees from Horey Georgetown will be able to stay in Myrtle Beach and take two more years of classes, long-distance, to complete a four-year degree program.

Coincidentally, Clemson has submitted a \$915,000 budget request to the state Legislature "specifically to expand our turfgrass research program," Kelly said. If passed, it will more

than double the current research. "Right now, we have little bits and pieces of people's time. They might spend 10 percent of their time on turf and 90 percent on another commodity. We want to purchase more of that time to deal specifically with turfgrass problems," he said.

South Carolina's 336 courses account for \$450 million in income a year, making golf, the state's

first- or second-leading industry, Kelly said.

"This is a very critical year for us," he said. "We have the funding to build the golf course (see accompanying story). But we do not have a pool to fund the research and education programs we want. We are seeking donors for that part, too. If everything comes together we will have a very well-developed program."

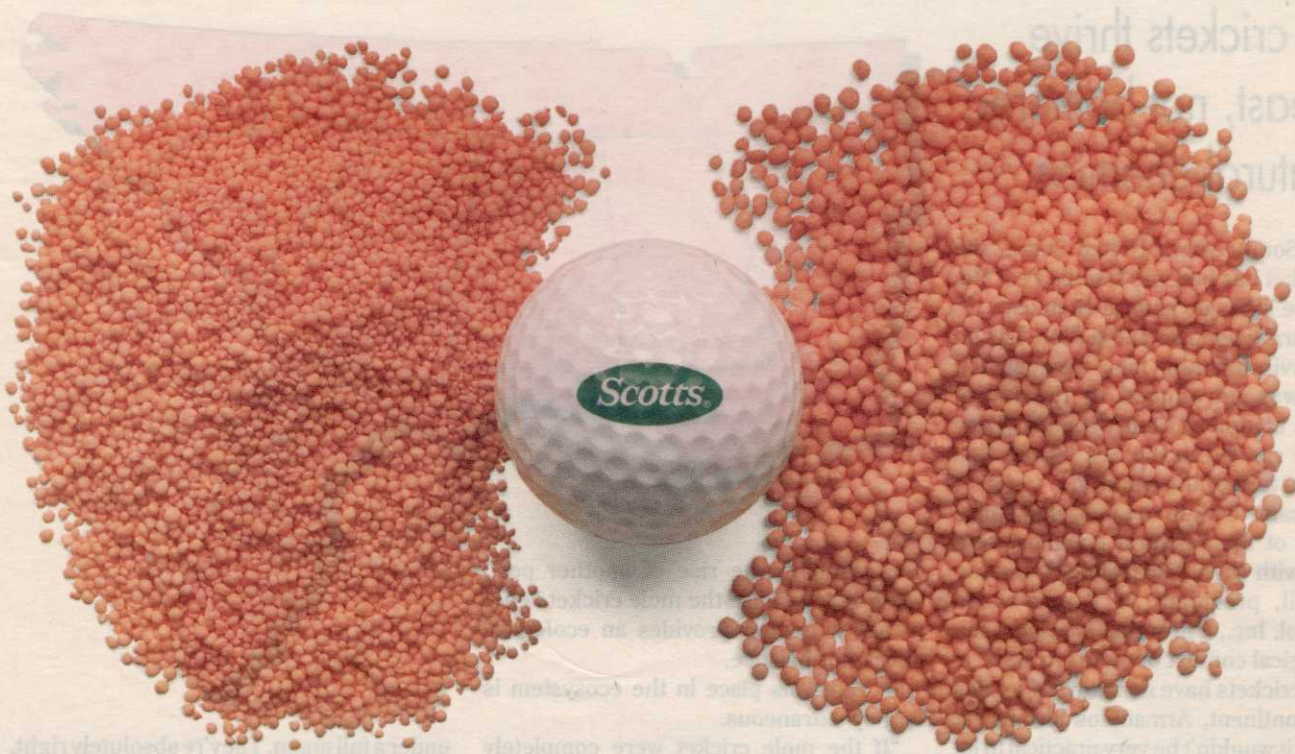
John Deere, regional distributors add equipment boost to Clemson

CLEMSON, S.C. — John Deere and its distributors in the Carolinas have given Clemson University what one official called "an incredible gift" for its new golf course.

Greenville (S.C.) Turf and Tractor and Revels Turf and Tractor of Fuquay-Varina, N.C., joined the parent company in providing, for an

undisclosed fee, "a complete package of every piece of equipment a golf course could need," said Greenville Turf and Tractor owner Lon Fleming.

"It was done with training of superintendents in mind, and hopefully it will enhance their education," said Fleming.



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RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS CONCLAVE

TIFTON, Ga. — A golf tournament at Spring Hill Country Club launches first-day activity of the 48th annual Southeastern Turfgrass Conference April 11-12.

Afternoon highlights are registration and inspection of Experiment Station research plots and a discussion of turf research by U.S. Golf Association (USGA) and University of Georgia researchers.

Second-day sessions feature an educational programs.

Speakers include Jim Snow, national director of the USGA Green Section; Drs. Bob Carrow, Gil Landry, Ed Brown, Wayne Hanna, Glenn Burton, Will Hudson and B.J. Johnson of the University of Georgia.