



Tim Moraghan, principal, ASPIRE Golf [tmoraghan@aspire-golf.com]. Follow Tim's blog, Golf Course Confidential at <http://www.aspire-golf.com/buzz.html> or on Twitter @TimMoraghan

NOT-SO DIRTY DOZEN

Many of us were lucky to grow up in the industry with researchers and scientists who have become legends, among them James Beard, Joe Duich, Joe Vargas, and Paul Rieke. We owe these gentlemen and their legions of research assistants a huge debt of gratitude for what they've done to advance turf over the past three decades.

So who are the next grass gurus? Is there a new generation of scientific wunderkind getting ready to set the standards? Indeed there is.

As I've attended turf conferences, regional meetings and research field days, I've met and listened to a new crop of talented young agronomists who soon will be changing our world. Some of them might not yet be known to you, but they—and their research—won't stay under covers for long.

Here is a list of 12 up-and-comers to keep your eye on, men and women working in soils, turf, weeds and other disciplines critical to our profession. Apologies to the many others not on this list, and thanks to you all for working hard to make our lives, and work, better in so many ways.

Dr. Aaron Patton – Purdue University,
Department of Agronomy
ajpatton@Purdue.edu
765/ 494-9737

Research Interest: Weed Biology and Control Turfgrass Extension. Current projects include warm season turf grass germplasm evaluation and product evaluation of biopesticides.

Comment: New-wave pesticide research will result in a wider variety of safe products, which besides improving turf will reduce the pressure on superintendents.

Dr. Dara Park – Clemson University,
Horticulture Department
darep@Clemson.edu
843/ 319-4957

Research Interest: Turf grass, Soil & Water Quality and Quality in Turf grass Systems

Comment: The use and dispersal of effluent water on golf course and landscape turf grass can only grow. Work like this will keep us better informed on how to use effluents wisely and effectively.

Dr. Doug Soldat – Wisconsin University,
Department of Soil Science
djsoldat@wisc.edu
608/ 263-3631

Research Interest: Evaluation of use of biosolids for improving the economics and environmental sustainability of sod production. Identify water and nutrient management strategies to promote healthy turf grass and minimize the loss of water and nutrients from the root zone.

Comment: It all starts with a properly functioning rooting zone.

Dr. Michelle DeCosta – University of Massachusetts, Stockbridge School of Agriculture
mdacosta@psis.umass.edu
413/ 545-2547

Research Interest: Drought Stress and Low Temperature Stress physiology of Cool Season Turf grass. Irrigation management and water use.

Comment: With winter golf on the rise—for which we can thank or curse “global warming”—preventing winter turf decline will lead to more golf and more golfers.

Dr. Gerald Henry – University of Georgia, College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences
gmhenry@uga.edu
706/ 542-2461

Research Interest: Crop and Soil Sciences. Monitored MSMA leaching po-

tential in Bermudagrass. Performance testing of sports fields for assessment of player safety and field playability.

Comment: Golf isn't the only area of turf grass research. Other types of playing fields need better study. And sports field management could offer other career opportunities for us.

Dr. Stacey Bonos – Rutgers University,
Department of Plant Biology and Pathology
bonos@aesop.rutgers.edu
848/ 932-6367

Research Interest: Developing improved pest resistance and stress tolerant turf grasses for conservation and environmental enhancement in the Northeast. Turf grass breeding for disease resistance and salt tolerance in various turf grasses species.

Comment: The more we can make turf resistant to wear and tear, the more golf—and other games—we can play.

Dr. Jim Kearns – North Carolina State University, Department of Turf Grass Science

jkerns0@gmail.com
608/ 516-8917

Research Interest: Turf grass pathology. In four years at University of Wisconsin the focus was based on disease of cool season turf grasses, in particular dollar spot and snow molds. There will be a shift in research focus once settled into the NC State University system.

Comment: Jim brings a wealth of cool-season turf grass disease experience to the Carolinas, where there remains a large percentage of creeping bent grass.

Dr. Kelly Kopp – Utah State University,
Plants, Soils and Climate
Kelly.kopp@usu.edu

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435/ 797-6650

Research Interest: Water conservation, Ornamental Horticulture and Extension. Work focuses on turf grass water use efficiency, water-wise landscaping principles, water and nutrient management in turf grass. Working closely with Utah state agencies for best water management practices.

Comment: No matter where we live and work, we need to develop best-management practices for water use as well as pesticide and nutrient run-off and management. Water is a valuable resource everywhere.

Dr. Scott McElroy – Auburn University, College of Agriculture, Agronomy and Soils

Jsm0010@auburn.edu
334/ 844-3992

Research Interest: Evaluation of herbicides for use in turf grass management and development of new sustainable organic and non-synthetic pesticide weed management practice for use in turf management.

Comment: Reduced pesticide use, alternative practices, and pesticide development will lead to cleaner, safer and weed-free golf courses.

Dr. Brian Horgan – University of Minnesota, Department of Horticulture Science

bphorgan@umn.edu
612/ 624-0782

Research Interest: Work revolves around nutrient fate and general turf grass management. In addition, research focuses on salt tolerance in cool season grass, water use and distribution practices.

Comment: You would think the “Land of Ten Thousand Lakes” wouldn’t have water concerns. But it does and water is very valuable to Minnesota’s economic development.

Dr. Alec Kowalewski – Oregon

State University, Department of Turf Grass Science

Email not available
541/ 737-3695

Research Interest: On getting settled at Oregon State, his research will focus on maintaining quality turf grass conditions within operating budget restrictions, reducing the impact to the environment through proper turf grass practices, researching various turf grass varieties for those species which use less fertility and water.

Comment: Effective management of turf grass resources is essential if we are going to continue to produce quality playing conditions.

Dr. Doug Karcher – University of Arkansas, Department of Horticulture

karcher@uark.edu
479/ 575-5723

Research Interest: Research program to improve the functional and aesthetic quality of turf grass through the refinement of cultural practices, especially those pertaining to soil management. Developed digital image analysis techniques to quantify turf grass cover and turf grass color.

Comment: If we can improve what turf looks like, the consumer will be more open to the various practices we employ.

As this “Not So Dirty Dozen” proves, there is no shortage of important agronomic ideas to study in this industry. But their success relies on our support. We can’t let funding be allocated to the same participants year after year after year. Be a voice for progress and get involved with local, regional and national groups encouraging research that will help make our lives better and safer.

Be on the lookout for new and better ideas and when you see them, let everyone else know. **GCI**



Training should be conducted by management and not fellow workers with longevity.

At the point of orientation, I suggest explaining some of the following items:

- What is a golf course?
- What are our objectives?
- What are the standard work rules including items like tardiness, absenteeism and anything else that would be included in an employee manual?
 - Pesticides, their storage and usage, location of MSDS sheets
 - Hazards in the workplace
 - Emergency evacuation information including fire exits and also location of extinguishers, etc.
 - Disaster Plan if applicable that might be for tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, etc.

It could easily take a few days to cover these items for new hires. For those superintendents that choose to delay this, you are really putting yourself and your club at great risk. If something happens to an employee in those first days of employment without this type of training, then the facility will likely be liable.

In recent years, it is fairly standard to receive either a training video or an operator manual for most of the equipment used on a golf course. Each employee must read or view these training and safety manuals so that they understand how the equipment works and how to use it in a safe manner. Should an accident ever occur this will be one of the first things an investigator or the injured parties will look into. “Was the employee properly trained?” If not, it is hard to defend safe usage of any piece of equipment. Be sure that employees view or read this material and then sign off on their understanding of the information and keep that on file.

OUTCOMES. Imagine a well-trained team of employees that operates in a precision manner to accomplish the goals and objectives of your facility. Imagine a team that understands what spells success for the golf course facility. Imagine a team that all knows how to execute daily the plan that you have for them. If this sounds like a fantasy it may be because you have never worked in an operation that holds training as one of the fundamentals for success. I suggest you visit a facility that utilizes formal training and see what their efficiencies are and their ease of management.

Cross training of employees will lead to several things. Not only are people checked off to do a variety of tasks, but they also are inspired to take on more training that could lead to more responsibility and potential pay increases. The more an employee knows and can do for the facility then the more value he has to the employer. Employees that are learning and growing are happy employees and this will lead to longer tenure with up to date skills. **GCI**