

Fertilizer Programs, Management Practices Investigated in Survey

Many Interesting Facts About Size of Courses, Maintenance Needs Uncovered by Poll

A SURVEY recently completed by a maintenance supply manufacturer in conjunction with GOLFDOM reveals several interesting facts concerning current course fertilizer practices, the extent of the supt's knowledge and understanding of turf management practices and some of his opinions toward his position.

A great deal of valuable information also was obtained as to course area sizes, wear and tear on turf areas as indicated by number of rounds played on individual courses and irrigation practices. In addition, sources of information used in deciding on management programs and the persons responsible for determining what kind of fertilizer programs are to be pursued, were investigated.

Only the northeastern and part of the central or midwest sections of the U. S. were covered by the survey. However, since nearly two-thirds of the country's courses are located in these areas, it was decided that the survey's findings would be as accurate and representative as if all the courses in the U. S. were included in the poll.

Get 545 Returns

More than 3,300 questionnaires were sent to supts. and 545 returns (16.5 per cent) were made. This is exceptionally high when it is considered that returns in almost any kind of a mail survey rarely run over 10 per cent. Of the returns that were received, 19 had to be eliminated because the questionnaires were improperly answered. Final figures were thus compiled on 526 questionnaires.

As for the average size of courses in the northeast and midwest sections of the country, these figures were arrived at:

Greens ^o -sq. ft.		Tees ^o -sq. ft.		Fair-ways	Grounds
Total Area	Area Per Green	Total Area	Area per Tee	Acres	Acres
9-HOLE					
34,130	3,792	14,370	1,597	45.8	4.1
18-HOLE					
87,480	4,860	38,390	2,163	71.2	4.1
27-HOLE					
130,410	4,830	40,660	1,506	104.2	1.9
36-HOLE					
187,500	5,208	110,920	3,081	103.1	3.2
^o Grass					

The survey reveals that 449 of the 526 supts. select the fertilizers used in their management programs. In only six cases does a green chmn. or green committee members select fertilizers. Others who play a part in the selection are park board members (municipal courses), club owners and in one instance, the club board of directors. Actually, the 449 figure cited above may be higher since the term, "greenkeeper", or individuals mentioned by name but not by title, were used rather frequently in the returns.

Analysis of Selections

The more important reasons why supts. use the fertilizers they do are listed below with the number of times these reasons were mentioned:

Past Experience and Results	151
Selection based on soil condition and needs	35
Selection based on soil tests	31
Organics are slow; soluble nitrogen selected for quick results	24
Selection based on past	

Organics are slow, no danger of burning, long lasting, easy to apply	15
Fertilizers used have correct N content	12
Fertilizers used are slow feeding and safe	12
Mixed goods are for complete feeding, other fertilizers are supplemental	12

Other reasons for use of a particular type included: Selection is result of analysis of special needs; organics are long lasting and good carriers for germicides and fungicides; fertilizers were recommended by: dealers; other supts.; state universities; turf assns.

A total of 355 supts. reported that they are satisfied with their present fertilizer program; 129 said that it is unsatisfactory; and 42 didn't answer this section of the questionnaire. Of the 129 who are not satisfied with their programs, 75 per cent indicated that they want to increase their present over-all nitrogen application, budget permitting. Only a few indicated that they want to step up applications on greens or tees but there was unanimous agreement that fairway application should be stepped up. In fact, a large number of supts. who indicated satisfaction with their fertilizer programs said that they would like to increase fairway treatment.

Depend on Golf Magazine

Where do supts. get the information used in developing turf management programs? (More than one answer was requested here.) A total of 372 said that they obtain all or part of their information from a golf magazine. Another 307 indicated "from other supts.", showing that there is generally a wide interchange of shop talk among the greenkeeping fraternity.

Other sources listed and number of times mentioned, include: State universities (262); Equipment dealers (172); Fertilizer dealers (147); Fertilizer manufacturers (137); USGA green section (136); Other (88); Green committee members (57); and Club members (36).

The survey shows that there is an annual average of 11,411 rounds of golf played at each 9-hole course. On the 18-hole layout, 24,398 rounds are played; on the 27-hole course they amount to 21,071; and on the 36-hole course, 53,700. One supt., reporting on a 54-hole course, said that the average number of rounds is 164,800 and at a single 72-hole course it is esti-



19-year old Susan Lane Martin of Aiken, S.C., was crowned "Miss Golf" during Tournament Week at the Masters in Augusta. Alice Lon, singing star of Lawrence Welk's show, presided at coronation.

mated that 200,000 rounds are played each year.

Irrigation Picture

The questionnaire was concluded with an investigation of the irrigation picture. It covered present systems as well as those that are planned for 1960. Here is the box score:

	Greens 1956/1960		Tees 1956/1960		Fairways 1956/1960	
9-HOLE						
Per cent with no irrigation	4	4	19	17	75	71
Per cent with irrigation	96	96	81	83	25	29
18-HOLE						
Without	1	1	12	9	55	50
With	99	99	88	91	45	—
27-HOLE						
Without	—	—	10	10	67	56
With	100	100	90	90	33	44
36-HOLE						
Without	9	—	10	—	45	45
With	91	100	90	100	55	55

Japanese Beetle Control

Western Reserve Turfgrass Assn., 4200 Mayfield Rd., Cleveland 21, O., has recently published a pamphlet, "Know How," which gives numerous pointers on control of the Japanese beetle. The Assn. says that the beetle is a constant menace, but in the opinion of authorities, it can be quickly wiped out if a concentrated drive to do so is made. The pamphlet can be obtained by writing WRTA.