

Answers to turf questions



by Fred V. Grau

All users and prospective users of Penncross seed—hear this! After the 1968 harvest, the only Penncross seed that will be available will be Blue Tag Certified. Anyone who buys "Affidavit Seed" or "So-called Penncross" which does not carry the Blue Tag can expect to end up with inferior turf. He will have only himself to blame.

The last speaker at the 1968 Penn State Turfgrass Conference (Jan. 15-18) was Dr. Joseph Duich, who reported on progress in the Penncross seed industry. He and Dr. Guy McKee of Penn State in 1967 inspected nearly every field in the Pacific Northwest that was producing Penncross. Serious talks with the growers resulted in strict guidelines for growers to which they subscribed 100 per cent.

Seed from fields that fail to meet rigid specifications can not be sold under the name "Penncross."

No field may produce Blue Tag Certified seed longer than three years. Then the field must be plowed and be put to other uses until certification inspectors declare it "free of bent."

Blue Tag Certified Penncross bentgrass seed will be sold only in newly-designed bags that hold 5, 10 and 20 pounds. Bags will be sealed to prevent tampering and possible adulteration, thus protecting the contents and the consumer.

This writer sounded the alarm in GOLFDOM a few years ago when golf course superintendents began to complain that the "Penncross" seed they had bought at a high price had failed to produce the high-quality putting green turf that they had expected from this Penn State developed grass. Some turf resembled nothing that anyone had ever seen before. Some of it was unspeakable. Dr. Duich logically and convincingly explained several ways in which this mass deterioration could have happened. Let us say only that the several loopholes in the system have been closed! Penncross seed users confidently can look forward once more to buying nothing but Blue Tag Certified seed, which will produce the superior results that can be expected from this truly great grass.

Q.—We have heard about the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Survey. Is there a

report? How big is turfgrass? How was the survey accomplished?

(Maryland)

A.—The full report carried the number CRS-42. Turfgrass in Pennsylvania is over a half billion dollars, just below Dairy, the largest industry in agriculture. This first full-scale, accurate, authentic, state-wide survey will be summarized to be easily readable. The Summary can be obtained from

The Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council, Inc.

Office of the Executive Secretary
526 Sunset Road
State College, Pa. 16801

Be sure to send a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

The survey was sparked by the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council, supported by the Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Lee Bull, and conducted by the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service. The project is a notable first in the U.S. With reliable data such as this, there is a better chance that turf will receive the financial support it has deserved for so long.

Q.—What is the recommended rate for seeding Penncross bent for putting greens?

(Indiana)

A.—From 3/4 to one (1) pound per 1,000 square feet.

Q.—At a recent turf conference we heard about the deterioration of putting green soil mixtures. Even the best mixtures showed decreased infiltration rates within a few years. What seems to be the best way to restore favorable infiltration rates?

(Ohio)

A.—The words are: aeration, cultivation and spiking. One could add dethatching. Small pores in the soil become clogged with "debris"—fine particles and products of biological decomposition. Compaction by men and machines expels air from the pores which then become "water-clogged." Thatch buildup reduces absorption. Preventive maintenance includes cultivation on a continuing basis to restore infiltration and gaseous exchange. Extreme cases may be helped by the combined use of lime and gypsum.

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