

## USGA SETS THE STANDARD

NEW YORK—*The United States Golf Assn. Green Section Conference* on golf course management was held here on January 26 at the Biltmore Hotel.

Marvin Ferguson, of Bryan Tex., was presented the Green Section award for his distinguished service to the turfgrass industry.

Presentations on the theme, Turfgrass Management, provided useful information for the some 350 superintendents who attended. Topics included: preparing a course for tournament play, organization and management of the labor force and nutrient application and turf physiology.

Joseph C. Dey Jr., commissioner of the Tournament Players Div., Professional Golfers' Assn., counseled attendees on what is expected on a tournament course. He prefaced his remarks by saying that championship courses are not chosen from courses that must be completely overhauled.

He stressed that major championship courses must be laid out with an evenness in their degree of difficulty and have continuity from course to course to prevent a set-up that favors one player's strength and exploits another's weakness. He favors courses that require players to use every club in their bags.

He advised superintendents to take full advantage of Green Section agronomists, who are made available to course superintendents as counselors.

Among the specifications for producing championship turf, set out by Commissioner Dey were: that grass on tees should be firm, level, and one-half inch in length; close-cropped fairways; putting greens, firm and clean, three-sixteenths-inch grass length, with positioning of hole done on day of play so that weather does not ruin a hole the night before the tournament; the hole should be five paces from any edge of the green and should not be tricky or steep within a three-foot radius of the flag. Dey cautioned

superintendents that, although it is not a desirable practice to limit watering of greens, from the standpoint of healthy turf, it is important that championship greens be as dry as possible; roughs should have a collar of two inch grass tapering to five inch grass; sand should be added to bunkers three months before a championship tournament to allow it to settle, and bunkers should have no steep lips on the rear; practice areas should be kept in the same manner as the course to simulate actual playing conditions; out of bounds should be painted on the ground or marked with large white stakes, with short stakes or painted lines to mark water hazards; the edges of car paths must be clearly defined; tee markers should contain helpful information, such as whether the course is fast or slow.

A distinguished panel presented helpful guidelines on the organization and management of the labor force. The discussion included such topics as what to look for in reviewing a pension plan in light of increased role of Social Security in retirement programs.

The panel also evaluated the effectiveness of college graduates as assistant superintendents. There were differences of opinion on this point with some saying training graduates was ineffectual, because they generally are learning the job for the first year or two and then move on to head superintendent positions, leaving the superintendent who trained them with another teacher-student cycle.

Another point of discussion was the relationship of grounds maintenance to the over-all budget. At the average 18-hole course, it was estimated that grounds maintenance should amount to 16 per cent and labor 11 per cent.

During the question and answer period the query was raised about the effectiveness of the mechanical trap rake. The panel said the rake had wide acceptance, but that users must avoid over raking (once or twice a week is good), which results in soft sand.

Although some attendees complained that presentations were too general, it was widely agreed that the conference provided much beneficial information.

## FERGUSON RECEIVES GREEN SECTION AWARD



NEW YORK—Marvin H. Ferguson, of Bryan, Tex., has been named the recipient of the United States Golf Assn.'s 1973 Green Section Award for distinguished service to golf through work with turfgrass. Dr. Ferguson's contributions in the field have been varied and important over three decades.

Since 1968, he has been president of Agri-Systems of Texas, a firm engaged in consultation work and the design of golf courses. He also is a consultant for GOLFDOM.

As a young man, his work at the USGA Green Section in Arlington, Va., helped to establish the usefulness of arsenical materials for herbicidal purposes and resulted in the recognition of thiram as an effective turf fungicide. Later he was responsible for deciding which of hundreds of grass selection should be saved and moved from the Arlington Turf Gardens to the United States Department of Agriculture Plant Industry Station in Beltsville, Md.; one of the five bluegrass strains saved was later released as Merion bluegrass.

Dr. Ferguson's work at Texas A&M University, where he was a professor of agronomy for 15 years, was vital in the evolution of the USGA Green Section Specifications for Putting Green Construction, which rely heavily on his contention that matters of permeability and pore space distribution, together with the employment of textural layers to take advantage of soil-water movement phenomena, are vital criteria for evaluating putting green soils.

Dr. Ferguson succeeds Herb and Joe Graffis, co-founders of GOLFDOM, as recipient of the Green Section Award.