



DR. FRED V. GRAU

ANSWERS TO TURF QUESTIONS

CHANGE

The interesting thing about progress is that it is brought about by changes. A huge, international oil company spent millions of dollars to change its name to Exxon. First, the change had to be cleared with Governor Exon of Nebraska, then all it took was money.

Highway departments change their names to departments of transportation. Why? Because the new term better describes their functions.

Some names hold steady, because they adequately describe functions; but even such stalwarts as ASA (American Society of Agronomy) and AAAS (American Assn. for the Advancement of Science) are more international than the names imply. Both have members all over the world.

Even the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council has members in many states other than Pennsylvania. The name is not likely to change because the sites of the main activities lie within state boundaries. Other turfgrass councils are similar. Out-of-state members belong because they receive many benefits from the research and educational work, and they want these bounties to continue.

When the "greenkeepers" in Great Britain, Scotland and the United States began to organize, they called themselves "greenkeepers associations." The history of the National Greenkeepers Assn. has been well documented. As progress was made, changes were made. Greenkeepers became superintendents. The NGA became the GCSAA (Golf Course Superintendents Assn. of America). Along with these changes went different names for the official magazine—now the Golf Superintendent.

My membership in GCSAA covers many years, and, I feel, qualifies me to discuss openly some changes that are

being talked about in "bull sessions." "A rose by any other name . . ." you know the rest. But isn't the man in charge of a multi-million dollar establishment something more than a superintendent? Isn't he more of a manager? He has many skills; he has executive capacity and responsibilities; he handles men, money and machines, and he manages turfgrass areas to please the members and other players. Manager describes his functions well.

Is he a golf course manager? It would seem so! He has jurisdiction over all the areas within the boundaries of the club property. The clubhouse manager is confined within the walls of the clubhouse.

Other turfgrass managers variously may be called according to their responsibilities. These can be 1) athletic field manager; 2) cemetery manager, 3) estate manager, and so on. In each case, the word "manager" implies a responsibility going beyond the turf itself.

The next step, and I approach it cautiously, is the name for the larger organization. When there are members scattered around the globe, isn't the natural term "international?" The new name that will be discussed in many groups for many months (sometimes heatedly) might be "Golf Course Managers, International" or GCMI. The word "association" has been eliminated, which is good, because it is a cumbersome, un-pretty, non-descript word.

I must credit C. William Black, GCM, of Fountain Head CC, Hagerstown, Md., for sharing some of his thoughts with me on which this editorial is based. Bill is first vice president of the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council and the turf council's representative on the Penn State Agricultural Advisory

Council.

Now, let the fur fly.

Q—Our course is located below the area usually considered the "bent belt." We mow our Penncross greens daily at three-sixteenths inch to prepare them for a major amateur golf championship. We think that this management helps prevent thatch. We have had advice that specifies one-quarter inch mowing to help the grass withstand the heat and humidity common to this area. We would appreciate your reaction. (Virginia)

A—I can't agree that you are located below the "bent belt." Penncross bent does well far south of Virginia. The three-sixteenths inch mowing will minimize thatch buildup and will give golfers a faster green with a true roll. I would keep the mowers at that height, but during heat stress, would "rest" the grass by skipping a mowing now and then. Keep the grass as dry as possible. Hand mowers are gentle on grass. Power mowers may be "rested" during periods of high temperatures and humidity. Yes, one-fourth inch cut will help the grass get through heat and humidity somewhat better, but the greens will be slower, putts will not roll as true, and there will be more thatch accumulation. I lean toward the golfer, so that he will be pleased. I believe that we have the management skills to bring Penncross through the summer when mowed at three-sixteenth inches.

Q—Someone mentioned that on occasion you have written about the use of hydrated lime and its role in relieving heat and humidity stress on bent greens in summer. We must have missed that item. Would you mind repeating it for our benefit? (Virginia)

continued on page 15