

Conserving for the Future of Golf

By Kathy Conard

What will irrigation be like in 2025? Will there even be irrigation on golf courses? As sustainability becomes a buzzword, you have to ask yourself what will ever-increasing water regulations be in 16 years. Better yet, what can you do now to prevent water shortages from forcing those regulations? Aquatrols believes in a winning combination, both for the present and the future: a good irrigation system and wetting agents.

Good irrigation systems make sure that water is distributed uniformly across the turfgrass surface. But what happens to water once it leaves the irrigation head? Science takes over and interferes with how water interacts with soil.

Unfortunately, things like soil-water repellency, the natural way water moves through a soil profile and soil physical properties can cause a well-designed, well-managed irrigation system to lose that high efficiency once it tries to penetrate the surface and move throughout the rootzone. We can't change the properties of water or soil, but we can control how water moves into and throughout the soil. In order to maintain adequate soil moisture content and to get water, fertilizers, insecticides and fungicides uniformly distributed, you need to use a wetting agent to optimize your irrigation and input efficiencies.

Aquatrols wetting agents are proven to reduce run-off, improve uniform penetration and distribution of water and



inputs, and reduce water use by 20 percent to 50 percent depending on the turfgrass variety. You can still maintain healthy, great-looking turf because of precise water placement (and everything water carries) on the surface

and throughout the rootzone — even with shorter irrigation times.

facilities to process effluent and the golf course has a place to store it. Additional amendments and different cultural practices may also be necessary for its use. Let's face it: Effluent water is a great option in some areas, but it can be costly to recycle water.

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You're conserving water and maintaining your turfgrass in peak condition, which is not only good for the environment, but is good for the game of golf. If you can be seen as good stewards of water conservation, you will be less likely to be targeted unfairly by legislators or your community.

The other alternative is for golf to go brown — I know, I also shudder at the thought of this. Brown golf may not be a reality in the United States, where consumers prefer a pretty green course with fast, firm greens and attractive fairways. Good thing there are other ways to save water and use it more efficiently. Using other water sources, such as effluent, is another option. Effluent water is used in certain parts of the country and can be a great alternative as long as the city or municipality where a course is located has the

realistic option for everyone that can easily be incorporated into existing turf management practices. If you reduce the waste of water now, you can preserve golf as we know it for the future.

Conard is Aquatrols' marketing manager for turf and ornamental. For more information or if you have any questions about wetting agents, you can contact Aquatrols at 800-257-7797 or visit the company's Web site at www.aquatrols.com.

