

What a KICK!



What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas? Not at the **2012 Golf Industry Show**. Here's *Golfdom's* rundown of the greatest show on turf.

BY THE
GOLFDOM
STAFF

It was the first day of the Golf Industry Show, and the Las Vegas Convention Center was *packed*. To get from booth A to booth B took the skill of a NASCAR driver. (And if booth B was the Direct Solutions booth, well, you could pretend to be a NASCAR driver in their life-size simulator.)

Though overall attendance was slightly down — 14,707 attendees compared to 14,772 attendees last year in Orlando — qualified buyer attendance was up 2.6 percent.

“Going from a traditionally strong draw in Orlando to a western location the next year generally results in a drop off in attendance, but that was not the case this year,” GCSAA CEO Rhett Evans said. “I think that speaks to the value of the event

and the belief the industry is gaining some strength. I sensed a much better mood from both attendees and exhibitors.”

One of the biggest buzzes of the show was created at the blowout Jacobsen party at the Las Vegas Hotel, where attendees got to dance the night away with Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. look-a-likes.

Indeed, of the many meetings *Golfdom* held, (see *Golfdom's* GIS Quick Stats, page 25) only one vendor told us that the 2012 show was slower than the 2011 show. One vendor even said the traffic in their booth increased from Wednesday to Thursday, even though the crowd was visibly smaller on the second day of the show.

Without further ado, here is *Golfdom's* rundown of some of the highlights of the 2012 GIS. Look for our product roundup story on the GIS in next month's issue.





Less is More

Frank Rossi encourages superintendents to reduce fertilizer and pesticide use

BY JOHN WALSH,
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Franks Rossi, Ph.D., associate professor in the department of horticulture at Cornell University, wants superintendents to think about the amount of fertilizers and pesticides they use more carefully and suggests ways to cut back on potassium, nitrogen and phosphorus.

Rossi, who's been researching potassium use for 13 years, questions whether superintendents are applying too much of it.

"I'm not convinced you're getting the desired response from the amount of potassium you're applying," he says. "You can afford to reduce or eliminate potassium for a period of time. It's a low-risk savings. Yes, potassium is vital to the plant. It's so much so the plant manipulates its chemistry to make sure it has enough. Reducing fertilizer input can enhance the nutrients that are already there. Plants don't have to work to collect

potassium because the soil does all the work."

Rossi's research has been done solely on cool-season grass, but he says no research indicates warm-season turf needs more than one-half to 1 pound of potassium.

Rossi, who's not a proponent of foliar fertilization, says soil has an innate ability to supply nitrogen to older, established turf via organic matter that's been built up over time. He predicts that during the next five to 10 years superintendents will be testing soil for nitrogen more often. Soil testing can help superintendents ratchet down how many nutrients they're applying.

"Farmers have been doing this for 20 years," he says. "They have to be efficient. Putting less nitrogen into the environment is probably a good thing."

Additionally, Rossi says weaving in bioproducts such as Civitas and Rhapsody into a pesticide program can

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A Personal GIS Milestone

After 30 years of research and two years of writing, I had the honor of signing my own turf book.

BY ANTHONY L. WILLIAMS, CGCS, CGM, ENVIRONMENTAL EDITOR



Every year the GCSAA bookstore showcases select authors and their books at the GIS. It is a memorable experience just standing in front of the signing table listening to tales of enlightenment. The book signing is a time-honored right of passage for every author. Hearing the author talk about the content and processes behind the book is very motivating.

This year I found out what it is like to sit behind the signing table. My first book, *The "Environmental Stewardship Toolkit,"* published by John Wiley and Sons, made its debut. The first copies literally shipped directly from the bindery to the bookstore tabletop!

The fact is, you put two years of writing and editing into a book and it becomes 320 pages fresh off the presses. Your thoughts race as you wonder if the book will be well received.

I bought a quick-drying blue pen made from recycled water bottles for the occasion and faced one of the most defining moments of my life. The book signing was successful. I will never forget the experience, nor everyone who stopped by, bought a book or offered encouragement. ■



reduce the amount of pesticides that need to be applied. There are three ways to reduce pesticide use:

- ▶ don't spray;
- ▶ lower the rates; and
- ▶ extend the intervals of products.

Bioproducts can allow superintendents to get the same control with fungicides at a lower rate. Large chemical companies are adding plant defense activators into their pesticides because bioproducts are so popular, Rossi says.

Rossi also has been testing the reduction of preemergent herbicide applications in fairways at Bethpage State Park in New York. In cases where two years of preemergent herbicides were skipped in the fairways, crabgrass infestation didn't resurge.

"If you can trim a few thousand here or there from your chemical budget, you can put that money toward, say, labor," he says. ■

PHOTO BY: JOHN WALSH

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Turfgrass Talk Show Spotlights Wetting Agents



Who needs Leno, Letterman or Conan when you have Nikolai? BY MARTY WHITFORD, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Wetting agents have earned their place in the golf market, according to the GCSAA's Turfgrass Talk Show at the GIS.

Hosted by Thomas Nikolai, Ph.D., a turfgrass academic specialist with Michigan State University, the Turfgrass Talk Show on wetting agents embodied "infotainment."

Although guests of the Turfgrass Talk Show varied in their use and support of wetting agents, all agreed it's more a question of when, where, how and how often to use the solutions.

Guests of GCSAA's Turfgrass Talk Show on wetting agents included:

- ▶ **Rodney Tocco Jr.**, a research assistant and doctoral student at Michigan State University;

- ▶ **Douglas Karcher**, an associate professor in the Department of Horticulture at the University of Arkansas;

- ▶ **Matthew Taylor**, CGCS, director of golf for the Royal Poinciana Golf Club; and

- ▶ **Michael Morris**, CGCS, a golf course superintendent with the Crystal Downs Country Club.

Turfgrass Talk Show participants from left to right: Thomas Nikolai, Ph.D., Rodney Tocco Jr., Douglas Karcher, Matthew Taylor, CGCS and Michael Morris, CGCS.

"I haven't bought into the need for a full-blown wetting agent program yet, but we do use wetting agents on our greens during certain times of the year," said Taylor, who oversees 36 holes in

Naples, Fla.

Taylor said wetting agents help golf course superintendents combat localized dry spots and deal with drought conditions and related water-use restrictions.

Morris agreed, noting he is somewhat skeptical of *some* of the water- and money-savings claims made by some wetting agent manufacturers.

"On greens, wetting agents serve as a bridge between waxy sand coatings and water — improving water droplet penetration," Karcher notes.

Tocco and Karcher agreed that several applications of a wetting agent can help control localized dry spots and enhance soil moisture levels.

"Wetting agents clearly are one of the many tools we have to enhance turf quality," Nikolai concluded. ■

Seed with Speed

Turfco unveils new 40-inch seeder designed for golf course greens and spot seeding on the links.

The Turfco TriWave 40-inch Overseeder features a dynamic design duo — 1 1/2-inch seed spacing and two independent floating heads. The design combination enhances germination by empowering the TriWave to closely follow contours of all types of course terrain for consistent seed depth.

"The TriWave's patent-pending floating heads ensure superintendents don't miss low spots or destroy high spots or unmarked sprinkler heads," said Turfco President George Kinkead.

The seeder's WaveBlade technology — counter rotating blades twirling at 900 revolutions per minute — creates clean, optimal slit widths for improved seed-

to-soil contact and keeps turf disruption to a minimum. The TriWave's delivery system places seed directly into the slit, reducing waste and further boosting germination.

"Nearly 20 golf courses tested our 40-inch TriWave

George and Scott Kinkead are all smiles with Turfco's new 40-inch TriWave Overseeder.



Overseeder with resounding success," says Scott Kinkead, Turfco's executive vice president. "Frankly, it was like pulling teeth to get some of the supers to part ways with the new machine — but that's a good thing." ■

A Blast from '67

My Favorite GIS Moment

BY SETH JONES, EDITOR IN CHIEF

It was a Golf Industry Show filled with highlights, but the best moment for me came when Michael Bavier, CGCS-retired, stopped by the *Golfdom* booth.

"I brought you a Christmas present," the former GCSAA president (1981) said to me. He then reached into his briefcase and handed me a copy of the May 1967 issue of *Golfdom*.

The copy had been sitting in his bookshelf gathering dust for the past few decades. He decided he needed to do something with the magazine before it accidentally got recycled, and knew we'd appreciate it at the *Golfdom* office in Cleveland. Indeed, the rare old magazine was a hit with all of us in the *Golfdom* booth.

Expect to see Bavier's name more this year, as the co-author of "Practical Golf Maintenance" (with Gordon Witteveen) told me he and his wife are working on an update to the classic turf book, due out sometime this year. ■



Golfdom GIS Quick Stats

Number of editors covering the show

5

Number of meetings made

58

Number of meetings missed

2*

Number of blog posts

31

Number of Tweets

97

Amount lost at the casinos
don't ask!

*our bad!

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