

ASE

operations. However, some courses have gone back to curative measures to save money during these tough financial times, including Bent Creek. And Loke's previous knowledge of spraying pesticides curatively has come back to help him.

"Experience plays a major role," says Loke, who has been in the business since 1969.

Rick Slattery, superintendent of Locust Hill Country Club in Pittsford, N.Y., has also reduced inputs and says he has saved plenty of money in the process. It's a tricky endeavor, though, considering Slattery's course hosts an annual LPGA event (this year's event in June was the LPGA Championship won by Cristie Kerr in June). But Slattery, who has been at Locust Hill for 16 years, is confident in his

Continued on page 23



EDITOR IN CHIEF



You've got enough to worry about. But **Insignia® fungicide** can give you up to 28 worry-free days — at least when it comes to preventing key turf diseases. That's how long research shows **Insignia** can prevent brown patch, pythium root rot, fairy ring, take-all patch, gray leaf spot and more. Which will give you plenty of time to tackle the other 100 job demands being thrown your way.

betterturf.basf.us | 800-545-9525


The Chemical Company

Aim to Please



◀ **The maintenance team at Traverse City Golf & Country Club is now triplex mowing greens daily instead of walk mowing them Tuesday through Saturday.**

Continued from page 21

approach because he knows his course's playability so well.

"You can grow healthy turf with less inputs and still provide championship turf," he adds.

Slattery, whose course is located in a region where disease pressure can be high, didn't make his first fungicide application of the year until only a week before the LPGA Championship. He's also prudent with fertilizer use and only irrigates the course when he must.

"Even if you're not paying for your water, it still costs a lot of money for the electricity used to pump it," he says. "Here, it's about \$1,000 for every million gallons."

Slattery is big on scouting for pest outbreaks and spot spraying to control them. If two of his course's greens get dollar spot, he sprays the two greens, not all 18.

"I can't tell you how many times I've gone out and spot sprayed, especially on fairways," he says.

Pat Blum, superintendent of the nine-hole Colonial Acres Golf Course in Glenmont, N.Y., says he has cut back on maintenance costs ever since the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Pro-

gram certified his course in 1998 for its environmental stewardship. The process led to Blum reducing maintained turf, which led to less water and energy use, among other inputs.

While Blum's budget hasn't had any reductions in the past seven years, it also hasn't had any increases in that time. And even with no new money added annually, golfing quality has held up, he says.

At Traverse City, the maintenance team is now triplex mowing putting greens daily instead of walk mowing them Tuesday through Saturday. Triplex mowing has become popular at many golf courses because it takes less time, and it will be the standard at Traverse City for the rest of 2010.

Continued on page 25

Traverse City superintendent Steve Hammon says the "core conditions" at his course are unchanged.



FOR SNOW
MOLD, DOES
INTERFACE™
GIVE ME
FASTER GREEN
UP THAN THE
COMPETITION?

YES

**INTERFACE™**
Intelligent Turf Management

 Bayer Environmental Science

Aim to Please

LEASE OR BUY

By Anthony Pioppi,
Contributing Editor

The choice is one made with a thorough understanding of a course's financial situation

ONE OF THE MOST important decisions a golf course can make when looking to save money is deciding whether it's more advantageous to lease or buy equipment.

The choice is one that golf course superintendents and their superiors must make with a thorough understanding of their clubs' financial situations.

Manufacturers of turf equipment offer three options facilities can take in order to obtain new equipment – they can purchase, lease or lease to own. For some courses, a combination is the best way to go.

Manufacturers and their distributors stay out of the decision-making process, leaving that up to the clubs.

Buddy Hooper, national distribution manager for Hustler Turf's Golf Division, said his experience is that more often it is a general manager, owner or green committee making the decision whether to lease or buy.

"In most cases the superintendent doesn't really care as long as he gets new equipment," Hooper said.



DEERPARK
GOLF CLUB, RV RESORT & LAND AUCTION
THURSDAY, AUGUST 26TH AT 2PM PDT



Income-Producing Championship Golf Course and Clubhouse


Bid on site and online

- 18-hole, 6,751 yard championship golf course rated 71.7 with a 120 slope
- Clubhouse includes operating grill and sports bar
- 300-yard grass driving range, putting and chipping greens
- Bentgrass greens and bluegrass fairways
- Waterfalls, reflection lakes, fountains and wildlife
- Also selling RV resort, condo, home lots and unimproved land

Daily inspections begin July 19th at 1205A N Country Club Dr, Deer Park, WA 99006

Golf Course and RV Resort will remain open for business



 WA RE LIC 3971 REALTY CONSULTANTS GLEN VANNOY
BROKER; AUC LIC 2513 GLEN VANNOY AUCTIONEER

For more information call 866.921.8883

williamsauction.com/golf



ILLUSTRATION BY: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.; PHOTO COURTESY: SYNGENTA

Paul Danielson, manager of financial marketing for The Toro Co., said it's not uncommon for courses to lease mowers, which they can turn over every four or five years, depending on the terms of the contract; or to purchase aerifiers and tractors, which are used less frequently and have a long life.

Rhonda Flannery, John Deere Credit's manager of product marketing development for golf and utility vehicles, said the one question superintendents need to ask to assess their existing equipment approach is whether they're meeting their replacement strategies.

For instance, if their plan is to have new fairway mowers every four years but they're not being turned over for five or six years, a change needs to be made. Instead of purchasing outright or a lease-to-own program,

There has been an increased interest in leasing, says John Deere Credit's Rhonda Flannery.

it it might be better to lease the piece of equipment for the useful life defined by the golf course, and replace it every four years.

According to Flannery, the economy has produced a shift in the strategy some courses are following.

"We're seeing increased interest in leasing, and the primary reason for that is cash-flow driven," she said.

Troy Murray, vice president of sales and business development for golf equipment in Textron Financial's Captive Finance Group, said once the trend among courses was that most wanted to purchase equipment.

"In 2000, it moved toward leasing," Murray said. "It reached a plateau two or three years ago."

The split of leasing versus leasing to buy is about a 50-50 divide across the United States, with the average length of a lease at about 48 months. ■

Continued from page 23

Incidentally, the mowing method hasn't slowed down greens at Traverse City, where they still run at 10 to 10.4 feet, thanks in part to daily rolling.

Like many private clubs, Locust Hill has lost members, and Slattery has had his maintenance budget cut as a result. In 2009, the budget was whacked 11 percent — from \$875,000 to \$760,000. But it was reduced only 4 percent this year. With an aim to keep golfers' expectations satisfied, Slattery says the key is to cut maintenance tasks that most golfers won't notice.

For instance, bunker maintenance has been reduced at Locust Hill but not to the point where golfers will complain about it. The maintenance crew no longer rakes bunkers fully, only where golfers have been. And if a golfer hasn't been in a bunker, it doesn't get raked.

"We haven't seen quality drop a lot," Slattery says.

Slattery has also coached his staff to

work as efficiently as possible. "If we can make it in-house, we'll make it," he says. "If we can fix it in-house, we'll fix it in-house."

Another key to appeasing golfers' expectations is to educate them about what's going on at the golf course, especially if it involves the maintenance budget. Hammon is doing that at Traverse City. When the club's finance committee and board of directors approved Hammon's 2010 budget in March, Hammon made a list of everything that would be affected by the cuts and communicated them to the course's green committee.

"My green committee appreciated knowing what to expect going into the season with our golf course conditions," Hammon says, noting that he also attended the April board of directors meeting and reported to them the same information so they were educated and prepared to answer members' questions if needed.

Continued on page 26

IS INTERFACE™ FUNGICIDE A NON-DMI ROTATIONAL PRODUCT?

YES


INTERFACE™
Intelligent Turf Management

 Bayer Environmental Science

Aim to Please

Continued from page 25

To his credit, Hammon is getting out in front of the matter, which makes his waiting and wondering a little less stressful.

What about workers?

Joe Boe, superintendent of Windermere (Fla.) Golf Club, has had a busy year

rebuilding greens and greenside bunkers at his course, which closed for a renovation. That's all good, considering a lot of clubs have put renovations on hold because of the economy.

But Boe's club hasn't been immune to the tough financial times. He says his 2010 budget is holding up, but he has two fewer employees and his full-time

staff has gone from working 44 hours a week to 37 hours.

"We reduced hours to eliminate overtime, which cost a significant amount of money," Boe says. "My assistant, my foreman and I are doing more on-course work than we did in the past to make sure things get done as needed because of the labor shortfall."

Ninety-two percent of superintendents who cut their courses' maintenance budgets did so by reducing labor, either through layoffs or reduced hours, according to the *Golfdom* survey.

A buzz phrase in the modern-day working world is "doing more with less." Loke says the phrase applies to his crew.

"My staff is smaller, but productivity is significantly greater," he says. "We're getting a lot of work done."

At Traverse City, Hammon has implemented reduced hours, which he says has impacted the "second and third jobs" of the day.

"These tasks, including bunker edging, landscape bed mulch, trimming sprinkler heads and markers, spot-spraying weeds, pulling milkweed in natural areas, tree trimming and filling fairway divots have been reduced dramatically," Hammon says, noting that many of his crew members now leave the course at 11 a.m. instead of 2:30 p.m. each day.

Slattery's maintenance staff is down to 19 people from 23. Slattery took a

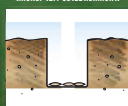


TRIWAVE 60-Inch Overseeder

Traditional overseeders create a v-shaped slit, causing inconsistent seed-to-soil contact.



The TriWave creates clean, square slits, resulting in faster, thicker turf establishment.



NEW WALKING TRIWAVE™

BETTER GERMINATION WITH LESS SEED.

The innovative Turfco TriWave™ 60-Inch Overseeder delivers better germination and quicker establishment with less turf disruption.

- UNC study showed 30% greater germination rates versus traditional methods
- Patented floating heads follow the ground contour for consistent seed depth
- Patented WaveBlade™ technology creates optimum slit width for improved seed-to-soil contact without turf disruption
- Patented seed delivery system puts seeds directly into the slit, reducing seed waste and increasing germination
- Close 1 1/2" spacing increases germination with fewer passes
- Now available as a walk-behind, the TriWave delivers even greater maneuverability and versatility

"The TriWave is the first overseeder that does exactly what we want it to do."

• • • • • Dale Caldwell
Superintendent
Minneapolis Golf Club
Minneapolis, MN

To see the TriWave in action visit www.turfco.com, or call 800-679-8201 to schedule a FREE DEMO.



WWW.TURFCO.COM

Superintendent Jim Loke believes there are signs the economy is on the mend.



“ My assistant, my foreman and I are doing more on-course work than we did in the past to make sure things get done as needed because of the labor shortfall.”

— JOE BOE



7 percent pay cut last year. But even though he has reduced labor, Slattery didn't cut overtime pay from his budget because he says it provides a big incentive to his crew.

Slattery says he'd rather have 18 workers who are getting paid time-and-a-half for overtime than 22 workers who are working 40 hours a week with no overtime. Because the smaller staff is making more money with overtime, they're more motivated to work, says Slattery, who also reasons he can attract better employees by offering overtime.

"It's very important, because we don't pay workers a lot of money in this business, so the one thing we can do for them is give them overtime pay," Slattery says.

The golf economy

The general economy continues to sputter along with some improvement, but consumer confidence is still down and unemployment remains high.

The golf economy continues to sputter as well. Rounds are down 3 percent through May when com-

pared with last year, according to Golf Datatech.

While Boe believes Windermere's renovation will lead to a financially healthier club when it reopens, he's concerned about the general economy.

"I'm as pessimistic as I've ever been," says Boe, who worries about the chances of a double-dip recession when the Bush tax cuts expire in January.

But Loke believes the economy is on the mend. He sees anecdotal evidence — literally — that things are getting better.

Loke says he sees more delivery trucks on the road; he sees more people on the road going home from their jobs; and he sees more trestles being built in lumberyards for future houses.

"I think the economy is picking up steam," he says.

There are similar signs at Bent Creek, where 50 new members have joined the club in the past few months and there has been a considerable increase in revenue.

"We're feeling an electricity at our club that wasn't there a year ago," Loke says. ■

WILL INTERFACE™
REALLY MAKE
MY TURF
LOOK BETTER
THAN OTHER
FUNGICIDES?

YES


INTERFACE™
Intelligent Turf Management

 Bayer Environmental Science

The 'Green' Dilemma

Most golfers aren't ready for brown turf — no matter how much they love the environment. What happened at the U.S. Open proved that

Even the most cynical observer who heard incoming United States Golf Association President Jim Hyler's presidential address last February that set forward an aggressive environmentally friendly agenda couldn't have imagined the enormous hurdles the organization faces. Given the public's negative reaction to June's U.S. Open at Pebble Beach Golf Links — the course was in splendid condition but the dried-out greens looked dreadful on television and were criticized by players — it may be time for Hyler and the USGA to re-imagine just how they push for less water usage and more "green" golf courses.

The very word "green" is part of the problem.

Jim Hyler, pictured here at Pebble Beach, says maintenance expectations must be realistic.

With all due respect to the folks who understandably can't stomach the notion that marketing drives our culture, it's all in the branding. Green grass is synonymous with over-watering, fertilizer usage and overall excess. Yet while Hyler's call for a sustainable future was beautifully written, elo-

Continued on page 30

**STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS
BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR**

THE ANSWER IS YES

So many questions, one easy answer: Yes, Interface™ should be the core of your program for healthier turf. It provides broad-spectrum disease control and turf safety you can count on anytime, anywhere. Interface blows away the competition on dollar spot, is the best on leaf spot and even controls snow mold. Its non-DMI chemistry lets you manage resistance issues. You can use it in the heat of summer and rotate in year-round. Yes, Interface with *StressGard*™ formulation technology provides denser turf and stronger roots to manage course stress. And naturally it is Backed by Bayer. So perhaps the only question left is do we have the data to back it up? And of course, the answer is yes – at BackedByBayer.com/Interface

 Bayer Environmental Science

Bayer Environmental Science, a business group of Bayer CropScience LP 2 T.W. Alexander Drive, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709. 1-800-331-2867. www.BackedByBayer.com. Interface and StressGard are trademarks of Bayer. Not all products are registered in all states. Always read and follow label instructions carefully. ©2010 Bayer CropScience LP.




INTERFACE™
Intelligent Turf Management

Continued from page 28

quently delivered and met with rave reviews, it's become clear that the push for "green" needs to be preceded by a more extensive education program about the cost of achieving green and the savings from brown.

Before addressing how to best take advantage of this momentous shift in

USGA philosophy aiming to make a very public case for sustainability (while the USGA Green Section merely continues on its behind-the-scenes efforts as part of its mission), Hyler's remarks are worth revisiting in case you aren't a regular reader of USGA presidential addresses (it's OK, most people aren't).

"In my opinion, many of the stan-

dards by which we construct and maintain our courses have become, quite simply, unsustainable," Hyler told the assembled blue coats. "While there may be short-term solutions, what we need to seek is a long-term strategy that confronts some of the deeper issues plaguing the game."

As for the issue of water, Hyler stated that the game "must reset the way that we look at golf courses."

He pledged the U.S. Open would attempt to continue to emphasize firm, fast "and, yes, even brown, and allow the running game to flourish."

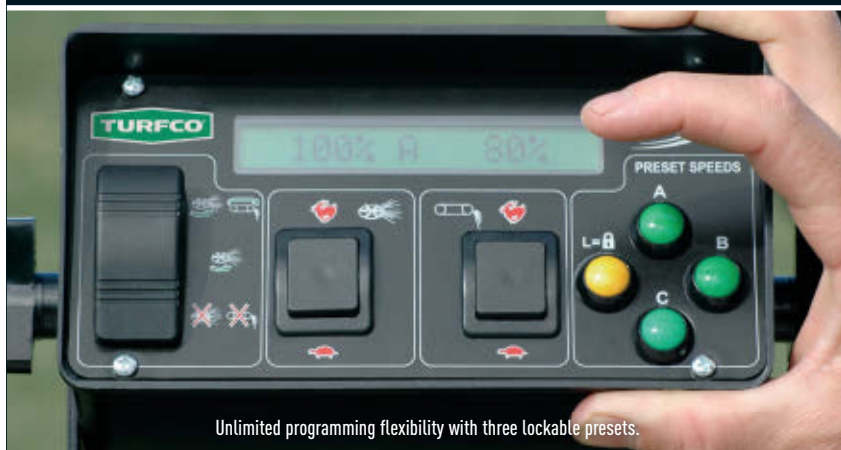
Hyler then said, "We need to understand how brown can become the new green. Our maintenance expectations must be realistic, promoting a more relaxed approach that allows us to reduce our consumption of clean water. A more natural game that is sustainable can be promoted as a more responsible philosophy for maintaining golf courses anywhere. It is certainly not our aspiration to become the game's environmental police, but we can and will develop and encourage best practices relating to sustainable turfgrass management for all clubs and courses to consider."

Great stuff, concise and not hard to understand. Except that it's become painfully clear that golfers not only didn't hear the message, they just aren't ready for brown, no matter how much they love the environment.

Even with an economic downturn that has everyone in the game buzzing about the need to cut back on water and, in general, on certain excessive practices that raise costs, most golfers still aren't prepared for how authentic firm, fast golf looks and plays. While most superintendents reading this are snickering and saying, "No kidding," the rest of the golf world, encouraged about discussions of sustainability, have been shocked by how little the golfing public actually understands or desires "green" golf. And as editors at Golf Di-

Continued on page 49

GETTING IT RIGHT EVERY TIME IS NOW AS EASY AS A-B-C.



Unlimited programming flexibility with three lockable presets.



INTRODUCING THE WIDESPIN™ 1540 EC TOPDRESSER.

We've made it even easier to get proven, WideSpin™ topdressing application every single time. Our new Electronic Controller gives you unlimited flexibility. Dial in the exact program you want, from light to heavy and everything in between. Just set the rates using presets and superintendent lockout. When your crew goes to work, you'll get the application you want. Guaranteed. And with 30% greater spinner angle, you'll also gain greater control and cover up to 40 feet.

See all the innovative features of the new WideSpin 1540 EC. Call 800-679-8201 for a FREE DVD or to schedule a DEMO.



WWW.TURFCO.COM