



From the Director's Desk
**THE GOLF TURF
INDUSTRY IN
WISCONSIN:
SOME
REFLECTIONS**

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The golf course turfgrass industry in Wisconsin has "come a long way" in a very short period of time. As a regional agronomist for the USGA Green Section, I have been fortunate to observe firsthand just how rapid this change for the better has come. For example, it wasn't all that many years ago that only the wealthiest clubs with the biggest budgets had a fairway fungicide spray program. Now, most every club in the state routinely sprays their fairway turf for disease when conditions warrant. It costs more money, but the turf is better for it.

The condition of the putting green turf is better. Greens are

smoother and truer putting than ever. At one time, putting green survival through the year was always a concern. Now, large scale losses of putting green turf are rare. I believe today's golf course Superintendent knows how to maintain greens better. Closer mowing, more and sandier top-dressing, vigorous aeration and vertical mowing along with the careful application of water, fertilizers and pesticides are expensive but, the turf is better for it.

Boy, has there ever been an improvement in overall fairway turf quality, health and survivability with the advent and acceptance of the use of light weight mowers to cut the fairway turf and even pick-up the clippings. Talk about coming a long way in a short period of time! What was once considered a laughable and even ludicrous idea is increasingly becoming the norm on golf courses in Wisconsin. It costs more money but, the turf is better for it.

It wasn't all that long ago when our industry was losing some of our important chemical tools. Now, this trend is reversing. Instead of agonizing over these restrictions, new chemicals which are helping us do our jobs even better are coming onto the market in ever increasing numbers. This trend looks like it will continue. Also, the chemicals that we now use are better understood and protected by a more concerned and active industry. These materials are expensive but, the turf is better for it.

Professionalism within an industry group is a difficult thing to define. However, enthusiastic attendance at local, regional and national conferences, active participation and support of and in national educational, research and fraternal organizations and groups are important aspects of a progressive group of professional golf course Superintendents. Your banner is your newsletter, **The Grass Roots**. All of these efforts cost money and take time but, the turf industry is better for it.

Finally, there is one other reflection and impression I have about the turf industry in Wisconsin. There seems to be a spirit within the state, a type of drive-to-improve. This is healthy. It sometimes may not be easy but within ourselves there should be a

feeling that we are doing our jobs better. . . and I think you all are. I hope this spirit never dims.

The turf industry and the quality of grass on which the game of golf is being played has improved immensely in a very short span of time. None of these improvements have come easily nor inexpensively. But, there seems to be a willingness for the clubs to support the courses at a higher level and the expected has occurred. The golf course Superintendents have responded and, the turf in the state is better for it.

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ATTENTION!

Due to a scheduling oversight, the March meeting of the WGCSA has been changed to **Monday, March 25**. The time will be **10:30**. The place remains the Traveller's Inn in Fond du Lac.

You must mail in a second reservation; it will be in your mail soon. Apologies for any inconvenience.