



Wet Spring Season Now A Dusty Memory

By Monroe S. Miller

When the last issue of *THE GRASS ROOTS* was nearing press time, many of us were wondering if the wet weather was ever going to end.

Although the winter may have been the warmest in over a hundred years, spring was extracting revenge for that by giving us the grayest, dampest, coldest weather that season had seen in awhile. The grass growing season was delayed for weeks, causing concern that the sun might not show itself again.

Such foolish emotions! By mid-May we were crying for rain. Memorial Day weekend offered some relief for us and for the state's golf courses with a little rain and some unseasonably cool temperatures.

Relief to us, maybe. But not to golf players. They had a miserable Memorial Day weekend. Good grass weather isn't always good golf weather.

The accompanying graphics from the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service chart how moisture status around the state has changed. For a more complete comparison, look back at the stats in the last issue.

Today's surplus is tomorrow's deficit.

The New Hampshire Heart Association conducted a study of men who walk three 18-hole rounds of golf each week. The results of the study show such golf activity improved the participant cholesterol readings.

The amount of exercise involved in walking a golf course three times a week raised the level of 'good' cholesterol and therefore decreased their risk of coronary heart disease.

This is especially good news for golf because the game hasn't been regarded as a significant benefit to cardiovascular health. The great thing is that participation in golf covers all age groups and both sexes, and it is a sport that is likely to be continued once the player has started. The same cannot be said of a lot of exercise programs which have a high dropout rate.

Now the 10 plus million golfers over the age of 39 in the U.S. have the

perfect excuse to head off the golf course—it's good for their health!

Phil Pellitteri thinks the mild winter so many enjoyed six months ago will come back to bug us in the form of some serious insect problems.

The warm winter months resulted in very little seasonal mortality of the insect population. Cold weather helps enormously in keeping our insect problems in check.

Normally it takes from -10°F to -20°F to kill off many of our problem insects. We just didn't get those temperatures last winter.

In our town, winter was similar to that you would normally expect in southern Illinois. I am praying we don't get the kind of summer that they can have down there. Bugs are of less consequence than the turf diseases that prosper in the mid-south summer. I've no interest in fighting either problem this summer in Wisconsin.

Speaking of insects, how many of you saw the AP piece about the New York Entomological Society's Centennial Bug Banquet on May 20th?

The NYES decided to invite a former colleague of Phil Pellitteri and Chuck Koval to be the guest speaker for their anniversary meeting. Dr. Gene Defoliart is a retired University of Wisconsin-Madison entomology professor with expertise on edible bugs.

Because of Defoliart's expertise, the Society decided to hold a feast featuring bugs, ants, worms and crickets!

Defoliart publishes an edible insect newsletter. He became interested in insects as a food source in the 1970s while studying them as a potential high-protein food source for poultry.

Unbelievable as it may seem to some, insects are considered delicacies in many countries. Once, while stationed in Asia not all that far from the equator, I personally watched a young native snatch a fairly large insect from the roadside edge and pop it into his mouth! I nearly lost my lunch—some really ugly

and really big bugs live in that part of the world.

At the banquet 118 people coughed up between \$45 and \$65 for the chance to find bugs in their food.

Hors d'oeuvres included cricket and vegetable tempura, mealworm balls in tomato sauce, wax worm fritters with plum sauce and sauteed Thai water bugs. Ants and kurrajong bugs were also on the menu.

I can see it now. The Symposium committee may take a clue from here and offer up an unforgettable meal at next October's noon luncheon at the Pfister Hotel.

The salad will feature BTA beetle croutons on a bed of dandelion and plantain leaves. The main meal might offer breaded white grubs (harvested from golf course fairways) served with a delicious earthworm (picked up from golf greens after irrigation) loaf and a side of deep fried cutworms. Desert will be chocolate cake decorated with individually selected Armyworms.

Yuk.

Few legislators impress me anymore. In fact, as I think about it, I would be hard pressed to name even one right at this moment (okay, I still really like Gov. Tommy Thompson).

One of the least impressive I've ever met is state representative Louis Fortas. He is the one who proposed, with no evidence of need, some very restrictive legislation affecting those in our industry.

The man has little respect for the institution he was elected to serve in—he showed up at one public hearing in a jogging suit, still sweating. No class. No dignity.

No respect for the public at the hearing, either. Starting times apparently mean little to Mr. Fortas, either. He showed up late at one.

So pressed to make a case was he that he brought a couple of 'victims' from Illinois to testify at a hearing. It was a dirty little ploy usually resorted to by petty politicians.

He ignored testimony from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, too. Since the DATCP was refining AG 29, there was no need for the Fortas proposal.

He appeared on WHA radio with host Tom Clark a little while back, along with Terry Kurth, to discuss his legislative proposal. Terry had his butt for breakfast.

Mr. Fortas tried to push his proposal through the legislature without a hearing before the joint finance committee. The chairman saw through his ploy and canned the bill. We were pleased that he wasn't able to pass this bill; AG 29 will take care of the pertinent issues.

Well, now Mr. Fortas is in the news for another reason, one less to his liking, I'd guess. He is accused of conflict of interest in his support for a proposed Madison convention center and his subsequent purchase of a nearby shopping center.

Fortas bought the shopping center only days after voting for state subsidies for the Monona Terrace Convention Center.

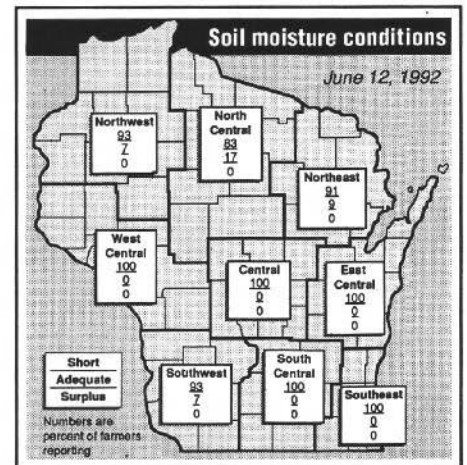
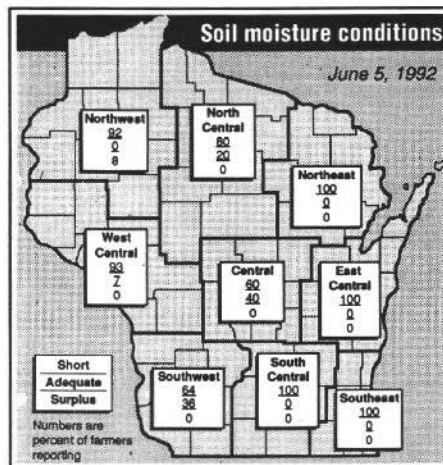
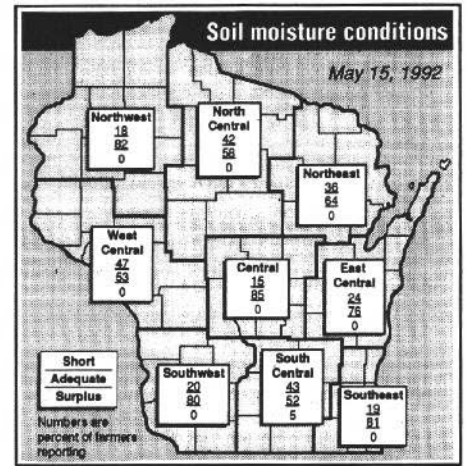
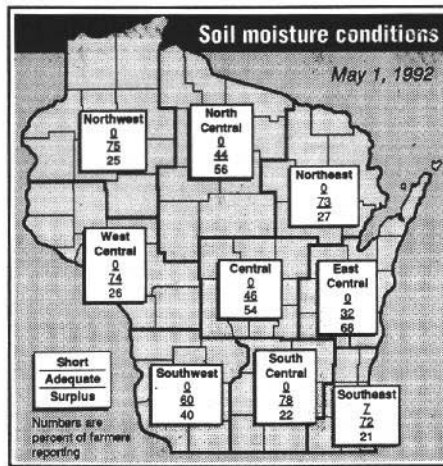
"It doesn't pass the smell test," said another member of the state assembly. Many others agree.

Fortas denies conflict of interest and criticized the objections to his purchase. Of course. Stay tuned for more.

Although last winter was a mild one, I hear there was some grass loss, especially up north. I hate to hear that, but those golf course superintendents are a very capable group and will deal with it in the best possible way.

Down here, the plants that suffered the most on my golf course were the scotch pines. They were really hammered in early November when the cold weather and strong north winds came on so quickly. I was sure in late March and early April that most of these trees were dead.

Fortunately, patience prevailed and we didn't remove any. Good thing, too. Most of them flushed out new buds and are now on the road to recovery. My



best guess is that they'll prosper again real soon.

I have to echo the comments of Bruce Worzella and others regarding the WGCSA members who have hosted meetings so far. I enjoyed going to Evergreen and Beloit—nice job by Bill and Don.

Although I did not attend, I have heard all good about the job Mike Handrich did in preparing Racine C.C. for the CMAA outing and meeting. Nice job, Mike!

What's the name of that guy who used to be at R.C.C.? Does anybody see him anymore (than once a month!)?

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