

SEEING WAS BELIEVING — WTA FIELD DAY MOVES UP A NOTCH!

By Monroe S. Miller

They'd been talking about it for months—the University of Wisconsin faculty and Wisconsin Turfgrass Association officers especially. "The WTA Field Day this year is going to be big."

Well, turns out they weren't kidding. The O.J. NOER TURFGRASS RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FACILITY was the place to be on Tuesday, August 17 for those in the grass business in Wisconsin. Or at least the nearly 500 people who came to Field Day thought so.

It was a great crowd and an excellent summer day. The research station clearly is taking on a more mature look. The research area actually looks crowded, to the point where conversations are taking place about possible expansion. Fortunately, sufficient room was available for displays and equipment demonstration this year.

The Field Day had something for everybody—homeowner to golf course superintendent to sod producer and everyone between.

Of particular interest to WGCSA members I visited with were Dr. Kusow's and Mike Carlson's organic amendments for USGA spec putting green construction. We've all read a lot about that work, and it was a great opportunity to see where that project is to date.

Quite a few members expressed interest in the bentgrass evaluations

for fairway use. As interesting to some was the Penncross study with PGRs.

Winter hardiness, disease control studies, species evaluations, management regime research, insect monitoring and control, environmental work and more were all available for inspection. Faculty were around from the start until early evening to answer the last question of the day.

So extensive was the research that a book was assembled by Dr. Rossi to organize it for participants.

I enjoyed watching, from my place at the registration station, the huge crowd almost religiously follow the research tour. I was envious, and vowed next year I was going to be with them.

It is difficult to imagine anyone leaving the NOER Facility dissatisfied with anything—the food was great, the event was packed with educational information, faculty and grad students were there for consultations, the building was open for a self-guided tour and the tent was a pleasant place to relax and visit with friends. Every successful Field Day needs lots of products and equipment to look at, and this Field Day afforded that, too.

The best summary might be that the 1993 Field Day really gave a glimpse of why the NOER Facility was built in the first place—for the betterment of the turfgrass industry in our state. It also gave us an idea of how this sum-

mer event will look in the future. It was quite a yardstick to measure how far we have come from the first Field Day held at the Arlington Farm over a decade ago.

Best Innovations

- The FIELD DAY BOOK is worth the price of admission. Detailed results will appear in the upcoming Winter Turf Expo and serve as a nice complement to this publication.

- Reduced registration fee carried a risk of reduced income. But the potential reward was a big jump in attendance. It was gratifying that the risk-taking, at this point anyway, was worth it.

- I like the red golf shirts all faculty, UW staff, grad students and NOER employees wore for the day. They made it easier to find someone for help or to answer a question.

- The auction was OUTSTANDING. It will only grow each year, I'm almost sure. Next year we need to get more involved—the bids were too low!

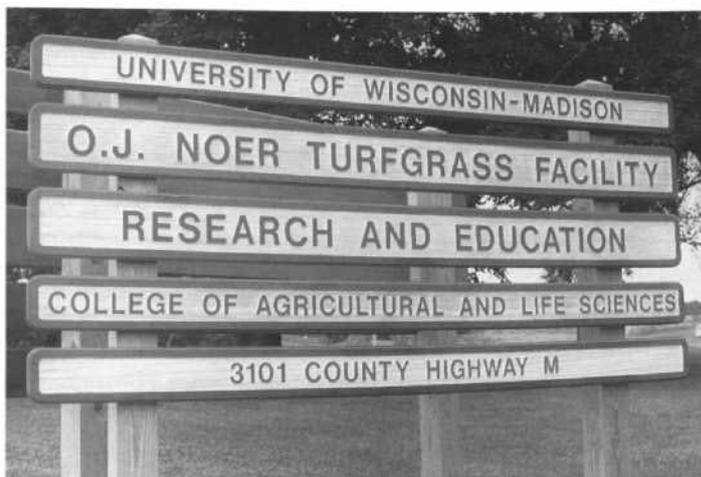
More Work Needed With...

- Registration remains a problem. We have some ideas for next year that will streamline the process and reduce the aggravation of waiting and alleviate the traffic on County Highway M.

- Parking was greatly improved for attendees, but we have to solve the problem of exhibitor vehicles. The situation at about 8:00 a.m. was chaos—



The auction has the potential to become a big fundraiser at Field Day.



New signage—compliments of Gary Richards and Tom Harrison.



The best research facility anywhere!



A couple of Field Day veterans — Bill Voegel and Ray Knapp.

vehicles on both sides of County M, waiting to get in. Trucks and trailers trying to get out of the station and onto the highway made the mess worse. Slow registration frayed nerves. Etc. Etc. WE WILL BE BETTER NEXT YEAR. PROMISE.

- People leave too soon in the afternoon. My feeling is that we need an afternoon “hook”. What is it? Any ideas or suggestions? How about a couple of drawings for a \$100 bill each time? I’d stay!

Disappointments

- It is amazing (and sad) to me that there are people in our business and members of the WGCSA who have a need to “sneak” in. I’ve watched several do it—park and backdoor it to the field and the show and demo area without paying. How can anyone be so cheap—it must be humiliating. One chump—you all know him—slid in again this year without preregistering

or registering at the door. He did the same thing at the Symposium. Next year I am going to name names. This ridiculous little rip-off by the same little chiselers must stop.

- There were too many bargains at the auction. We need to get the bids up higher. I was very satisfied when Wayne Otto bought the Putter creeping bentgrass. We were bidding each other up and up. Fortunately, I am a little more shrewd and he took home the Putter!

It Was Good To See...

- Two carloads of people from Blackwolf Run. Mike Lee was even doing the driving!
- A dozen people from the Bruce Company, including (as usual) the boss himself.
- A crowd from the SENTRY-WORLD staff. Gary Tanko was still buzzed up from his golf game on Monday!

- Stevens Point C.C. continued their premier support of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association with a fine turnout.

- Quite a number of golf course superintendents from Illinois, including WGCSA member Danny Quast.

- CALS Dean Roger Wyse and department chairmen Larry Binning (Horticulture), Robin Harris (Soil Science) and Craig Grau (Plant Pathology). These chairs, in particular, have been wonderful advocates for our industry. They really are a special group of good friends.

Thanks To...

- Gaylord Catering for another excellent year. They always come through.
- Tom Schwab and Tom Harrison for superb and dedicated planning.
- Gary Richards for organizing the parking. He was at the NOER Facility a couple of different times, getting everything ready. He has handled this



A happy man—Field Day co-chairman Tom Schwab.



Field Day registrars Sharon Jaekel and Cathy Pries.

job since the first Field Day at Arlington. By the way, on that day he also handled the beer taps!

- Cathy Pries and Sharon Jackel from the Horticulture Department for their work with the registration. They are the ones who will improve it for next year. Actually, they put in far more work on the days leading up to Field Day than on the event day itself.

- All exhibitors.
- Henry Berg (he did more than we can note here).
- Channel 27 in Madison for covering the event on television.

Did You Notice?

- The new NOER Facility sign at the entrance, compliments of Gary Richards and Tom Harrison?

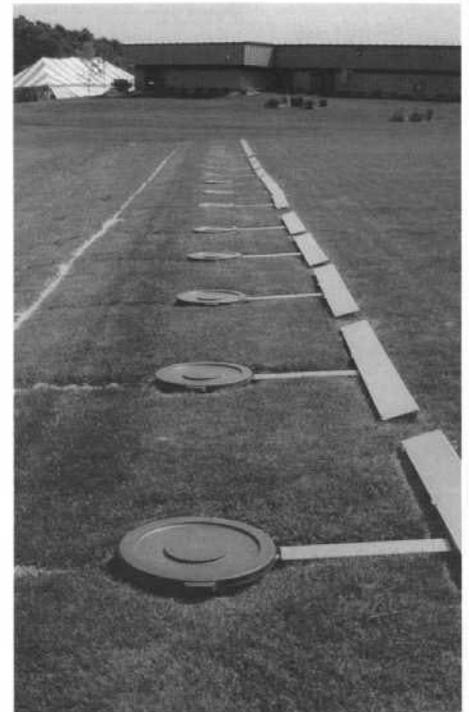
- The new NOER Facility Honor Roll plaque in the front hall of the building?

- The cleanliness of the building, the shop and the surrounds? It is nearly always that way (which is how it should be).

- The materials stockpiled in readiness to construct new experimental greens? (work will be done by The Bruce Co.) 🍀



Weather data collected here was presented in the Field Day booklet.



No—these aren't missile silos. They are part of Professor Kussow's runoff plot area.



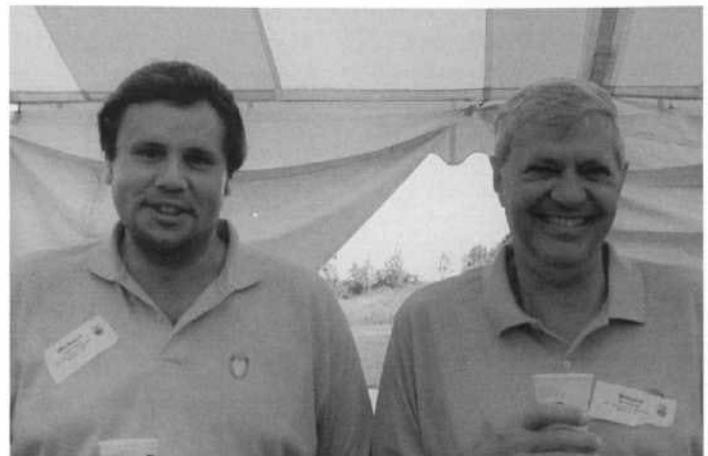
Did you ever wonder how Zoysia grows in Wisconsin? Visit the Noer Facility and find out!



Insect problems? Lots of people consulted with UW-Madison entomologist Phil Pellitteri.



Equipment demo opportunities are an important aspect of Field Day.



Mike Carlson and his major professor, Wayne Kussow.