



Field Notes for Field Day and Other Noer News

By Tom Schwab, Manager
O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility

I just had my first big event at the Noer Facility. It was the equivalent to hosting a WGCSA meeting or big member/guest tournament. The event was the first ever Super/Pro fund raising tournament. The tournament teamed up club superintendents and professionals against other clubs' paired teams. This year they played the wonderfully conditioned University Ridge course.

In the morning all the teams met out here at the Noer Facility. So I had to make sure the place was clean, well groomed and all the dandelions mowed down. We took the teams for a tour of the building and then to all the plots that were related to golf turf research. It was a great opportunity to introduce the golf professionals to all the varied research that takes place at the Noer Facility. I think many of them left with a new appreciation for the science of turfgrass management.

The day to really get an appreciation for turf research is at the annual Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Summer Field Day. This year it's being held on Tuesday, August 15th. The permanent site for Field Day is the Noer Facility so you can actually see and hear about all the research being done here. This day not only explores golf turf research but also highlights home lawn, athletic field and production related turf studies.

A major portion of the day is dedicated to a trade show, where you can learn about the equipment and products used in the turf industry. These exhibitors have made Summer Field Day what it is today. They have always been strong supporters of turf research and education. We are expecting over 60 exhibitors this year who will be anxious to tell you about the latest innovations.

The day will also include a silent auction, a putting contest, some surprise entertainment and as always a great lunch. We would be very pleased to see you at Field Day, whether it is your first or fourteenth appearance. We promise an educational and fun experience. If you do not receive your registration in early July, or if you have questions, please feel free to call 608-845-6536.

Some new studies are starting to take shape at the Noer Facility. Two important ones are being funded by you, the WGCSA. They are the Putting Green Management Systems (PGMS), and National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP). The studies are on 5000 square feet of native soil green and 5000 square feet of USGA green. Each 5000 is divided again to support half PGMS and half NTEP trials. That way they cover both studies on both types of construction.

The NTEP looks at 28 different cultivars of bentgrass in a green situation. The PGMS will look at high, medium and low intensity management regimes. It will also look at those regimes on three distinctly different bentgrass cultivars. The studies will be producing good information by Summer Field Day. They will have pertinent information for virtually every golf course in the state.

Another new study you will want to see is the Kentucky Bluegrass fairway cultivar evaluation. These cultivars are being maintained at a 3/4 inch mowing height to see if *Poa annua* or other weeds are creeping in at this height. They also investigate if the grass would be fine textured, upright and dense enough to fit on your fairways.

Six new studies will be under construction at Summer Field Day. They are an NTEP for perennial ryegrass, a NTEP for Kentucky bluegrass, use of a so called "miracle product" called Natures Nutrient to maintain Kentucky bluegrass, a thatch management study, a prairie demonstration and an ornamental grass demonstration.

The ornamental grass demonstration is being coordinated with a Madison landscape nursery, C/R Stephenson Company. They will be helping set up the study with two goals in mind. One goal is to set up the study in a natural setting. This way we can observe the grasses as they would actually be used in a landscape. The other goal is to use many of the less common varieties along with the common ones. We'll have more information to help you use more varieties.

(Continued on page 15)

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(Continued from page 13)

The Noer Facility just came one step closer to acquiring the 20 new acres. It had been reported to you before how we need this land to expand Summer Field Day, do lower maintenance turf studies (roadside, airstrip, athletic field) and expand our other landscape plant study. This will provide more research and education to the users of the Noer Facility.

The land is owned by the UW Foundation, which gave us the original 13 acres. The Foundation has been reluctant to give up the 20 acres because they think University Ridge may build another 18 holes and need this land some day.

The University of Wisconsin Division of Intercollegiate Athletics (DIA) just wrote to Wayne Horman, President of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association, explaining how the DIA is doing a long range development plan for the University Ridge Golf Course. The plan has two key components; to maximize the efficiency of the existing golf course property, and an analysis of options for developing adjacent land owned by the University of Wisconsin Foundation. The important part of the letter states, "Our assumptions relative to the second component include continued, and even expanded, involvement of the research personnel of the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Educational Facility. Further, the Department is well aware of the need of the Noer Facility's request to expand the research area by approximately 20 acres immediately north of the existing holdings. The function of this important research operation is important to the continued growth and efficient operations of golf courses in Wisconsin as well as University Ridge. Therefore, as we meet with the successful bidder the land requested by the Noer Facility will not be included in the development of the Master Plan."

This letter let the UW Foundation know that the UW Division of Intercollegiate Athletics has no plans to expand onto these 20 acres, which should free up the Foundation to do what it does so well. That is to help expand good research and education, which the addition to the Noer Facility certainly will do.

Lastly I would like to tell you about a meeting I had a month ago with an equipment manufacturer. It was so unusual after coming from a relatively low budget golf course operation. A representative from John Deere in Beaver Dam and his secretary made an appointment to meet with me one Tuesday. When they arrived we sat down and they set a John Deere catalog in front of me. We went through every page to see what I needed. John Deere generously loaned us \$113,000 of equipment to use at the Noer for the next two years with a promise to stop back again.

Two weeks later a representative from Jacobsen heard this story. I was then sent a catalog from Jacobsen. The problem is we are 13 acres and only need so much equipment. There is also Reinders, Wisconsin Turf, and Hanleys that have helped out with the equipment every year. Even Tiziani Golf Cars brought out a Yamaha this year.

The meeting with John Deere was so unique as is the support from the other manufacturers. I have spent more time this spring reading new operators manuals when what I have been used to is making trips to Farm & Fleet for more duct tape and bailing twine. 🍷

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