

# North Central Turfgrass Researchers Visit Madison

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**History.** In the early 1900's the United States Department of Agriculture established regional crop specific research groups. These groups were created to address the needs of the growers in the region. In the mid 1960's regional turfgrass research groups were initiated. The North Central group known as, NCR-10, includes researchers and extension personnel from 11 mid-western states (MN, WI, NE, MO, MI, ND, IA, IL, OH, IN, KS). Each year the group meets at one of the turfgrass institutions and on June 20 and 21 they converged on Madison.



Dr. John Street of Ohio and Dr. Zachary Reicher of Purdue University visited the Noer Facility to gather information they might use in the construction of their new turf research facilities.



Wayne Kussow holding court. To his right see Dr. Dave Minner of Iowa State.

I was responsible for setting up the itinerary for the meeting that typically draws 20 to 25 individuals. As a young turfgrass researcher, I was honored to have the opportunity to host leaders in our field such as, Dr. Bob Shearman from Nebraska, Dr. Don White from Minnesota, Drs. John Street and Karl Danneberger from Ohio State and Drs. Nick Christians and Dave Minner from Iowa State, to name a few. In all over 45 individuals attended!

**Research Reports.** The meetings began at the Holiday Inn-Madison West, site of our own Turf EXPO, where introductory remarks were made by Wayne Horman, President of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association. For a young guy, I am regularly impressed with Wayne's ability to establish a leadership posture addressing what many would consider an intimidating audience. Also, it is significant to mention that the WTA provided a \$1500.00 grant to support the hospitality functions at the hotel and later that evening at Quivey's Grove in Verona.

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Following some further remarks from Dean Neal Jorgenson from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences administration, the excitement began. I must admit that moderating five hours of research reports was one of the many highlights I've experienced in my short academic career.

Each state provided a "What's goin' on" type of report with general information about teaching and extension programming. The open floor discussion and questioning could have easily lasted the entire two days, but the enticing Noer Facility lay ahead for the afternoon.

**Noer Facility Visit.** Several of the researchers attended the meeting specifically to view the Noer Facility. Currently, Ohio State has a facility under construction with Purdue scheduled to build soon, as well as Minnesota and further expansion of the Michigan State University facility. I wish that each person even peripherally involved in the development of the Noer Facility could watch visitors turn green with envy. The fruits of all of your labor was apparent in the eyes of the researchers and brought to a crescendo when provided a personal tour by Dr. Kussow and myself.

**Horicon Works.** With the first day in the books and a wonderful Wisconsin dinner in our bellies we headed northeast to the John Deere Horicon Works. Dennis DePonte and his staff of engineers and retired engineers provided an in-depth and personal tour of the manufacturing facility. There was wonderful interaction among the attendees during the tour and many who have visited manufacturing facilities around the world marveled at the technological innovations that make the Horicon Facility one of the finest.


**Mad Town Tour.** As we boarded the bus for our return to Madison, I began to scheme of a way to really show off our great University and the city of Madison. Clearly, there would have been better tour guides than myself, yet, I gave it my all. We came in East Washington headed straight for the capital. The bus driver decided that a ride down State St. was appropriate, and having moved her after State St. was closed to traffic I was thrilled. Next stop was the UW Memorial Union terrace for some imbibing of refreshments and soaking up the atmosphere that makes the terrace a special place. A quick souvenir stop at the University bookstore and then on to Michael's Frozen Custard. All that was



Dr. Karl Danneberger from Ohio State University visited the Noer Facility during the NCR-10 meeting and will address Wisconsin Turf Manager at the Turf EXPO in January. That's Dr. Tom Voigt, U of Illinois Turf Extension Specialist on the left.

missing was the Farmers Market and a Badger Football game to make the day compete. Nevertheless, I was solicited by several researchers to do their sabbatical leaves here in Madison, as well as another who wished I had taken the GCSAA job so he could get this one!

**Thanks.** As you might imagine, the meeting was a resounding success and only strengthened the growing reputation of the program and industry have developed nationally. On a more personal note, I want to thank each and every one of you for allowing me the privilege to work for you in Wisconsin. As I talk with my colleagues, I realize that the partnership we have here in Wisconsin is truly unique and most enviable. I am grateful to be part of it. And with full minds and bellies all departed safely, waiting another 13 years to return. I'll look forward to that day also... 🍷



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