

A Three Year Plan For The TDDL

By Bob Erdahl

In the March/April 1996 issue of THE GRASS ROOTS, I concluded my article ("Wisconsin TDDL Takes Big Step Forward") by stating that the future of turfgrass disease diagnosis in Wisconsin was up to all of us. Following up on that theme, this article will describe how we can all do our part to insure the long term success of the Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Lab—TDDL.

Before proceeding with any further discussion on the future of the TDDL, however, it is necessary to first correct an oversight that I made in my last article. In my comments about the history of the Plant Pathogen Detection Clinic in the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I was remiss in not mentioning the very important contributions made to the clinic by:

Mary Francis Heimann
Chuck Koval
Phil Pelletteri

These dedicated individuals have played key roles in the operation of the clinic since its inception in the mid-1970's. Their years of hard work formed the foundation from which we can now go forward and build the TDDL.

As I outlined in my last article, the 1996 TDDL is a partnership between the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association (WTA) and the University of Wisconsin-Madison/UW-Extension. The \$45,500 needed to pay the staff of the TDDL and purchase the equipment and supplies necessary to run the lab in 1996 will come from:

- WTA \$23,000 \$1,000 donations from 18 golf courses and 5 businesses.
- UW-Madison/UW-Extension \$19,000.
- TDDL Revenue \$3,500.

How long will this partnership last? With the current budget shrinking that is taking place in Madison, the \$19,000 from UW-Madison/UW-Extension may not be available in the future. Thus, the partnership may be only one year long and the responsibility for future funding of the TDDL will fall solely upon the WTA.

Given this very probable scenario, the WTA Board of Directors has undertaken a 3 year fund raising campaign to insure the continued existence of the TDDL through 1999.

The goals of the fund raising campaign are three-fold:

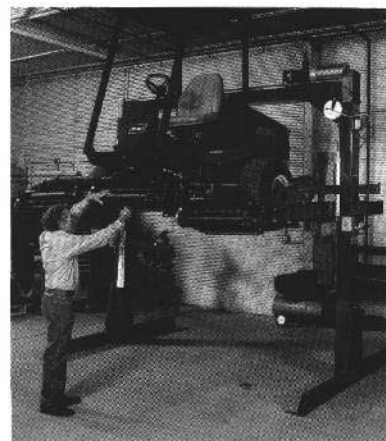
1. Obviously, the number one goal is to raise enough money to make the TDDL financially independent.
2. A second important goal is to create a broader base of support for all of the programs of the WTA.
3. The third and more subtle goal is to draw more people to the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research & Education Facility.

To meet these goals, the WTA needs to draw support from all segments of the turfgrass industry in Wisconsin. This includes golf courses, sod farms, lawn care companies, public institutions, landscape companies and the distributors of turfgrass maintenance supplies. Who will provide the most support? Golf Courses! And who will make the decision to provide that support? The golf course superintendent, of course!

That's right, this article has just turned into an unabashed effort to twist your arms into supporting the 3 year fund raising campaign for the TDDL. And that doesn't bother me a bit—because golf course superintendents stand to gain the most from the TDDL. After all: Who gets the weird patches that show up on the 7th green overnight? We do. Who needs to have a diagnosis ASAP? We do. Who needs to know whether to spray a contact or a systemic? We do. Who needs to solve the problem in order to save their own necks? We do. And finally, who is in the best position to send a big check to the TDDL? We are!

(Continued on page 21)

**GIVE
YOUR
TURF
MAINT-
ENANCE
PROGRAM
A
LIFT!**



**AND DO ALL YOUR ROUTINE SERVICING
QUICKLY, SAFELY,
AND MORE THOROUGHLY!**

Trion offers the only turf equipment lift designed to efficiently meet the daily maintenance needs of your turfgrass operation! No other lift compares! Call today to request our **FREE VIDEO** and see the Trion difference yourself!

YOUR AREA REPRESENTATIVE:
JOE CHECK
CHECK SIGNATURE, INC.
4420 Churchill Street
Shoreview, MN 55126



(123) 456-7890

(Continued from page 19)

OK, so hopefully I've proved beyond a reasonable doubt that golf course superintendents need the services of the TDDL more than any other turfgrass managers and that we are also in the best position to financially support the TDDL. Can I expect the checks to start rolling into the WTA office? Probably not! Why? Because it's tough to go before your chairman or owner and ask for a donation to any organization. Money is tight and no one wants to just give it away without getting something in return.

I can deal with that, and so can the WTA. In fact, as Figure 1 illustrates, the WTA has decided to reward donors to the 3 year TDDL fund raising campaign with benefits that approximate the value of the money that is contributed. A quick glance at Figure 1 reveals four levels of donation—\$100, \$200, \$500, \$1,000—and the four types of benefits.

Figure 1

Yearly Benefits	Yearly Donation			
	\$1,000	\$500	\$200	\$100
Number of Free Samples (1)	10	5	2	1
Priority service on free samples (2) Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Disease Diagnostic Seminar for your staff at the Noer Center (3) Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Field Diagnostic visit to your facility by TDDL staff (4) Yes	Yes	No	No	No

1. Free samples include same-day analysis for Pythium and Rhizoctonia. Free samples do not include analysis for Nematodes.
2. Priority Service provides for immediate service on all free samples. Additional samples will be processed on a first come-first serve basis.
3. The Disease Diagnostic Seminar will be held at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research & Education Facility in conjunction with the WTA Summer Field Day.
4. The Field Diagnostic Visit will provide on-site diagnosis of your turfgrass disease problems by members of the TDDL staff.

Unused benefits do not carry over into the next year.

The first benefit is free analysis of your samples. You get one free for every \$100 you contribute. This compares to the normal charge per sample of \$60 for the standard analysis and \$100 for same-day analysis for Pythium and Rhizoctonia. And yes, your free samples do include the \$100 same-day analysis for Pythium and Rhizoctonia. Thus, it is possible that the value of your donation could be returned to you in full just through the free sample analysis.

The second benefit is priority service for all of your free samples. This means that when you walk in the door of the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research & Education Facility and hand your dead grass to the TDDL staff person, your problem will be diagnosed ASAP. Remember, this special service only applies to your free samples.

The third benefit is a Disease Diagnostic Seminar that

will be held in conjunction with the WTA Summer Field Day in August. This is a "Hands On" event for you and your staff and will focus on sampling techniques, disease identification in the field, microscopic examination of pathogens in the lab and the overall operation of the TDDL.

The fourth benefit is only for the high rollers at the \$1,000 level. It involves a visit to your facility by the TDDL staff to assist you in the identification of your particular disease problems. Even if you don't need a diagnostic visit, the staff of the TDDL will pay you a visit so that they can get to know you and your golf course. After all, for a big donation, you deserve some special treatment!

So what do you think? Are you getting some valuable benefits for your donation? Is it worth—say \$500 a year? It probably depends on the year. If 1995 repeats itself—God forbid—you could get your money's worth on just the free samples. If the next three years are free of serious disease pressure, you may not think it is such a good deal.

Good deal or bad deal is one question that you have to answer—but there are two other questions that are more important. The first is, "Can I afford to be without the services of the TDDL?" The second is, "Will the TDDL be a success without my donation?" The answer to both of these questions is an emphatic NO.

I guarantee you that at some point in your career you will need the TDDL to help you solve a tough problem. I can also guarantee you that if you don't support the TDDL with your donation, the chances of the TDDL being there when you need it are slim to none.

Bottom line—starting in 1997, the WTA will need a minimum of \$42,000 a year to operate the TDDL. If you don't help out, the job won't get done—period.

Start making plans now to include your contribution to the TDDL in your 1997-1999 budgets. The donation levels are structured to encourage participation by all golf courses. The WTA realizes that a \$100 donation from a small golf course is just as important as a \$1,000 donation from a large golf course with a much bigger budget. Speaking of you guys and gals at the big clubs, now is the time to put a crow bar into that budget and come out with a big donation. Show some leadership and help the WTA generate some excitement for the TDDL.

I know one person who is very excited about the TDDL. That's Dr. Doug Maxwell of the UW-Madison Department of Plant Pathology. Doug is in charge of the TDDL and is really fired up about the turfgrass industry. He attended the GCSAA conference in Orlando and came away truly impressed by the whole affair. You will be able to meet Doug and get all your questions about the TDDL answered at the May meeting of the WGCSA.

Doug has spent the last few weeks getting the TDDL organized out at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research & Education Facility. He has released the job opening announcement for the lab technician and is expecting a lot of qualified candidates to apply. With Doug at the helm, we can all rest assured that our donations will be wisely used and the performance of the TDDL will live up to our expectations.

Look for the official information about the three year fund raising campaign for the TDDL to arrive at your club in the middle of the summer—note the timing, just when you start to get those sleepless nights worrying about disease! Remember, if we all do our share to help the TDDL, we will all be able to rest easier when disease problems come knocking at our course. 🍷