



# Done Deal

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

How many times has it been reported to you that the Noer Facility will be acquiring new land? Well, it's done. The UW Foundation is finally letting us use the land that surrounds the facility to expand our research and to meet the needs of the ever-expanding summer field day. The new addition is about 34 acres.

The details of the acquisition are a little complicated. There are two main points. 1. We have to rent the land, basically to pay the taxes. The way I understand it is that if the Foundation gave us the land there would be no taxes. Then the land would be deemed tax exempt state research farm land. I think the Foundation doesn't want to give us the land because they're concerned that it may be needed to build another 18 holes at University Ridge golf course some day. 2. We're only getting the land on a three year rolling horizon. That means the Foundation can take the land back anytime as long as they give us a three year notice. We're happy about the rolling horizon. It

would be hard to start a new study if the land could be taken away before the investigation was done.

The good news is that we can finally use the land. I told the WTA board about the new land at their last meeting. Two board members gave me more good news. Wayne Horman said Scotts will donate the starter fertilizer and Chris Wendorf told me L.L. Olds will donate the seed. Once again, industry comes through to show their dedication to turf research.

Initially we'll just be establishing about six acres to turf which will be used for equipment demonstration and vendor parking for Field Day. The rest of the land will be cropped by West Madison Agricultural Research Station with the proceeds helping to pay the rent. More of the new land will eventually be established to investigate other turf studies including shade, low input, propagation, and variety/cultivar turf studies; we also may research other horticultural and agricultural plants as well.

I dream of the day that we may

have to sink another irrigation well to maintain other high input studies, build our own research golf hole and other athletic turf studies, build a green house for indoor turf studies, construct a mixing/ loading/ storage building, and have the new Turf Disease Diagnostic Lab (TDDL) staffed and equipped to handle many more urban plant queries.

The Noer Facility also has a new phone system to report about. Our old system was rude. The calls were frequently interrupted by "call waiting" beeps. The old system couldn't handle the addition of the new TDDL with all its electronic, homepage, URL, surf-in' and turfin'. The turf hotline will be continued by horticultural outreach specialist Amy Sausen, but she needed another line for her e-mail and voice line. WTA administrative assistant Audra Anderson will also soon be getting on the net. You may want to jot down these numbers for reference this summer:



Ground view and...



an aerial view of the NOER Facility and its area of expansion.

**Telephone and Fax numbers:**

Noer Facility Main # or  
Audra Anderson.....608-845-6536  
Noer Facility Fax .....608-845-8162  
Tom Schwab or  
Dr. Kussow.....608-845-6895\*  
Turf Disease Diagnostic Lab.....  
.....608-265-TDDL (8335)  
Dr. Maxwell, Dr. Meyer,  
Steve Millett.....608-845-2535\*  
Amy Sausen.....608-845-2545\*  
Turf Hotline.....608-845-TURF (8873)

\*new numbers

**E-mail addresses:**

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Catherine (center), working at last year's Summer Field Day.

Very soon you will have one more number to remember. I am in the process of setting up what is called an electronic list server or electronic discussion group. It should be operational soon and is free if you are already on the internet. The group will be Wisconsin golf course superintendents, WTA members and eventually

other managers in our region who share similar turf knowledge. How it works is that anyone in the group can e-mail a question or message to the rest of us. If anyone in the group wants to answer the question or make a comment, they would e-mail back. It's called a discussion group because everyone in the group will see all questions written to the group and  
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have a chance to respond back. Everyone will also see all responses from anyone in the group. It will work to get quick answers back to immediate issues or problems. For example, someone could write, "My topdressing just got rained on. Does anyone have a suggestion for dragging in wet sand?" This list serv could be real informative, fun and as I said it is free. Hopefully I'll have it all figured out and be able to tell you about it at the May meeting to complement Dr. Maxwell's Turf Disease Diagnostic Lab presentation.

On an extremely sorrowful note, I'm sure most of you have heard about the passing away of a dear colleague and friend. Catherine Smejkal lost her short bout to cancer on February 29, 1996. She did so much work for the turf industry for so long.

I remember first meeting her almost twenty years ago when she was a senior research assistant with Dr. Worf in the Dept. of Plant Pathology. I can't honestly say I had much contact with her until I started working at the Noer Facility. There I saw her coordinating and carrying out numerous fertility and disease trials. The days that she was away from the Noer, she was off to another ag research station or experimental site helping Dr. grau and others with potato, alfalfa and other plant studies.

She did so much behind the scenes work for EXPO and Summer Field Day. She wasn't concerned with grabbing credit for all the work she did and that work was huge. She was pleasant to work with. You could tell the other workers at the Noer and her own small staff really looked up to her. There will be a big void created by her absence this summer. She will be missed by all of us, but won't be forgotten.

A group of her friends and colleagues are raising funds to build a memorial garden in her name at the Noer Facility. If anyone would like to contribute, you can make a check out to WTA Catherine's Garden and send it to the Noer Facility/3101 Hwy M/Verona, WI/53593. If you'd prefer to send plant material, Catherine left a list of her favorite plants. Call Audra at the Noer to get that list at 608/845-6536. We'll surely miss you, Catherine. 🍀



The Noer Facility will expand but to the first row of trees in the background.

