

NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED

By Tom Schwab, Superintendent
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The planning committee for the WTA Summer Field Day made a big attempt to attract more attendance and make the day more informative for the 1997 show. Some things worked, other things didn't. The biggest change was to try a two-day format for the first time since the show started in 1983. Another change was to move the trade show to the new six-acre addition of the Noer Facility. Simply outgrowing the previous location mandated that change. The last big change was on the educational tour. More signage and marking paint were used on the plots than ever before. The tour also returned to a more formal schedule with each stop given a set amount of time to keep the crowds flowing in an organized fashion.

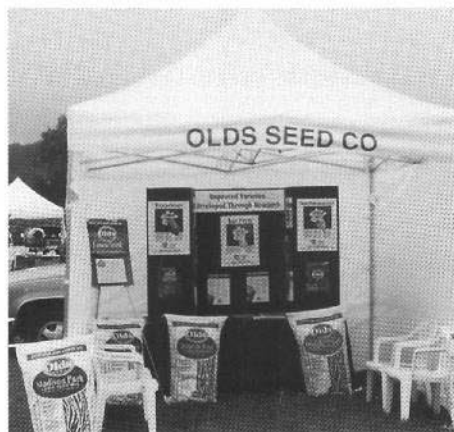
The attendance was only slightly less than previous years. 445 people came when counting both vendors and attendees, which was 31 short of last year. Onsite registration may have been less because the weather was less than ideal. The temperatures stayed in the 60's and some annoying sprinkles occurred both days. Other than that, everyone was puzzled as to why attendance dropped.

The display of research covered more subjects than previous years. There were specific studies for sod growers and athletic field managers along with the golf and general turf culture studies. The vendors put on an awesome trade show as usual. They offer such a great opportunity to compare products side by side and have so much information to help you do your job better.

The two-day format was tried so that if a person had a conflict making the show on one of the days there would be another optional day to attend. The same information was presented both days but at different times of the day. The first day was more of an afternoon show and the



It was all there at the 1997 Field Day!



Olds Seed was present, as they always are.

second day was a morning one. The different times of day were planned to also try to fit people's schedules better.

Some attendees and vendors liked the two-day format but most people didn't. We know most people didn't from the responses received from the post conference questionnaire. Many responses were very constructive and will help in planning future field days. A grouping of the responses are shown below. The planning committee used those responses and



A line-up of the latest in grass machinery.

their own observations to already make plans for 1998. Future plans are discussed below also.

The categories of the responses are in bold. An asterisks means their was more than one of the same comment. Here are a few of the constructive questionnaire responses.

Research Tour

- Spend more time on the plots *
- Go back to one day but have two research tours in that one day *
- More on chemicals and diseases



Three different aerial views of the Noer Facility just immediately prior to Field Day.

- More herbicide trials
- More pest identification
- More on turf and weed identification
- Need more Kentucky bluegrass, and tall fescue cultivars trials
- Have research on ball mark and divot repair techniques
- Need more comparisons between the different turfgrass mixtures that are sold in the state
- Enjoyed different bentgrass cultivar trials and their different mowing heights
- Greens construction and their different organic matter contents was interesting

Trade Show

- One day only *
- Condense exhibitor space *
- Enjoyed more spacious area, easier to move around in *
- Need more attendees *
- Have food tent in the center with vendors around it
- Mow the general trade show turf shorter and let demos mow at 2-2.5 inch height

Equipment Demos

- Would like to demo equipment at green and tee height *
- Don't need equipment demos
- Have each vendor demo one machine or product and give a short presentation on it.

Auction

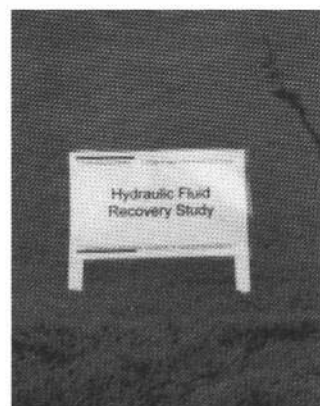
- Need more items such as golf packages
- Need more smaller items
- Auction should be under a tent and have a permanent attendant to answer questions *
- Great, get more stuff
- More space and have placards for company donating items

Other

- Should be one day *
- Change date (two to three weeks earlier). Summer employees leave



College leaders — Assoc. Dean Doug Maxwell, Acting Dean Neal Jorgensen, and Department Chair Larry Binning.



A hydraulic fluid recovery study whose results can help almost all of us.

- around field day *
- Have field day in late September or early October
- Better placement of and more porta potties and trash cans
- To get larger crowds need to combine with other shows (landscapers, grounds maintenance and lawn care professionals)
- Need more attendees *
- Have more and better tour guides
- Have door prize to give away something like a 27 inch TV to get attendance up
- Give prizes to people that visit X number of vendors
- Need more attendees, maybe try combining field day with a golf outing afterwards *
- Have vendors donate \$25 to give away in a drawing to attendees that visit all booths
- Adding a second day and dinner was great
- Ask the attendees in the survey whether the trade show is still important to them
- More breakfast rolls and coffee
- Don't conflict the dates with surrounding state's field days
- Hand out or post agenda of the days events
- Have open house inside the facility

- Turf plots get better each year
- Send out reminder cards
- Would like to hear from other turf professionals to see how they view each growing season
- Have safety class for equipment operators

We will be doing our best to mold these responses into a field day that is ever more educational and will draw greater attendance. The changes that have already been decided on are to go back to a one-day show. We are also changing the date to a week earlier. The date has always been the third Tuesday of august. It will be the second Wednesday of August next year which should proceed the loss of everyone's summer help and yet will be late enough for the researchers to have results from their summer's work.

We will take many of the other suggestions into account next year also. Write me if you have more suggestions or if you would just like to add your vote to one of the above. They can be anonymous or not. I'll get the suggestions to the planning committee. We'd like to hear all your

(Continued on page 29)

(Continued from page 27)

suggestions because "nothing ventured, nothing gained." The two main suggestions we are looking for are how to improve your educational benefit from Field Day and how to increase attendance. Other ideas are important also. Send them to Tom/Noer Turfgrass Research/ 3101 Hwy M/ Verona, WI/ 53593. Let me know if you would like to help plan or work during the field day also. You may be just the one needed to make the day even better. You could help on the planning committee, help publicize the event, be a tour guide, work the auction, help the vendors and demos, organize parking, or help inform attendees about the day's agenda.

Listed below are the 1997 Summer Field Day exhibitors. They do a lot to make the field day a success every year. Please show them your gratitude by giving them your business throughout the year. Thank you.

Absorbent Technologies
Bayer Corp
Cannon Turf
Century Rain Aid
Chipco
Conserv F/S
Contree Sales
DGS & Associates
Finn Corp
FS Seed
Glenn Rehbein
Great Lakes GC Products
Greensmix
Hanley
Hanson & Assoc
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IMC Vigoro
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Lebanon Turf
Lesco
McFarlane Implement
Melcher Equipment
MidAmerCo

Miller & Assoc
Milorganite
Neary Mfg
Olds Seed
Olsen Dist
Par Aide Products
Pendelton Turf Supply
Pro Greens of the Midwest
ProGreen Plus
ProLawn
Reinders
Rhodys Town & Country
Rohm & Haas

Scotts Co
Soil Organics Consulting
Sports Turf Association
Spring Valley Turf
Tee Shot Marketing
Terra International
Tiziani Golf Cars
Trelay Seed Company
United Horticultural Supply
WDATCP
Wisconsin Turf
Wolosek Landscaping
Zeneca Products



Jeff Gregos, TDDL director, visits about the newly constructed pathology plots.



Dr. Wayne Kussow holding court on bentgrass plots at Field Day.



Thanks to the many companies who offer material support.



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