

## CAN IT GET ANY BETTER?

By Tom Schwab, Superintendent  
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The Wisconsin Turfgrass and Greenscape EXPO may have been the best ever this year. It was the 15th annual winter conference hosted by the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association and the 5th time held at the Marriott Madison West (formerly Holiday Inn). While EXPO is always one of the best educational conferences in the Midwest, many people thought this year was even better. The reasons were that the educational sessions were supreme for all three categories of turf managers: golf; lawn and landscape; and grounds and sports turf. Also, a huge number of exhibitors in the trade show provided plenty of one-on-one attention to attendees. In addition, the scheduling and organization of the whole conference flowed so expertly. Registration was quick and friendly and the EXPO packets were organized and helpful.

The only thing that could have been improved was the weather. Why does the weather always take a turn for the worse during EXPO week! Record cold temperatures for



The trade show was packed.

the season and slick snow covered roads have become the norm. I'm sure the weather kept on-site registration down. There were a record number of attendees despite the weather; 367 attendees came to gather information from the talks and trade show. The number of exhibits in the trade show was a few less than last year though, with 61 booths occupied by 129 helpful exhibitors.

Chris Wendorf, the EXPO planning committee chairman, will work on improving the weather for next year. He did such a good job with everything else as chairman. The planning meetings started right after last year's show and continued throughout the year. Finding all the speakers is the most important element of planning, but scheduling, organizing, and coordinating a 500 person conference also takes quite a bit of work. Audra Anderson, Wisconsin Turfgrass Association's administrative secretary, does much of the planning and almost all the behind-the-scenes work. She really pours her heart into EXPO, and it shows. Planning committee members for this year, other than Chris and Audra, were Dr. John Stier, Jeff Gregos, Paul Huggett, Amy Sausen, and myself. Please complete your post conference questionnaire to help us plan next year's show especially if you have certain speakers that you would like to suggest.

WTA president Bob Erdahl opened the conference summarizing the research projects that the association has supported this year. He also described the progress the association is making to reach a one million dollar endowment, through the UW Foundation, that will support future research projects. We are more than a quarter of the way to reaching that goal since starting the endowment four years ago. Lastly he thanked Greensmix for

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their \$30,000 donation of root zone materials to build a half-acre bentgrass research area that was constructed in 1997.

One of WTA's past presidents, Curt Larson, introduced the 1998 scholarship recipients and turfgrass research donors. The turfgrass research donations make up a large part of the WTA annual budget for projects and growth of the endowment. The summary of scholarships and turf research donations is mentioned here.

Scholarship Donor	Recipient	Amount
AgrEvo	Dave Rappold	\$500
Bayer	Jeff Beauvais	\$500
Spring Valley	Raechal Sager	\$600
WGCSA J.R. Love Scholarship	Trygve Ekern	\$500
Wisconsin Turfgrass Association	Aaron Goninen	\$600
Wisconsin Turfgrass Association	Eric Counselman	\$600
Wisconsin Turfgrass Association	Jamie Johnson	\$600

Turf Research Donor	Recipient	Amount
Aqua Aid	WTA	\$1,000
Bulls Eye Country Club	WTA	\$1,220
Cannon Turf	WTA	\$375
Cole Grower	WTA	\$500
Creekwood Farms	WTA	\$500
Greensmix	WTA	\$30,500
<i>(research and materials donation)</i>		
Horst/ Milorganite	WTA	\$1,350
Milorganite	WTA	\$2,000
Riverview Country Club	WTA	\$1,366
Soil Organic Consulting	WTA	\$1,000
Spring Valley	WTA	\$1,000
Spring Valley/ Milorganite	WTA	\$1,075
Standard Tar Products	WTA	\$500
Stevens Point Country Club	WTA	\$1,148
WI Golf Course Superintendents Assoc	WTA	\$10,000
Wisconsin Sod Producers	WTA	\$875
Wisconsin Turf/Milorganite	WTA	\$1,800
Gary Zwerlein	WI Turfgrass Research and Development Fund (WTRDF)	\$200
Lake Wisconsin Country Club	WTRDF	\$450
Reinders/ Daconil	WTRDF	\$5,560
Westmoor Country Club	WTRDF	\$2,730
WTA	WTRDF	\$45,000

Dr. John Stier continued in the opening session by introducing himself as one of the newer members of the UW turfgrass program. He summarized some of his past research from Michigan State University, his present work since arriving this past April, and what his duties will be in the future of the UW turf program. He will be adding a new advanced turfgrass management and physiology course to the turf program in 1998. That will be part of his 30% teaching appointment at the UW. His other appointment is 70% extension — so you may be seeing him as he travels the state doing research and giving turf advice.

Dr. Michael Casler has done work on every UW-Madison Agricultural Research Station except O.J. Noer. since joining the University in 1980. He will now add to his work by doing some breeding work on turfgrass. Casler described the history of turfgrass breeding and the long arduous process of bringing a new grass to market. He will continue focusing mainly on his forage grass



Randy Smith, Dan Williams, and Randy Witt, talk about the good old days.



Dr. Wayne Kussow had some thought-provoking presentations during EXPO.



Dr. Bruce Clark from Rutgers offers the latest information on summer patch control.



Andy McNitt from Penn State had interesting talks about top-dressing greens and athletic field root zone amendments.



Dr. John Stier met a lot of new faces at his first EXPO as a UW-Madison faculty member.



Large attendance at opening session

research but in collaboration with Dr. Stier will work on developing some cultivars that function better for Wisconsin's environment.

Brian Swingle from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection finished the opening session with a discussion of issues governing the green industry. He talked about rules and possible rule changes covering warning signs, advance notice, applicator training, citizen complaints, and record keeping.

After opening session came the large and exciting trade show. Over 60 exhibitors participated this year and the expanded trade show hours allowed time to visit with them all. There was also time for camaraderie to visit with old friends and make new ones in the large accommodating Marriott trade show area.

A wonderful buffet lunch came next, followed by more trade show, and then the best part of EXPO: the educational sessions. The speakers were excellent this year. The talks were divided into the three categories mentioned previously. It's unfortunate that you can't attend all the talks because the categories go on concurrently.

The golf course session was jam packed with information from Drs. Wayne Kussow, Michael Hurdzan, Bruce Clark, and Dave Huff. Bob Vavrek, Jeff Gregos, Andy McNitt, Amy Sausen, and Steve Millett also brought good information to the golf course session. Hurdzan seemed to be the big draw in golf as he had the room packed to the walls for two combined talks. He gave such entertaining and insightful presentations about the past, present, and future of golf in America.

Not to be outdone, the lawn and landscape sessions had excellent talks from Drs. John Stier, John Ball, Nick Christians, and more talks from Drs. Wayne Kussow, Bruce Clark, and Dave Huff. Other turf experts also offered insightful talks for lawn and landscape. One of the best talks had to be Kussow's "Turf and the Environment; The Real Story." He presented a scientist's view of the real impact that turf fertilizer and other management practices have on the environment. He made every point so clear to the audience before presenting the next point. The biggest compliment Kussow may have gotten was when one of his peers, Dr. Nick Christians, told him that his information would make a great publication. Christians then had an informative presentation himself. It simplified the confusion about different sources of nitrogen fertilizers. Next Dr. John Ball gave an enthusiastic presentation about how turf and trees co-exist. He explored issues of pruning, mulching, fertilizing, irrigating, and doctoring of distressed trees.

The most practical session had to be the grounds and sports turf session. It had three successful sports field managers on the agenda: Rich Riggs from the UW-Stevens Point; Pete Bemis from the UW-La Crosse; and Vince Patterozzi from the Baltimore Ravens. Drs. Stier and Kussow also had useful sports turf information as did Andy McNitt, John Sorchan, and myself. Use of *Poa supina* was explored in a couple of the talks. It is a relatively new specie which has a lot of potential use for sport fields because of its aggressive stoloniferous growth habit.

All I can say is, "So many good talks, so little time!" You just couldn't get to them all so there were good ones that had to be skipped. If I didn't mention some of the good ones it's because I unfortunately couldn't make them all. If you know of some good speakers for next year, please let someone on the planning committee know

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The media cornered Paul Huggett from Long Island Sod Farm to gather information about Wisconsin's sod industry.



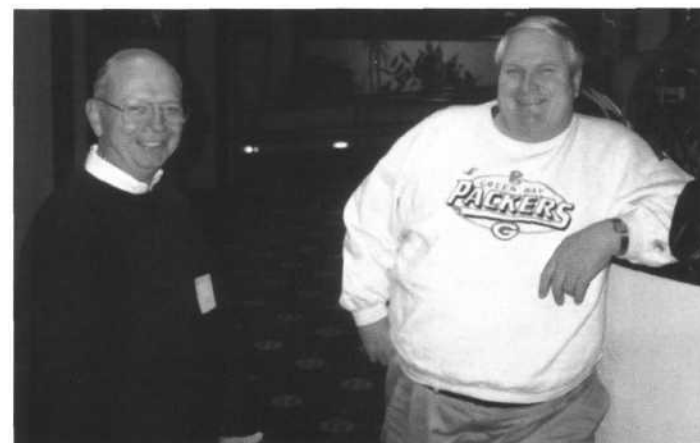
Bill Vogel presents Raechal Sager with the Spring Valley Scholarship.



Jamie Johnson accepts one of the WTA scholarships from Curt Larson.



Vince Johnson and Jim Belfield pose for the camera.



Two of the founders of WTA attended EXPO, Jim Huggett and Tom Harrison.



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about them. We'd like to keep the educational benefits of EXPO at the highest level. I think it is such a good conference every year and I hope you do to.

Thanks go to the registration volunteers, turf student volunteers, and all the session chairpersons that help make the show flow smoothly. Thanks also to the exhibitors that are quite an informative part of EXPO themselves, and also help defray the costs of offering such a superb conference.

A list of EXPO '98 exhibitors follows. They are there throughout the year to inform you about their latest wares, and to give you the most for your money. Your EXPO program gave a summary of each of their businesses along with their telephone numbers. Audra can get you a new copy by calling her at 608-845-6536 if you lost your copy. These exhibitors give so very much to the turf industry in Wisconsin, so I encourage you to pay them back by purchasing their products throughout the year. They have everything you could ever need for your landscapes.

#### **1998 EXPO Exhibitor**

Absorbent Technologies  
Anderson Thomas  
Bayer Corp  
Beck's Ornamental & Turf  
Cannon Turf Supply  
Century Rain Aid  
Chipco  
Contree Sales  
Dakota Peat & Equipment  
Data Transmission Network  
Evergreen Turf Equipment  
F/S Growmark  
Glenn Rehbein  
Graves Feick Golf Architects  
Greensmix  
Hanley Company  
Horst Distributing  
IMC Vigoro  
ISK Biosciences

J W Turf

Jerry's Small Engine Supply  
Johnson & Associates Turf Equipment  
Kujawa Enterprises (K E I)  
Lange-Stegmann Company  
Lebanon Turf Products  
Lesco  
Lohmann Golf Designs  
McFarlane Implement  
Medalist America Turfgrass Seed  
Megli Lawn Care  
Melcher Equipment  
MidAmerCo  
Miller & Associates - Sauk Prairie  
Milorganite  
Natural Products Research  
Novartis  
Olds Seed Company  
Olsen Distributing  
Par Aide Products  
Pendelton Turf Supply  
Peterson Seed Company  
Porter-Achtenhagen Seasonal Services  
Pro Greens of Midwest  
ProGreen Plus  
Reinders Turf Equipment  
Scotts  
Spring Valley  
Superior Tech Products  
T J Emmerich Associates  
Tee Shot Marketing  
Terra International  
Tiziani Golf Car  
Trelay Seed Company  
Tyler Enterprises  
United Horticultural Supply  
W A Cleary Chemical  
Wheeler Consolidated  
Williams, Gill Golf Course Architects  
Wisconsin Turf Equipment  
Wolosek Golf Course Mix  
Zeneca Professional Products 🌿



Dr. Mike Hurdzan, noted golf course architect and author, made his first-trip to EXPO.



Dr. Nick Christians presented information about soil testing and nitrogen sources from his Iowa State University research.